



"Keepin Ahad O Wor Tung"

Registered Charity No: 515179

President: Katrina Porteous FNLS

Patrons: Their Graces the Duke & Duchess of Northumberland

Members' Newsletter No. 68 – Summer 2009

NLS CONTACT DETAILS

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Passionate about dialect

north east
england

MEETINGS AND HAPPENINGS

Saturday/Sunday 5th/6th September: Lancashire Dialect Society event at Fleetwood, on the Fylde Coast . They are planning a national English Dialect event this year, with speakers, competitions and entertainment. People from Norfolk and Lincolnshire will be there in addition to folk from the Northern Dialect Societies. More details from www.sidcalderbank.co.uk

Thursday 8th October: National Poetry Day. Following last year's successful event, which saw events in Wooler, Morpeth, Ashington and Newcastle, all involving Northumbrian Language Society members, we are keen to build on what we did. More details later.

Saturday 17th October: Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture in Morpeth Town Hall, starting at 2pm. This year's speaker will be popular Northumbrian character and poet, Peter Athey, who will be talking about his life and reading some of his dialect poetry.

Saturday 12th December: the world-famous NLS Yule Meet!! This year year, we're back in the Chantry Museum, which has been extensively refurbished after last year's floods. The event starts at 2pm, and will finish at 4pm. Please bring the family for festive food, fellowship and fun for all NLS members. It's a great way to celebrate the season.

Friday 9th to Sunday 11th April 2010: 43rd Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering

In 2010 we are planning to have another Northumbrian Church Service. We haven't decided on a date or venue yet, but we are in discussions about these details at the minute. Whenever it is held, it will need a lot of preparation. We would like any members who feel they can translate readings, prayers or hymns into Northumbrian to volunteer to help. Please get in touch with Hazel Dickson on 01670 811697 if you would like to be involved. In addition, we really do need some Northumbrian Christmas readings and carols which we can use at events like the Yule Meet. If you have any suitable material, please get in touch with the Gaffer on 0191 264 4811, or by email on pja13@btinternet.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM of the Society was held on Saturday 2nd May in the Masonic Hall in Morpeth. The Minutes of the 2007 AGM were read and approved, as was the Executive Report and the audited Accounts. The Officers were the same as last year, and their election was agreed. The Secretary, Kim Bibby-Wilson, indicated that she was considering stepping down from the post within the few two years. Raymond Reed was created a Fellow of the Northumbrian Language Society because of his promotion of the language over many years, and Brian James was made an Honorary Life Member for his services on the Executive Committee.

REED NEET

This year's Reed Neet bigan wi thi tradeeshnal peypin in ov thi Muckle Greet Stotty, wor Preseedint mayd thi Sarrimoanyill Forst Hack wiv a greet big gully, an wor Gaffer spoke thi Stotty Cyek Weesh. Eftor thi pie an peas suppor, thi Revrand Ron Forster frae Morpeth myed thi Address ti thi Muckle Greet Stotty. Maistor Terry Common frae Morpeth repleyd on eets behaaf. An then wor Preseedint, Mistress Katrina Porteous frae Beadnell myed thi Address ti thi Bard, and she wes follad bi Maistor Raymond Reed frae Stakeford whe repleyd on hees bihaaf. Members then hoyed in theor bits an peeces, an thi neet wes ower when thi canny an tradeeshnal Beenydickshin wes spoken bi Maistor Alex Swailes frae Rathberry.

THE MORPETH GATHERING

This year's Gathering was a busier one than usual for the Language Society. In addition to hosting and running the Storytelling and Fine Northumbrian Speech competitions, and the dialect recital and awards event, we also hosted two other events (details below). This resulted in a long, but very rewarding, afternoon for the NLS members involved!

The first was a performance by Cumbrian Keith Gregson, who had created a session based on the Moody Book. Keith played the character of Thomas Moody, and explained how the Moody Book came to be written. He then asked members of the audience to shout out letters of the alphabet, and Keith then read out an entry from the Moody Book beginning with that letter, and this then sparked off a discussion of the language, and the derivation of the words. This was an interesting session, which the audience enjoyed, and Keith expressed the hope that the Language Society might like to take up the challenge of presenting this piece in future, so that the piece would be performed in Northumbrian. We are talking to Keith about how this might be done.

The second event was by Lancashire dialect performer Sid Calderbank, who had created a two-hour performance of pieces written in the Lancashire dialect by Edwin Waugh, a nineteenth century writer. Sid had edited his performance down to the hour he'd been allocated, but the small audience enjoyed the event, and joined in the discussion about dialect that Sid encouraged. Perhaps inviting performers from other parts of the wider area where the northern dialects are spoken might become a regular feature of the Gathering?

As far as the two traditional competitions were concerned, the Fine Northumbrian Speech was won by Raymond Reed, Nick Short was second, and Meg Stephenson was third. In the Story-Telling, Terry Common was first, Bill Stephenson was second, and Nick Short was third. The full results of all the Gathering competitions are included with this Newsletter.

DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY DAY

A small group of members attended this biennial event which was held in the County Hall at Durham on Saturday 16th May. The location of our stall was not as prominent as in previous years, so fewer people came to see us. However, we did get to meet some new and interested people, we sold some merchandise, and made contact with a local organisation who wanted someone to go and talk to them about the Northumbrian language!

Development Day

At the last meeting of the Executive Committee a meeting was fixed for Monday 27th July for members to talk over our long-term plans for the Society. We need to draw up a timetable of projects we want to do, things like creating a modern Northumbrian dictionary, recording a CD of people talking in the language, publishing the Holland Book, creating some language resources that can be used in schools, and creating the material for adults who want to learn how to speak Northumbrian. No doubt, many members will also have ideas about projects we should consider. So, if you would like put forward any suggestions you may have, please get in touch with the Gaffer or the Secretary before then, so we can make sure they're discussed. Contact details are on the front page of this Newsletter.

USING NORTHUMBRIAN

One of the things we've been meaning to do is to use the language more, both at public events, but also in our own Society affairs. People have often said to us "But you're all talking in Standard English. Why don't you use Northumbrian?" So we're going to give it a go, starting with the Newsletter. From now on, there is going to be more of the Newsletter written in Northumbrian, as was the case in the Society's early years. Eventually, the aim will be to have everything in the language, and that includes at public events like the lecture, the Reed Neet and so on. What do you think? Will it work? Can we do it? Please let us know what you think. If you think this is a good idea, or just plain daft, get in touch with the Gaffer with your views. His contact details are on the first page of this edition of the Newsletter.

the howdy

About eighteen months ago wor Gaffer, Peter Arnold, was asked to look at a couple of stories written by Thomas Bewick in the Tyneside dialect. They'd been published in book form in 1850, some years after Bewick's death. One of the stories was called "The Howdy" and the other was called "The Upgetting". The book was in the keeping of Newcastle City Library, and they wanted someone to translate the stories into standard English, and possibly to record the work in its original dialect.

Peter Arnold and George Wallace both had a shot at translating the texts, and the final version was a combination of their two attempts, with some additional comments from Kim Bibby-Wilson. Peter Arnold was also recorded reading the two stories in the original Bewick version of the dialect.

Last month, Newcastle's brand new Library was opened, and on the first floor, at the top of the stairs from the atrium, there is a console where you can listen to "The Howdy" and "The Upgetting" being read by Peter Arnold. He wasn't able to be at the opening event, but Kim and Terry Common were there, and they launched this unique facility to an appreciative audience. Kim explained what some of the words meant, and Terry read extracts from the original in his own inimitable Northumbrian dialect. It was a great day for the Northumbrian Language Society to be a part of this exciting new development. If you haven't been yet, try and get along. It'll be a grand day out!