







## MEG BURDON

Meg will be remembered with deep affection by many people. During her final illness, the nursing staff commented on the number of visitors she had, saying that she must have been 'a good friend' and 'a bit of a character.' She was both of these. The long-lasting friendships she enjoyed reflect not only her wide range of interests but also her kindness, generosity of spirit, loyalty and incorrigible humour. No doubt each of her friends will have their own favourite recollection of a situation made memorable by her ability to tell a funny tale. No doubt there are others too, who will remember her, but who did not know her so well having met her briefly and by chance. She was unfailingly interested in people and the narratives of their lives.

I first met Meg when she was in charge of the Reference and Requests Department at the Headquarters of Northumberland County Library in Morpeth. A History graduate of King's College, Newcastle (then part of Durham University), her continuing love of History was evident in the Local History Special Collection

which she built up. It was an impressive collection, expanded and updated regularly over the years. Her intelligence and extensive knowledge enabled her to help enquirers with the most complex of queries. With each enquiry she persisted until she found the answer, giving each researcher personal attention in her unique way. On Wednesdays, some residents from the nearby hospital appeared in the Reference Department to find a cosy corner and nod off. We tiptoed around them on Meg's insistence that we should not wake them but allow them a few moments of peace. I remember her laughter when she told me that one man who brought her flowers regularly was spotted collecting them from the graveyard!

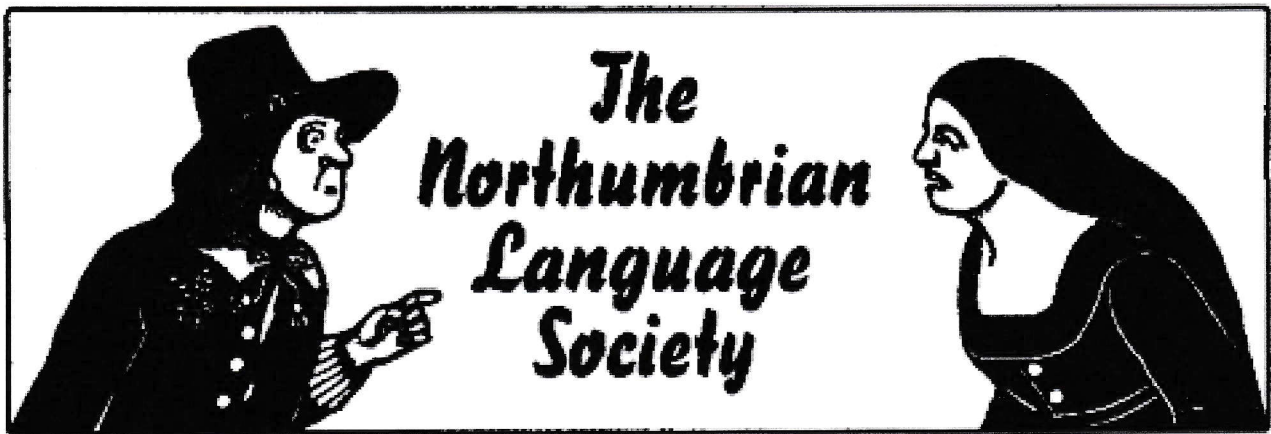
Retirement brought Meg the opportunity to engage further in voluntary work and to support causes close to her heart. The Northumbrian Language Society was one of these causes and benefited from her store of memories relating to the language, as well as from her ability to keep her colleagues entertained. She was Assistant Secretary for a number of years

She also supported the provision of lunches at St. John's Church in Newcastle by clearing and washing up and worked as a volunteer in the Border Library at Hexham Old Gaol. Her interest in the RNLI grew from her experiences in Newbiggin where she witnessed fierce storms, watched the boat being launched and was moved by bravery of the crew. She did not seek the limelight in anything that she did.

When the floods in Morpeth forced her to move into temporary accommodation, she faced the situation with courage, determined to retain her independence as much as possible. Her quiet faith remained unshaken even when life seemed impossible. It was her deeply held Christian beliefs that informed her life throughout but she made no show of them. They were evident in what she did and in her respect and compassion for others. I know that I am not alone in my thankfulness that I knew Meg Burdon.

Eliza Harthope





Keepin ahad o wor tung

# **The 2014 Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture**

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October at 2 pm**

**The Northumbrian Language Society  
presents**

**Dr Warren Maguire**  
(The University of Edinburgh)

**"The Dialect of the Holy Island of  
Lindisfarne"**

**Corn Exchange, Morpeth Town Hall,  
Market Place, Morpeth, NE61 1LZ**

**Free admission. Full disabled access.  
Doors open and free drinks 1.30 pm**

Further details: Hon. Sec. NLS: Mrs Kim Bibby-Wilson, Westgate House, Dogger  
Bank, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1RE. Tel. 01670 513308

Website: [www.northumbriana.org.uk](http://www.northumbriana.org.uk)

# Whaat's On in 2014

**Saturday 11 October : ROLAND BIBBY MEMORIAL LECTURE**, held in Morpeth Town Hall Ballroom, starting at 2pm. See the full details of this year's Lecture on the poster included in this Newsletter

**Saturday 18 October : NATIONAL DIALECT DAY 2014**, held this year in Cumbria, at Rydal Hall in Ambleside. More details can be found on another page of this Newsletter.

**Saturday 6 December : 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?"

**Friday 13 March : GATHERING FUNDRAISING CONCERT**, Morpeth Town Hall Ballroom at 7.30pm

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

47th Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering 2014

## DIALECT COMPETITION RESULTS

### GROUP B : WRITING & COMPOSING

**B3a Novice Northumbrian Verse:** 1, "A Silly Bit Vorse" Peter Arnold (Hexham); 2, "Will Anyone Save Us?" Nick Short Jnr (Telford, Shropshire).

**B3b Open Northumbrian Verse:** 1, "Geordie and Santa" Brian Dawson (Blyth); 2, "Me Trusty Steed" George Carrick (Cramlington); 3, "Hruffty Tuffty Frae Newbhruffty" & "The Newbhruffty Travellhor" Nick Short (Hexham); HC, "Wor Helen" Herbert Savory (Gateshead).

**B4a Junior Northumbrian Verse (Middle School):** 1, "The Sheep Stealer" Fiona Hesler & Kate Waklett; 2, "The Girl in the Photo" F Gesler & K Waklett; 3, "Rothbury" Jacob & Frazer Cansfield (all of Rothbury).

**B4b Senior Northumbrian Verse (High School):** 1, "Nowt but Everything" Olivia Sheed; 2, "A Year on the Farm" Anna Comber; 3= "Ow the Meadows" Kirsty Famelton & "Emily Wilding Davison" Rachael Kennedy (all of Rothbury).

**B5 Northumbrian Prose:** 1, "The Lambton Worm Saga" Peter Arnold; 2, "Mr Bits of Feet" Nick Short; 3, "Time" Herbert Savory.

### GROUP C : PERFORMING

**C18 Fine Northumbrian Speech:** 1, Raymond Reed (Stakeford); 2, Carl Stianson (Hadston); 3, Nick Short (Hexham).

**C22 Story-Telling:** 1, Chris Jones; 2, Nick Short; 3, Raymond Reed.

**C26 Hoafy Trophy:** 1, Anna Fawcett (Bedlington); 2, Peter Arnold (Hexham), 3, Nick Short.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

## Nowt But Everything

by Olivia Sheed

Placed 1st in the B4b Senior Northumbrian Verse (High School 14-18) category.

*Nowt but the taal pine trees  
Nowth but the hum of Bees  
Nowt but the bords that sing  
Nowt but everything*

*Nowt but the sharp Badger's claws  
Nowt but the sly Fox's paws  
Nowt but the Hawk's great wing  
Nowt but everything*

*Nowt but the Hedgehog's quills  
Nowt but the Mice restin in flour mills  
Nowt but the bad Wasp's sting  
Nowt but everything*

*Nowt but the Pheasant's tail  
Nowt but the feathers of a Quail  
Nowt but the Bull's always vexed and foamin  
Nowt but everything*

*Nowt but the Sparrow's caal  
Nowt but the March Hare standin tall  
Nowt but the Stag acting king  
Nowt but everything  
Aye, nowt but everything*

This poem by Fiona and Kate was placed 1st  
in the B4a Junior Northumbrian Verse (Middle School 8-13) category



**The Sheep Stealer**  
**By Fiona Hesler & Kate Walklett**

I'm a bad, bad lad  
Yes, yes I'm a bad lad, yes.  
No, I won't steal a coo,  
No, I won't steal a coo.

I think I'll steal a ewe,  
I think I'll steal a pig or two.  
I hope tha's nee-one about,  
It'll be the crime of the year.

I'll have the richest meat for free,  
Maybe I'll steal a gimmer.  
A chicken or two,  
It'll be the crime of the year.

I'm a sheep stealer,  
And a canny one too.  
I'll never be caught,  
It'll be the crime of the year.

Robert Trotter was convicted of Sheep Rustling  
in Newcastle Upon Tyne in the early 1900's



# Executive Committee Report to the 2014 Annual General Meeting

**Introduction** - the Executive Committee has met on several occasions to deal with the normal business of the Society. We are a member of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), which means we get advice and support in our role as a charity. The finances are in a sound state, and details will be in the Treasurer's report.

**Annual Calendar** - our main activities in the last twelve months have been the language competitions at the Morpeth Gathering, the Reed Neet, the Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture, National Dialect Day, and the Yule Meet. In addition, our President, Katrina Porteous has appeared several times on national radio during the year; and we also recorded a piece for inclusion in a SkyTV programme about the North, but we don't know whether it has been broadcast.

**National Dialect Day** - This was held in Devon in October 2013. We were well represented by nine members, thanks to the support given by a member who made a very generous donation to enable us to be there.

Johnny Handle and Kim Bibby-Wilson were the only non-Devon performers asked to contribute to the Friday evening concert, and they were very well received by the capacity audience.

Johnny Handle, Peter Arnold and Stuart Lawson all competed in the dialect competition for pieces they had written themselves; and Johnny competed in the competition for pieces written by any author. Peter won the first competition, and Johnny was pipped at the post in the second competition by our friend Sid Calderbank from Lancashire. Peter's success got a lot of good publicity for the Society in the papers, on the radio and on television.

There were seven or eight dialect societies represented at the event, and everyone seemed to have a great time meeting old friends, making new ones, and swapping stories, poems and songs.

This year's National Dialect Day will be closer to home at Ambleside in Cumbria, and we are hoping for another good turnout of members and supporters on the 18th October which will be the main competition day at the event.

**Dictionary** - Work is progressing on the dictionary. A preliminary review session was held in January, and a fuller discussion is planned for June. At that meeting we are hoping to agree the final format for the dictionary, so that the detailed work on the words to be included can begin.

**Morpeth Gathering** - The Society has been supporting the Gathering financially for the last three years, because a lot of the funding previously provided by charities and local authorities is no longer available, largely due to the difficult national economic situation in the country.

Our main contribution is in the dialect competitions, which we organise and host, but other members are involved in a number of other aspects of the weekend of events.

Each year, however, becomes just that little bit more difficult, and our Secretary, Kim, who is also Chair of the Gathering Committee, spends a lot of her time simply trying to find the money to put on the events we all look forward to.

The Gathering is an important part of our cultural inheritance, because it celebrates everything that identifies us as proud Northumbrians – music, singing, dancing, dialect, sports, arts and crafts.

As a Society dedicated to the celebration of our unique dialect, we know how hard it is to keep going in these difficult times. For example, the number of people entering the dialect competitions at the Gathering is now very small. The entries in the written competitions are also in decline.

And yet, when we go to community groups to talk about the dialect, we always get an enthusiastic reception. People tell us how much they enjoy hearing the dialect being spoken. It brings back family memories. It makes people happy.

But the few of us who get involved can't do it all on our own. We need help too, and we hope that next year we are able to report an increase in our membership, and in the number of entries in the Gathering competitions. Haway, giz a hand like!

**Sad News** - It is with great sadness that we report the death in March of Meg Burdon. She became quite poorly in February and was taken to the palliative care centre at Wansbeck Hospital where she died soon after. Her funeral was very well attended, and we will be publishing an appreciation of her life in the next edition of the Members' Newsletter.

**Thanks** - the Northumbrian Language Society is a voluntary organisation. We have no premises, or machinery, and we do not employ any staff. Everything is done by volunteers, and we would like to thank all the Executive members for their support and work over the last year. Thanks are also due to the many members of the Society who have supported our activities, at home and abroad.

# Society News

At this year's AGM in May, the following Officers and Members of the Executive Committee were elected :-

## 1. Officers

President - Katrina Porteous FNLS  
Vice-President - Janet Brown  
Chairman - Peter Arnold  
Vice-Chairman - Liz Elliott  
Secretary - Kim Bibby-Wilson FNLS  
Minute Secretary - Liz Elliott

Treasurer - John Davidson  
Bibliographer - George Wallace  
Newsletter - Peter Arnold  
Audio-Visual - Ian Elliott  
Press&Publicity - vacant  
Hon Auditor - Mr T Horne

## 2. Executive Committee Members

Ron Forster  
Alec Swailes

Avril Common  
Hazel Dickson

There are vacancies for one executive member and the Press/Publicity Officer.



## National Dialect Day, Saturday 18 October 2014

Rydal Hall, Rydal, Ambleside, Cumbria, LA22 9LX; Telephone: 01539 432050

**Friday, October 17, 2014** – Visitors can arrive at Rydal Hall from 4pm. Supper will be from 6pm – £18 for three-courses.

An evening of entertainment arranged by the Lakeland delegation is planned for the Bulley Barn at Rydal Hall from 8pm. Tickets cost £6. For tickets, contact 01539 560475/ 01539 432449/ 01931 716386; or contact us on [ldslouise@btinternet.com](mailto:ldslouise@btinternet.com) and we'll make sure you're updated as things are confirmed.

**Saturday, October 18, 2014 – DIALECT COMPETITIONS** – Breakfast for Rydal hall residents from 8am. Following a short introduction at 10am from the different societies attending National Dialect Day, the competitions will begin at 10.30am. Entry is free, but donations are requested for Rydal Church. Competitors, however, must register to take part, either by phoning on 016973 71710, or by emailing [lakespeak.jean@gmail.com](mailto:lakespeak.jean@gmail.com)

10.30–12.30: First is the **Sam Laycock Trophy** for performances in the host dialect.

Lunch 12.30–2pm. 2-courses, £12.50 if required.

2pm-5pm Afternoon competitions. The **Bill O' Bowes Cup** for writing in any English dialect written by the performer, followed by the **Eric Topping Trophy** for performing any English dialect piece.

Supper 6pm – £18 for three courses – then free time for delegates until 8pm.

From 8pm: Merry Neet fun with the **Far Weltered Trophy** for the most entertaining performance on Saturday evening, to be judged on audience reaction. Email [lakespeak.jean@gmail.com](mailto:lakespeak.jean@gmail.com) if you want to take part.

**Sunday, October 19 – AFOOR YE GAA,**

Breakfast from 8am. Followed at 9.30am by a church service at Rydal Church; or, at 10am, a 3–4 mile leisurely guided walk with dialect leaders.

12.30pm lunch (2 courses, £12.50 if required)

**To book meals during the weekend, please phone 01539 560475. To find out more about National Dialect Day, either phone 01697 371710, or email [ldslouise@btinternet.com](mailto:ldslouise@btinternet.com) To register for the competitions, either phone 01697 371710, or email [lakespeak.jean@gmail.com](mailto:lakespeak.jean@gmail.com)**