



"Keepin Ahad O Wor Tung"

**Members' Newsletter, Number 84, Spring 2013**

## Next Event

**Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering  
Fundraising Concert**

**Friday 8th March at 7.30  
Morpeth Town Hall Ballroom**

**Featuring  
MC - Alex Swailes FNLS**

**Johnny Handle FNLS, Border Directors,  
Peter Athey, ClockTower Cloggies,  
Werca's Folk, Ernie Gordon,  
Rachel Hales**

**Tickets : £8.50, concessions £7.50  
(including refreshments)**

**Tickets from Kim (01670 513308)  
or from the Tourist Office in Morpeth  
(01670 623455)**

## Northumbrian Language Society

Charity Number 515179

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*Passionate* about dialect

north east  
england





## Society News

**Northumbrian Dictionary** - after months of silence, work has re-started on our dictionary. The first draft has been revised, expanded and re-organised. There is now an Introduction, including a short history of the language, plus some brief details of the main differences between Northumbrian and Standard English. This is followed by a piece of Northumbrian prose to give an example of the language in use.

After that is the dictionary proper, organised in two parts – English into Northumbrian, and Northumbrian into English. This second part has more detail than the first, including examples of the words in use.

There is still more work to be done. This will be to provide more detail in the second part of the main dictionary – which part of the language community a word comes from, whether the word is from Old English or Old Norse or even Middle or Early Modern English, plus alternative spellings and pronunciation.

We are very keen for members to be involved in this part of the work, so two special sessions are being planned at this year's Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering. They will be held on Saturday 6th April, at noon, and at 4pm, in St Robert's Church Hall, immediately before and after the spoken language competitions in the same venue. There will be an opportunity to look at the words, suggest additions and deletions, add examples, and any further information you think needs to be added. This is a unique opportunity. Please come along and help.

**Caallin Aall Dorty Leors** - this year sees the introduction of a new competition to add to the Storytelling and Fine Northumbrian Speech competitions which are held on the Saturday afternoon of the Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering. The new competition – Tall Tale Telling – is being held to honour the memory of the late Terry Common, who was a master of tall tales. There will be a special Hoafy Trophy awarded for the best tall tale, and the trophy has been provided by Terry's family, for which we are very grateful.

The new competition will be held on the afternoon of Saturday 6th April in St Robert of Newminster Church Hall in Morpeth town centre. This is the same venue as the Storytelling and Fine Northumbrian Speech competitions.

This year, all three competitions will be held between 1.30 and 3.30pm, and they will be interspersed with the results of the already judged written competitions, with some entries being read out by the winners. This is a change from the normal programme, and we are trying it out to make it a more satisfying experience for both competitors and the audience. As usual, there will be refreshments available.

**For God and Saint Cuthbert!** - this is the title of a new play which has been written as part of the celebrations to welcome the Lindisfarne Gospels to Durham from July to September this year. The play deals with the events leading up to the decision to make the Gospels at the beginning of the eighth century. We are hoping that dramatic societies might be interested in staging the play as part of the Gospels Festival. If you know of anyone who might be interested in staging it, please get in touch with Wor Gaffer, Peter Arnold, on 01434 608230, or by email at [pja13@btinternet.com](mailto:pja13@btinternet.com)

## Whaat's On

**Friday 8th March** - Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering Fundraising Concert, Morpeth Town Hall Ballroom, at 7.30pm. Tickets £8.50, concessions £7.50, either from Kim (01670 513308) or the Chantry TIC (01670 623455)

**Friday 5th – Sunday 7th April** - 46th Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering at various venues in Morpeth town centre. Please see attached sheet for more details. Please note that there may be changes to this draft programme.

**Saturday 4th May** - Northumbrian Language Society AGM and Reed Neet Celebration. The AGM will start at 7.00pm and the Reed Neet at 8pm. Venue to be decided.

**Saturday 12th October** - Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture, Morpeth Town Hall, starting at 2pm (doors open at 1.30) Lecturer and title yet to be announced.

**Saturday 19th October** - National Dialect Day in Devon, probably in Exeter. This is a long way to go, but we are determined to have a strong contingent to support this event, and to take part in the dialect competitions and events. If you are at all interested in being part of the Northumbrian Team, please get in touch with Wor Gaffer, Peter Arnold on 01434 608230, or by email on [pja13@btinternet.co](mailto:pja13@btinternet.co)

**Saturday 7th or 14th December** – Yule Meet, Morpeth Chantry Museum, starting at 2pm. Our annual pre-Christmas celebration, with a shared meal, contributions from the audience, and "Whe's Tellin Hoafies?"

## A Northumbrian Toast

The Morpeth Gadgy, Alex Swailes, would like to know if anyone knows of a Northumbrian Toast, the formal greeting used at dinners and other celebrations. This could be a short verse, in Northumbrian, or a saying, to be used after the toast to the Queen for example. Please let us know if you know of one, or perhaps you would like to write one for us? Contact Wor Gaffer with ideas, on 01434 608230, or by email at [pja13@btinternet.com](mailto:pja13@btinternet.com) or by post at 33 Hackwood Glade, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 1AL.



# Rene Chaplin 1920 - 2012 by Heather Ging

I was very young, inexperienced and newly married when I first saw Rene. Typically, it was in an art gallery. She was laughing at her husband, the kind of quiet, conventionally dressed, older man you wouldn't associate with high jinks. Sid was lying on the floor in the arms of a naked, reclining, life sized, nude, sculpture. The vivacious and fun loving Rene was always accompanied by her renowned, writer husband and they were to be seen at every hot ticket in town because for national and international, as well as regional culture, they shared a great passion.

Myself, although coming from a background of instinctive writers, painters and musicians, I had never been endowed with the sort of reverence which Rene, daughter and wife of pitmen, had for cultural things. And she amazed me. Perhaps this was the lack of a mother in our previous generation – because mothers pass on the tradition. And Rene was, above all things, a mother. She mothered me and taught me tradition, too. When I had my first child: *"Come and see me and I'll give the bairn his three things"*

*"What's that?"*

*"Come and ye'll find out."*

The home of the Chaplins was a treasure house of paintings, precious china, family photographs and the smell of good food and polish. As for many other people, it became a bolt hole for me – such as when my mother died – *"I'm so glad you wanted to come here"*, said Rene warmly, putting on the kettle and getting out the china.

The three things gift for the new bairn were modest in the extreme, reflecting the intensely important wishes of the modest, thrifty, society from which Rene came. *"Here y'are"* she said, holding before her a little ceremonial silver tray. *"Salt to savour, sugar to sweeten and a candle to light the way"*

*"How cum I never had my three things"* I said later to my older cousin.

*"Ye did, " she ses, " or ye nearly did|. But wor Johnny went 'yem with them in 'e's back pocket".*

*"Nee wonder summick went wrang wi' mey life"* Ah ses tiv 'ar--because in the family we Geordies -speak our own language.

The keeping of tradition was very much a part of Rene's life, and as mother, grandmother, great grandmother, she passed it on. And as a traditional daughter, she cared for Andrew, her father, who after losing an arm in a pit accident lived with her until his death at age 102. And the wider community, too, received the benefit of Rene's love and respect for the cycle of life. There were home cooked meals for the sick and the dying, comfort for the bereaved, joy for the new mother and encouragement for the ambitious. Amazing generosity it seemed to me, having come from our hard pressed riverside family, and so used to the chant, "Charity begins at 'yem".

Her impassioned interest in people, and their lives, knew no bounds and I would sit there, in Chaplin comfort, replete with home made cake, spell-bound by her life experience. And Sid would sit there, too, silently, eyes cocked on her, teeth clamped round the pipe stem, and an ungoverned hand feeling for his notebook. Sid often said she was his sternest critic but in public she played the artist's helpmeet to perfection, entertaining lavishly (huge steak and kidney puddings in the boiler, too big for the pots) and graciously being interviewed by the Journal's Woman's Page about her life with the famous writer.

*"What it is"* mocked Sid, *"to live in the shadow of the mighty oak."* He got a long, long, look of ironical affection.

In later years, husbands gone, Rene and I would go to the Reed Supper together. Dialect stories and traditional, Northumbrian music, our delight, along with pies, peas and stotty cake. I would buy the tickets, drive the car, Rene would bring the wine and butter. *"Wey " she ses, " ye cannit hev stotty cake withoot butter. What the ' like?"*

After many years of being Sid Chaplin's wife and then his widow, Rene appeared to come into her own in her eighties and nineties. She began writing stories about her roots, had them published, and gave speeches at various Chaplin memorial events. At a Norman Cornish preview she even autographed catalogues for which she had written the foreword, to the delight of a queue of waiting fans. *"Get me another glass of wine "* she said to me, waving her pen, star for a night. I drove her home afterwards feeling like the Queen Mother's proud lady in waiting. Having pronounced herself ready to go, Rene went, leaving us with what she gave to our lives and richer for having had her there. Honest, direct, faithful, warm and feisty, she brings to mind the poignant words of Jane Austen, and few people can say things more simply or more truly: *"Where shall we see a better daughter, or a kinder sister or a truer friend."*



# **Terry (Terence Armourer) Common 1943 – 2012**

## **by Avril Common**

Terry was a native of Harbottle, and he lived in the village for the first twenty-seven years of his life. He attended the primary school in the village, and then transferred to Brownrigg Secondary School at Bellingham. He left school at fifteen to start work with the Forestry Commission from 1958 until 1965. He then joined the Northumberland Fire Brigade, serving at Hexham, Morpeth and Cramlington, and he retired from the service in 1988.

In 1970, Terry married me, and we moved to Morpeth where our two sons David (38) and Steven (35) were born.

Terry was a keen and enthusiastic sportsman all his life. In his younger days, he had been involved in darts, boxing, football, volleyball, and crown green bowling on the grass at Morpeth, but his real passion was running. He represented the Fire Brigade on many occasions – running 5 and 10 mile races, half and full marathons, and cross country – and he was a member of Morpeth Harriers for years.

He took part in the first Great North Run, and ran in several others over the years. He also took part in the Morpeth to Newcastle New Year's Day races (when work shifts permitted), and he ran in lots of other local events, including the Morpeth Fair Days Family Runs in 1985 & 1986 which he won with David and Steven. He also ran in numerous other races with the boys.

Terry was also very interested in, and proud of, the Northumbrian dialect, and he was a regular competitor in the speaking and writing events at the Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering, as well as in other events around the county. He served for many years on the Committee of the Northumbrian Language Society, and he was usually the one who booked and organised the pie and peas suppers at the Society's AGM and Reed Neet celebrations. His understated and deadpan delivery of stories and poems were legendary, and much loved by audiences. There are stories told of the times when Terry would regale innocent travellers from outside the region in a pub, late at night, with tall tales of his adventures when he was a lad. It is these stories which has prompted the Language Society to introduce tall tale telling as a new competition at the Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering this year, for which a "Hoafy Trophy" will be awarded in Terry's memory. The family is very pleased to be able to provide the trophy for this event.

Not a lot of people know this, but Terry was a keen ornithologist, and he loved all aspects of nature. Other activities that caught his interest were gardening (though this waned a bit in later years), and cooking, which he enjoyed greatly.

Terry loved travelling both far and near, particularly in and around Northumberland, when he would spend hours sitting watching the wildlife (I usually had a book or my sketch pad to keep me quiet so as not to distract the birds etc!!) He also enjoyed reading, particularly local history, and he was generally interested in what was happening in the world as well as locally (though not really into politics).

All in all, he pretty much lived life to the full, despite various health niggles over the last few years, but he didn't complain about his lot. His family always came first, and he was delighted when our first grandchild (Iona) was born in May 2010 – although, with her mother and father living in Thailand we didn't see much of her, but we spent a very happy month with them very shortly before his death.

## **Barbara Hadaway**

We also note the recent death of Barbara Hadaway, widow of Tom Hadaway, playwright, and former President of the Northumbrian Language Society. Following Tom's death, Barbara was a regular attender at our AGM and Reed Neet celebrations. We do not have any more details at the moment, but hopefully, we will be able to print a fuller appreciation in a future edition of the Newsletter.



# 46<sup>th</sup> Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering

**5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> April 2013 Programme** - details subject to confirmation *Edition 4*

## **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2013:**

9.30 - 5.00 **CRAFTS EXHIBITION** with refreshments; adult & junior craft competitions (entries received Thurs. 4<sup>th</sup> April 5.30pm - 7 pm). Displays/stalls: sport heritage, proggy mats, smallpipes, shepherds' sticks, T-shirts, CDs, books *Town Hall Corn Exchange Small charge on door*  
10.00- 4.00 **OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT & STALLS:** Hautbois (Suffragette music), Rent a Peasant, storytelling, Punch & Judy, Ordway the Anglo-Saxon *Market Place*  
10.00-1.00 **FAMILY ART WORKSHOP** make pageant items with Elaine Porter. *Market Place "Yurt" tent*  
Daytime **DANCE WORKSHOPS** *Town Hall Free*  
Daytime **WOMEN'S COSTUMES** presentation *Town Hall*  
Daytime **WINNING LINE** suffragette morris dance presentation with Hester Reeve *Town Hall Free*  
2.00 **OFFICIAL OPENING** of Gathering by Mayor of Morpeth Town *Town Hall Exhibition Free*  
2.15 **WOMEN OF THE WORKHOUSE** Launch of Bridget Gubbins' new book on Morpeth's history *Town Hall Free*  
3.00 **THE DARLING MANUSCRIPT** Bryan Jackson on Grace Darling's father's fiddle tunes *Bagpipe Mus'm Free*  
4.00 **STORIES FOR CHILDREN** *Library Free*  
5.00 (time tbc) **EARLY MUSIC CONCERT** Jamie Savan, Jacob Heringman, Susanna Pell, Andy Watt plus Newcastle University students *Bagpipe Museum £5*  
7.30 **NORTH COUNTRY LASS** concert: Emily Portman, Werca's Folk, Lottie Alexander as Emily Davison, Gemma Telfer, Tom Patterson, Hautbois *Methodist Church £8/£7*  
8.00 **SINGAROUND** - women's songs *to be confirmed*  
8.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** with Alasdair Turnbull, Keith Besford & friends *Tap and Spile Free*

## **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April:** (10-4 Park & Ride at County Hall)

*St. John Ambulance at rear of Town Hall.*

9.30 - 6.00 **CRAFTS EXHIBITION** as Friday *Town Hall*

9.30 - 10.30 **WOMEN'S SONG WORKSHOP** *St Robert's Ch Hall Free tbc*

9.45 - 10.30 **STORYTELLING FOR CHILDREN** including legends of Anglo-Saxon times *Library Free*

10.00-3.30 **OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT & FARMERS' MARKET** Punch & Judy, dancers, Anglo-Saxon Ordway, Squeake's Noyse, Time Bandits, etc. *Market Place, Park, Bakehouse Millenn Green, Sanderson Arcade Free*

**LIVING HISTORY** incl. Rent a Peasant *Park nr play area*

10.00 - 10.45 **CLOG DANCE WORKSHOP** Bring flat hard-soled shoes. With Anne Walton. *Town Hall Free*

10.00 - 10.45 **MEET THE NORTHUMBRIAN PIPERS** Drop-in session - all welcome *Bagpipe Museum Free*

10.00 **RING O' BELLS** Clock Tower open afterwards

11.00 **PAGEANT** Border piper, flags, Lord Greystoke's return from Otterburn, welcomed to Town Hall by Morpeth Gadgy. Entertainers, costumes, Ellington Band, etc. *During this time (10.45 - 11.45 am) Market Place & town centre from Chantry roundabout to Manchester Street closed to traffic. Alternative route via Dark Lane/ Dacre Street/ Manchester Street.*

12.00 - 12.45 **DIALECT DICTIONARY** discussion

*St Robert's Church Hall Free*

11.45 - 12.45 **MOUTH ORGAN WORKSHOP** with Anita James & Ernie Gordon (key of C) *Bagpipe Museum Free*

12.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** as Friday

12.00 - 3.00 **SINGAROUND** with Beeswing *Joiners Free*

**Saturday Competitions:** Passport ticket for entrants & audience £2.00/£1.50 includes free entry to Exhibition. Doors open 30 minutes before times given below to allow entrants to register. Refreshments at all venues except museum.

12.00 **CLOG DANCING** *Town Hall*

1.30 **NORTHUMBRIAN PIPES & LOWLAND/ BORDER /HALF-LONG PIPES** *Bagpipe Museum*

1.30 **SPEAKING:** dialect, stories, Hoafy Trophy for telling tall tales, plus **WRITING RESULTS** and recital by entrants of this year's dialect prose & poetry. (Writing classes closing date 16<sup>th</sup> March, juniors 23<sup>rd</sup> March) *St Robert's Church Hall*

2.00 **BANDS, ACCORDIONS, FIDDLES, OTHER INSTRUMENTS, DUETS** *St. George's Church (ground floor)*

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

12.30 - 1.30 **MORPETH WAITES** early music *St Geo's Ch*

12.30 - 1.30 **VOTES FOR WOMEN?** Join local school-children staging Anti-Suffrage Rally *Methodist Ch Free*

1.00 - 3.00 **BIRD & BATBOX** making *Old Bakehouse Millennium Green, Newgate St. Free (pay for materials)*

2.00 - 2.45 **FAMILY SHOW** with Sandra Kerr of Bagpuss fame *Methodist Church Free*

3.00 - 3.30 **BATTLE** Time Bandits re-enact an Anglo-Saxon skirmish *Park Bandstand area*

4.00 - 5.00 **DIALECT DICTIONARY** discussion

*St Robert's Church Hall Free*

4.00 - 5.00 **DUNSTAN'S DREAM** Rachael Hales explains and presents multi-media sound composition based on the Anglo-Saxon legend *Bagpipe Museum (time tbc)*

5.00 - 6.00 **VERY EARLY MUSIC CONCERT** Squeake's Noyse, Sedayne and Rapunzel *Bagpipe Museum £3 tbc*

6.30 - 8.30 **WINNERS' CONCERT** Guest Stewart Hardy plus 2012 open winners. *Town Hall Ballroom £6/£5*

7.30 **TWILIGHT TALES** with storytellers *Millen. Grm*

8.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** as Friday

8.30 **BARN DANCE** Gary Forrest Ceilidh Band + guests. Bring own drinks; no stilettos! *St Geo's Ch.Hall £6/£5*



### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April:**

9.30 - 4.30 **CRAFTS EXHIBITION** as Fri. Town Hall

9.30 - 11.00 **ORIENTEERING** event (prizes at 12) Park

10.00 - 11.30 **AMBLING IN THE STEPS OF THE ANGLES** Walking tour of the ancient riverside woodlands. *Meet in Park at William Turner Garden Free*

10.00 - 3.00 **OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT** Storytellers, Punch & Judy, living history, stalls *Market Place & Park*

10.30 **CHURCH SERVICE** *St George's UR Church*

11.00 **MOUTH ORGAN WORKSHOP** with Anita James and Ernie Gordon (key of C) *Town Hall*

12.00 - 2.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** as Friday.

1.00 - 3.00 **TOURS OF COUNCIL CHAMBER**, Mayor's Parlour, civic silver and 1513 Town Hutch *Town Hall Free*

1.30 - 3.00 **FAMILY CONCERT** Fligarishon, mouthorgan workshopers, 2012 junior winners *Town Hall - donations*

2.00 - 3.00 **WORKHOUSE WALK** Bridget Gubbins reveals history of town workhouses *Meet outside Town Hall Free*

3.00 - 3.30 **BATTLE** details as Saturday

6.00 **ST CUTHBERT AND THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS** Colm O'Brien on the origins, history and significance of the Gospels *Town Hall Evening ticket £6*

7.30 **PSALMS, POETS AND LYRES IN EDWIN'S KINGDOM** Graeme Lawson on the archaeology of Anglo-Saxon music *Town Hall Evening ticket £6*

*M.N.G. Committee, part of Morpeth Antiquarian Society, Reg. Charity no. 507640, reserves the right to alter event details.*

**TICKETS:** Morpeth TIC 01670 623455 **GATHERING OFFICE/QUERIES:** 01670 513308 [www.northumbriana.org.uk](http://www.northumbriana.org.uk)



## **Northumbrian Symbols**

On the way back to Hexham after our very successful National Dialect Day events in Morpeth last October, Nick Short asked the question "Is there such a thing as a Northumbrian flower?" This started an interesting discussion, and we decided to ask members of the Society for their contributions. So, here are some things for you to think about. Please let us have your ideas. We'll publish the results in a future edition of the Newsletter. **Send your ideas to Wor Gaffer, Peter Arnold at his address on the front page of this Newsletter**

1. Northumbrian food .....
2. Northumbrian flower .....
3. Northumbrian National Anthem .....
4. Northumbrian tree .....
5. Northumbrian animal .....
6. Northumbrian bird .....
7. Northumbrian motto .....
8. Northumbrian capital city/town .....
9. Northumbrian drink .....
10. Northumbrian flag .....
11. Northumbrian badge .....
12. Northumbrian patron saint .....
- Anything else? .....