



"Keepin Ahad O Wor Tung"

Members' Newsletter, Number 83, Autumn/Winter 2012

Whaat's On

Saturday 8 December

Yule Meet

Chantry Museum, Morpeth
in the first floor meeting room
(access by lift and/or stairs)

2pm until 4pm

Our seasonal, pre-Christmas event.

There will be contributions from those present, a shared meal with food brought by those attending, our celebrated Northumbrian word game "Whe's Tellin Hoafies?", some possible novelty items, and finally, our own Christmas Carol.

Northumbrian Language Society

Charity Number 515179

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Passionate about dialect

north east
england

Society News

National Dialect Day - This was held on Saturday 20 October in Morpeth Town Hall, and many of those who were there said it had been a great success.

Thanks are due to everyone who helped, but especial thanks go to our Secretary, Kim, on whose shoulders most of the burden fell. What you see and experience on the day is a tiny fragment of the effort that goes into the organisation and delivery of these events.

The BBC also helped, because Radio 4's national Saturday Live programme was broadcast that morning. They have told us they had a lot of positive feedback from the item which featured Raymond Reed talking in and about the dialect, and some people turned up to our event because they had heard him on the show! If you would like to hear Raymond being interviewed, and you have access to the internet, you can hear the broadcast at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01nq03s>

In addition to local members, people attended from Devon, Cumbria, Lincolnshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire.

The Roland Bibby Memorial lecture was given this year by wor Gaffer, Peter Arnold, who talked about language change, and its impact on our regional dialects of English. There is an article on the BBC webpages about the day, and you can read the text of the lecture as well!

Go to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-19904109>

If you're feeling very brave, there's also a three minute clip of Wor Gaffer giving the lecture on YouTube. Go to MorpethNewsTV and find the item published on Sunday 21 October. Count how many times he touches his nose!!!

The Dialect Competitions in the afternoon were well supported, and our own Bob Bolam and Raymond Reed came away with two of the trophies. The third was won by our old friend Sid Calderbank from Lancashire.

Unfortunately, the Dialect Concert was poorly supported, but those who did attend were richly entertained by those who took part, and by Johnny Handle, who hosted the event. The Lincolnshire contingent were awarded the trophy for the most entertaining spot in the concert.

The musical concert given by the Northumberland Ranters on the Friday evening was a popular event, and it was attended by several of our colleagues from other dialect societies.

We also held our third Dialect Church Service on the Sunday morning in St George's URC. This was led by the minister and NLS member Rev Ron Forster, with readings by Peter Arnold and Kim Bibby-Wilson. The service was well supported; the band that provided the music for the hymns was lively and skillful; and it was attended by folks from Lancashire and Lincolnshire who had stayed for the whole weekend.

[illegible]

It is with much regret that we announce the death of Renee Chaplin. She died on 12 October, and her funeral was held on Monday 22 October at Holy Trinity Church, Jesmond, in Newcastle. Renee's husband, writer Sid Chaplin, was one of the early members of the Northumbrian Language Society, and Renee was a loyal member for many years. A fuller obituary will be published in a future edition of the Newsletter. Kim Bibby-Wilson, and Peter and Claire Arnold were able to attend the funeral.

NLS Banner Stand - If you attended National Dialect Day, you will have passed our brand-new banner stand in the Butter Market outside the door leading into the Corn Exchange. This is the first of two banner stands we are purchasing. This one gives general information about the Society. The second one will focus more on the language. These new features are part of our attempt to raise and modernise our profile, so that other folks can see what we are all about. Look out for them at future events!

Mixty-Maxy - The Society issued, in time for National Dialect Day, a new 32-page booklet called "Northumbriana Mixty Maxty", an anthology of Northumbrian poetry and prose from the 19th to 21st centuries, featuring pieces by many of our best deceased and living writers. It is available from Kim at £2, including postage.

Anyone who bought copies on the day needs to be aware that one page, featuring Joe Wilson's "Maa Bonny Gyetside Lass" suffered from printing gremlins (deugars?) and therefore if you wish to post your faulty copy back, we can replace it with a corrected version at no extra charge. The correct version is also printed on the back page of this Newsletter.

The anthology is the first of a series of booklets planned to continue, in part, the work of the publication "Northumbriana" edited and produced by the founding chairman.

Northumbrian Words Tea Towel – You will remember that we worked with Barter Books of Alnwick, and our President Katrina Porteus, to produce these very popular and colourful tea towels showing word lists with cartoon Northumbrian characters. The first set sold out very quickly, but we have managed to get some more.

The Tea Towel costs £7.60; the glossy Poster with a border costs £3.60; and the Poster on stiff paper and no border costs £4.40.

These will make delightful presents, especially for those who are exiled Northumbrians, and if you want one (or more!!!), please contact Kim, or go to Barter Books.

Calling all Kindle Experts! - It has been suggested that it would be a good idea if this year's Lecture was put on our website, and Kindle, so that more people can read it.

However, none of us has any knowledge of Kindle, an wuh knaas nowt aboot it! Are there any techno wizards out there who can give us a clue? Please get in touch if you can. Contact either Kim, or Wor Gaffer, Peter Arnold. Their details are on the front page of this Newsletter.

The Lindisfarne Gospels are coming home – but only for 3 months! Next year, the Gospels are returning to the north east on a three month loan from the British Library in London. They will be on view in Durham city during the months of July, August and September. In June, there will also be a month-long arts festival celebrating the talent of the region. There will be lots of activity, all over the region, and it is a great opportunity to show the rest of the world how talented we are!

Our contribution has been to write a play which tells the story of the events leading up to the decision to produce the Gospels. We don't have the resources to put the play on ourselves, but if any members know of drama groups that might be interested, please get in touch with Peter Arnold either by phone on 01434-608230 or by email at pia13@btinternet.com

Dialect Church Service - For those who were unable to attend this event, held on the Sunday following National Dialect Day, here are the words of the hymn which have been put into Northumbrian by our President, Katrina Porteous :

Eternal Father, Strong To Save

Good Skipper, helmsman strang ti steer,
Whae keeps wor cowble ratchin clear,
Whae gies the word ti yon flood tide
When she maan flow an when maan bide;
*Howway man, heor us shoot tiv ee,
For folks sair-feort upon thi sea.*

O Christ, thi gurrelly wetters faa
Clock calm afore ye. Whilse thi blaa
Ye dandered oot wheor poor souls droon,
In sic a berrel laid ee doon;
*Howway man, heor us shoot tiv ee,
For hairts sair-feort upon thi sea.*

Ah fiery Spirit, whae thowt on
Yon wetter's wild fagarrashon,
Whae bides thi lipper: 'Haad yor tungl'
Born us a beacon wheor theor's naen;
*Howway man, heor us shoot tiv ee,
For Souls gey-gliffed upon thi sea.*

Strang Trinity, thoo's soft a hairt,
Be compass for wor crew, an chart;
For fool an shad, an Nor'east swell
Aye bide nigh-handed. Mind us weel;
*Darse, Maister, whilse wuh hyemward
flee,
Gan on, wor sangs, fro' land an sea.*

Can You Help? - Local writer Malcolm Green is writing a book on north-east legends and folk tales. He wonders if anyone in our Society knows of any, and would be willing to get in touch with him about them. You can contact him by phone on 0191 265 3224 if you are interested.

Bondagers Film - If you attended National Dialect Day, you might have heard the maker of this film, Dinah Iredale, talk about why and how it was made. It was shown to those who were having a pie and peas tea just before the evening Dialect Concert. We are hoping to be able to show it again at the Yule Meet on Saturday 8 December.

HAVE YOU GOT EMAIL? If you have, PLEASE, PLEASE send an email to our Treasurer, John Davidson, who is collating all email addresses, so we can send future copies of the NLS Newsletter by email to those who have it. John's email address is on the front page of this Newsletter.

Whorral Bank, Morpeth - Kim was recently contacted by someone who was querying the correct or original name of this place in Morpeth. In some 19th century maps and documents it is shown as Quarry Bank.

We print below part of Kim's reply. She would be very interested for comments on this issue, particularly if the word occurs in other areas :

"Of course, the trouble with English before compulsory education kicked in is that the oral tradition led to various spellings and the later mapmakers didn't necessarily have an understanding of the local speech.

"Dad's use of e in 'wherral' is either his attempt to convey the likely spelling, or the result of a typo by the Herald typesetter. This latter notion is quite possible as Dad suffered from the typesetter playing havoc with his work on many occasions (there was the famous subheading 'Glamorous Creditors' which was meant to be 'Clamorous Creditors', quite a different story!!)

"The Northumbrian r has a huge influence on neighbouring vowels (both preceding and following) and the attempt to spell the results leads to all sorts of variants.

"The wh- spelling at the start is Caxton's idea of tidying up the appearance of the very explosive hw- words of Old English (a bit like the -ch sound in Scottish loch or Welsh Ll- in Llangollen) so it must be that we had that sound at the start of the name.

"Whorral", "wherral" or "whorl" are local pronunciations of what is in Standard English "whirl", which fits in with describing the extreme curving nature of the roadway at the site. Heslop gives "whorl" as "anything that turns"; also "round knob of wood" and "to whirl or twirl".

"But Heslop also has 'wharry' for 'quarry', so it may be that if there was actually a quarry there for a while (was there?) the name could apply. However, that has no final l (it would be 'wharry', not 'wharil' - there's another second vowel and spelling variant!), which wouldn't normally attach itself for no good reason, leading me to suppose that the final letter l is crucial, and that the curving topography of 'whorl' is the real origin, with the added second vowel added after the r to convey the sound of the native speaker's voice.

"But I could be wrangl"

"Or perhaps the name has changed over time with different meanings influencing the people's understanding of what the name signified and therefore influencing what they called it, despite supposed standardised forms appearing in documents and print."

Any comments anyone? Please get in touch with Kim if you have any thoughts on this issue, or if you know of any other places with this sort of name.

Have YOU Paid Your Subs Yet? - If you received a letter from the Treasurer recently about your subs, then this will be the last Newsletter you will get from us. The cost of postage these days means we can only send information in future to those who have paid their subs. Sorry!

CORRECTION - For those of you who bought a copy of Mixty-Maxty at National Dialect Day, here are the correct words for the poem, "Maa Bonny Gyetside Lass". It waas them deugars agyen!

Maa Bonny Gyetside Lass

Joe Wilson (1841-1875)

Aa warn't ye hev'n't seen me lass – hor nyem Aa winnet mention,
For fear ye gan an' tell her hoo Aa like her, so Aa de!
But it's just fer lads an' lasses te whisp'or thor affecshun;
The bonniest lass o' Gyetside's bonny fyece's bother'd me!

The forst time that Aa saw hor, whey, Aa's sure Aa diddint knaa hor,
Tho' Aa thowt Aa'd seen hor fyece afore, but cuddint think o' where;
Hor blue eye met mine i' passin' up High Street i' the mornin',
An' hor leuk wes se entrancin' that me heart wes mine ne mair!

Aa diddint see hor for a week till one neet at the Bridge End
When Aa strampt upon hor goon, an' the gethors cum away.
She said that Aa wes clumsy, an' Aa said that Aa wes sorry,
An' Aa humbly beg'd hor pardin, Aa wes lickt for what te say.

But Aa waalk'd on biv hor side, just as if Aa hed a reet te dee't.
The conversayshun forst wes shy; at last it torn'd forst class;
We byeth spoke aboot the weathor, an she menshun'd that hor fethur
Wes a puddlor doon at Haaks's, oh me bonny Gyetside lass!

She menshun'd confidenshly that hor unkil wes a grossor
An' his muther's fethur's cussin wes a fiddler doon the shore,
An' she spoke se nice an' frindly, an' smiled se sweet an' plissint
That Aa thowt Aa'd nivor seen a lass se charmin like before.

She said hor muther kept a shop an' sell'd het pies an' candy,
An' hor bruther wes a cobbler at the high pairt o' the toon,
An' she wes a dressmaker – we got se kind tegithor
That Aa blist Aa'd been se awkward as Aa strampt upon hor goon.

Aa myed hor laff an' slap me lug wi taakin lots o' nonsense,
But, bliss ye, when yor courting, theor's nowt se gud'll pass.
Aa askt hor wad she be me lass, an' Aa'd tyek hor oot on Sunday.
Te ma delight she said Aw might, ma bonny Gyetside lass.



Whaat's On - Part Two

Monday 10 December - Morpeth Northumbrian
Gathering AGM, Carlisle Park Lodge, Morpeth,
starting at 7pm

Friday 5 to Sunday 7 April - Morpeth
Northumbrian Gathering, at various venues in
the centre of Morpeth.

The Big Day for the Northumbrian Language
Society is Saturday 6 April, in the afternoon, at St
Robert's Church Hall, when we will be hosting the
Dialect Competitions at 1.30pm, and the

Announcement of the Results of the Writing
Competitions at 2.30pm. Refreshments will be
available.

YOUR support is very much needed! Come
along if you can. Enter the Competitions if you are
able. The future of our Dialect depends on YOU!



We need your ideas –

Most of our meetings and events are held in Morpeth, mainly
because it's more convenient for many of our members; but
there must be venues in other parts of the county that we could
use, places like village halls, schools, or pubs.
Please let Kim know of any that you think would fit the bill.