



"Keepin Ahad O Wor Tung"

**Members' Newsletter, No 86, Autumn 2013**

# Whaat's On

## Yule Meet

**Saturday 14 December, 2pm  
Chantry Museum, Morpeth**

All members are cordially invited to join us for our traditional pre-Christmas celebration featuring :-

- ☆ contributions from the audience ☆ Hazel's punch
- ☆ a shared meal, with food brought by those attending
- ☆ "Whe's Tellin Hoafies" our popular word game
  - ☆ the singing of our own Christmas carol
  - ☆☆☆ and for this year only ..... ☆☆☆
- the recitation of the prize-winning entry at this year's National Dialect Day competition in Devon won bi wor Gaffer, Peter Arnold
- ☆ NLS books & CDs for sale ... great for Xmas gifts
- ☆ an mind on about thi raffle ... so bring sum lowah!

## Northumbrian Language Society

Charity Number 515179

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*Passionate* about dialect

north east  
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# Society News

**NATIONAL DIALECT DAY ...** many of you will have heard by now that we had a very enjoyable and successful trip down to Exeter in Devon in October. Nine members of our Society were able to make 800 mile round trip, thanks in part to a very generous donation from one of our members. We joined friends from six other dialect societies from other parts of the country in a busy weekend of talks, competitions and concerts.

There was an opening concert on the Friday night, put on by, and featuring, our Devon colleagues. The event was very well attended, with about 200 people in the audience in the Barnfield Theatre. The highlight of the evening however, was a special invitation spot by our own Johnny Handle and Kim Bibby-Wilson, the only non-local performers on the bill. They did us proud and got very warm applause at the end.

The Saturday was given over to talks on dialect issues in the morning, to competitions in the afternoon, and to a dialect-based concert in the evening. All the events were well supported.

There were two kinds of competition: the first for performances in dialect from any part of the country, written and performed by the author; and the second was for a performance in dialect from any part of the country of any piece written by anybody. There were about fifteen or sixteen competitors in each section, so there was a good spread of material and performances.

The first competition was won by wor Gaffer, Peter Arnold, who gave an outstanding rendition of his own hoafy tyel "Waad Yuh Beleev It?" This was his first-ever entry into the National Dialect Day competitions, and he was extremely surprised when the judges announced the winner! You can read the full story on another page of this newsletter.

However, he was not the only Northumbrian competitor in this section, as the photograph shows, and Johnny Handle and Stuart Lawson also produced fine performances which showed the range and depth of talent we have. Johnny also entered the second dialect competition and gave a spirited performance of the Billy Bell poem "Whist" on the Hunt after the "Wolf" which was very well received by the audience, but the judges decided that Sid Calderbank's performance in the Lancastrian dialect was the best of the competition.



Johnny Handle (left), Peter Arnold (middle) and Stuart Lawson (right) after the first dialect competition of the day on Saturday 19 October 2013

In the dialect concert in the evening, Kim, Johnny and Peter represented us with a mixture of story-telling, music on the pipes, and songs from all three performers. The final piece was an unrehearsed rendition by all three of them of "Wor Geordie's Lost Ees Penka" which went down very well with the audience, but Peter's still trying to get over the shock of having to sing in public!!

The Sunday was given over to the Devon dialect, with more talks and presentations in the morning, and the same two kinds of competition as on the Saturday in the afternoon. All in all, we had a thoroughly enjoyable weekend in Exeter, and we have thanked our Devon hosts for the magnificent effort they put into the organisation of the event.

Next year's National Dialect Day will be in Cumbria and we really hope that more members will be able to support the event.



**DEED AS A MAERK ...** does anyone know what this phrase means?

The spelling of "maerk" is a best guess, so it may be spelled differently. The query has been sent to us by Terry Dixon who is keen to find out what it means. The word "maerk" is not in any of the dictionaries we've got, so we're having difficulty getting to the bottom of this puzzle.

One possibility could be the word "mairt", meaning an animal killed at Martinmas to be salted and eaten over the winter, so that "deed as a mairt" might be something or someone who is as useless as a dead animal.

Another is that it could mean as "dead as a mark on a sheet of paper".



Here is the text of the prize-winning story Peter Arnold wrote and performed recently at the National Dialect Day event in Exeter, Devon. (See the article on page 2 of this Newsletter)

## Waad Yuh Beleev It?

Noo then, lads an lasses! As some on yuh knaas, Aah's frae Hexham way up in Northumberland. Di yuh knaa Hexham? If'n yuh dee, yuh'll knaa yuh canna gan varry far afore yuh hev ti gan up a hill or doon a hill. It's that kind ov a plyec. Yuh'll mind on as weel that wuh had a lot o snaa last winter. Moontins o thi stuff. Whey, this tyel's aboot whaat happened tiv is i thi snaa.

One neet last January, wor lass went ti see one ov hor freends whe lives in a hoos at thi top o thi hill abeun wor hoos. It wasn't snaain whan she left, like, but it started ti snaa syun eftor, an afore lang it waas canny deep. Eftor haff an oor, she rings is up an she sez "Can yuh come'n get is pet, coz the snaa's geet deep up heor, an Aah divvent think Aah can waalk back hyem doon thi hill?"

Me bein a hero like, Aah sez ti hor "Whey aye hinny, nee bother! Aah'll be theor as syun as Aah can, coz Aah's just finishin off a bit stotty cyek an a mug o tea". So, eftor aboot thorty minits, coz yuh canna rush chowin a stotty, can yuh? Aah gets thi car oot, an sets off up thi hill.

Whey, Aah haddent gon varry far whan thi snaa got wors an wors. It waas blawin aall ower thi plyec, me wipers waas deein, an Aah thowt ti mesel "Bye, Aah's ganna be lucky ti git ti thi top like wiv aal yon snaa." Sure enyuff, thi car started ti slaa doon. Theor waas nowt for it. Aah tordn thi winda doon, lowped oot thi car while it waas still gannin, reached intiv it, got a hadda thi steerin wheel, an started ti push it up thi hill.

Bye, it waas hard wark! Thi wind waas blaain thi snaa ivorywheor, inti me fyec an doon me sark. Me fingers waas frozen, an Aah thowt Aah wuddent mek it ti thi top. It waas cumin on fer neet an aal, an ootbye theor's nee street leets ti show yuh thi way ti gan. Bye, Aah waas puffin an pantin like a reet tanky.

Aal ov a sudden, Aah heerd someone shoot "Div yuh want a bit hand like?" Aah keeked aal around, but Aah cuddent see nee-one, cept Aah cud just mek oot a black gallowa powkin its heed ower a dyke top, so Aah just started pushin me car agyen. Then theor it waas agyen "Div yuh want a bit hand, like?" Aah still cudna see whe it waas, but Aah shooted back "Aye! Just giz a push ti thi top o thi hill, but. Aah cn manage aal reet frae theor."

Whey, yuh cud a dunchd is doon wiv a stotty like, coz thi gallowa lowped ower thi dyke, got ahint me car, an started ti push it up thi hill wiv its heed agin thi back winda. Aah waas that chuffed for thi bit help, Aah just steered thi car, an Aah pushed a bit an aal like. Weel, yuh hev ti show willin, divvent yuh?

Eftor aboot ten minutes, wuh got ti thi top, an Aah cud see thi hoos wor lass had gon ti, so Aah giv ower pushin ti tyek me pipe a bit afore Aah got back i thi car.

Noo, me mam had erlwis telt is ti say "Ta" ti them whaat helps yuh, so Aah tordn ti thi gallowa ti thank it, but bugger me, it had fliggied! Aah looked aal ower for it, but it waas nee-wheor ti be seen. Whaat gov is a reet gliff but, theor wor nee hoss tracks i thi snaa ahint thi car nowther!

Onyroad, Aah got back i thi car, an drove ti thi hoos, an eftor a few minutes, me an wor lass drove back hyem doon thi hill.

As wuh passed thi dyke wheor thi gallowa had been, Aah gov a toot on thi horn, like, ti say thank yuh ti thi bogle, coz Aah reckon that's whaat it waas, coz yous aall knaa that hosses canna taak, divvent yuh?

"What did yuh dee that for?" wor lass sayd, so Aah started tellin hor aall aboot me adventures i thi snaa like. Aah cud tell frae thi look on hor fyec that she didn't beleev is, an aal she waad say waas "An Aah suppose yor ganna tell is that's wheor thi word hoss-pooer comes frae, are yuh?"



# Whaat's On

*[NB : The dates prefaced with question marks are not yet finalised. The event will definitely be taking place at this time of the year, but it may be moved forward or back depending on circumstances. We will publish the finalised dates as soon as we have them.]*

**Saturday 14 December : YULE MEET,** Morpeth Chantry Museum, starting at 2pm. See the article on the front page of this Newsletter for more details. Please bring something for the shared meal.

**??? February/March 2014 :  
GATHERING FUND-RAISING CONCERT,** Morpeth Town Hall Ballroom, starting at 7.30pm.

**Friday 25 to Sunday 27 April 2014:  
MORPETH NORTHUMBRIAN GATHERING,** the annual event celebrating everything Northumbrian - concerts, events, stalls, competitions, merchandise. The Northumbrian Language Society hosts and runs the dialect competitions on the Saturday afternoon in St Robert's Church Hall, starting at 1.30pm. There are three competitions judged on the day: Fine Northumbrian Speech, Storytelling, and the Hoafy Trophy. **NB: The closing date for the pre-judged written competitions is the 1st of March.**

**??? Saturday 3 May 2014:  
AGM & REED NEET.** The AGM begins at 7pm, followed by the Reed Neet at 8pm. The Reed Neet is our tribute to Fred Reed, one of the founders of the Northumbrian Language Society, and our acclaimed Poet Laureate. After the piping in of The Stotty, we have our traditional Pie & Peas Supper. Guests then celebrate the event in toasts to the Bard and to the Stotty, followed by contributions from the audience.

**??? Saturday 11 October 2014:  
ROLAND BIBBY MEMORIAL LECTURE,** held in Morpeth Town Hall Ballroom, starting at 2pm. This is our annual lecture by an expert in one of the many branches of our language and dialect.

**??? Saturday 18 October 2014:  
NATIONAL DIALECT DAY 2014,** held this year in Cumbria, probably at Ambleside.

**??? Saturday 13 December 2014:**

**YULE MEET,** held in Morpeth's Chantry Museum, starting at 2pm. This is our annual pre-Christmas celebration, with audience participation, a shared meal, and our popular dialect game "Whe's Tellin Hoafies?"



**SEDAYNE WRITES :** "Thinking about South-East Northumbrian Hallowe'ens of yore ... We had this word SNAMMY for turnip. Have you heard of that? Snammy Lanterns, which became NEEP under the influence of Oor Wullie ... "

Anyone care to comment?

**HEXHAM CALLING ...** We've had a request from a student doing some work on the Northumbrian dialect as it is spoken in the Hexham area. Can anyone help with typical Hexham words or phrases? The differences between the dialect in Hexham and that of other parts of the north-east would also be of interest. Please contact the Gaffer, Peter Arnold, if you can help this student in any way.



Finally – No, this is not a photograph of anyone you know, and it's got nothing to do with Peter Arnold's prize-winning performance in Exeter last month either!

But, do you remember in a previous newsletter we asked you for some typical Northumbrian symbols? Well, here's something to think about. The picture is of one of the wild cattle at Chillingham. They're sturdy, determined, and they've survived for hundreds of years. Could this also be a symbol for our dialect, which is a survivor, and just as sturdy and determined? What do you think?