

Whaat's On

Thursday 8th October National Poetry Day

This is a UK-wide national celebration of everything to do with poetry, not just dialect poetry. There will be events all over the country, and we are hoping to join in the fun! Why not read a poem at any meetings or gatherings you go to on the day? Or have a poetry coffee morning, or an afternoon tea party where everyone reads a poem? Go on, give it a try! Please let us know if you are able to organise an event.

Friday-Sunday 16-18 October National Dialect Weekend -

This event is being held in Wednesbury in the West Midlands (near Wolverhampton). We will be sending a team of competitors and supporters to see if we can carry on winning some of the trophies! Please let us know if you are going. You can find all of the details on the website at www.dialectday.co.uk/2015

Saturday 24th October Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture

The title of this year's lecture is **"A Gift from Northumbria: the journey of Scots back to the Classroom"** and the speaker will be Jamie Fairbairn from Banff Academy.

The event is in Morpeth Town Hall, in the Corn Exchange on the ground floor, starting at 2pm, doors open at 1.30pm. There will be refreshments available, as well as our own merchandise on sale. This is a free event, but donations to help defray costs are welcome.

Thursday 3rd December Morpeth Poetry Recital 2015

This is a new event to raise funds for children with cancer. It is a poetry competition, the poems can be in dialect, and the theme is "Northumberland". The poems to be read out at the Recital will be decided by a panel of judges. The closing date for entries is Sunday 8th November. For full details, contact Barbara Ross by email at barbarajoyceross@gmail.com

Saturday 5th December Yule Meet

This is our annual celebration of the Festive Season, held upstairs in the Morpeth Chantry Museum. The event is free, and starts at 2pm. There will be recitations, stories, poems and songs, followed by a shared meal (please bring some food!), a raffle, NLS merchandise on sale, our popular dialect word game "Whe's Tellin Hoafies?" and finally, the singing of our own Yuletide Carol.

Friday-Sunday 1st-3rd April 2016 Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering

This is THE most important event in the annual dialect calendar, an opportunity to celebrate and enjoy everything to do with our regional culture and heritage! There are lots and lots of events to watch and take part in, many of which are free. More details will be available soon.

Saturday 30th April 2016 AGM & Reed Neet

The Reed Neet is one of the highlights of our year, when we celebrate the birthday of our Poet Laureate, Fred Reed, in an evening of speakers, a pie and peas supper, and entertainment from those present. It is preceded by our AGM.

NLS News

Robson Green's Tales of Northumberland

ITV is currently filming a new series of programmes featuring actor and proud Northumbrian, Robson Green. Each programme focuses on places, people and activities that are in some way characteristic of our county.

One of the programmes will feature the Northumbrian plaid, and Robson will be wearing it and discussing its place in our history and culture with a well-known member of the Northumbrian Language Society.

We don't know when the programmes will be broadcast, and we don't know which episode in the series will feature the plaid. All we do know at the moment is that all eight programmes will be broadcast together, either just before or just after Christmas.

If anyone finds out when the new series is going out, please let us know using the contact details at the bottom of this page.

Talks to Community Groups

Several members of the NLS give talks about the Northumbrian language to a wide variety of community groups.

The WI, the University of the Third Age (U3A), local History Societies, Beacon Clubs and Rotary groups are some of the people who have asked us to go and talk to them about our unique dialect and language.

All of our speakers are volunteers, and in most cases are reimbursed their travel and other expenses by the groups who invite us to speak to them. Those of us who do this work find it a good way of sharing our enjoyment of our dialect, and the audiences enjoy them.

As always, we could do with expanding the pool of people who are willing to go and talk to these community groups. If this is something you think you might like to do, then please get in touch with Wor Gaffer, Peter Arnold, who will be happy to talk you through what's involved.

Obituaries

It is with great sadness that we report the deaths of two of our oldest and most determined members, Maisie Polworth and Sybil Durno.

Maisie died earlier in the year; Sybil in July. Both women had been members for many years, and were well-known for their support of our events.

Maisie was a regular and successful entrant in our dialect competitions at the Gathering for many years, and her daughter read out some of her more humorous entries at the Reed Neet at the end of April.

Sybil was not a competitor, but she always supported as many of our activities as possible. She refused to let increasing deafness, blindness or physical frailty get in the way of attending our events.

We remember their support with gratitude, and we will miss both of them.

Contacts

If you want to get in touch with us about any of the items in this Newsletter, or about a dialect query, or to volunteer to help, the best contacts are:-

Peter Arnold, 33 Hackwood Glade, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 1AL; phone: 01434 608230; email: pja13@phonecoop.coop

Kim Bibby-Wilson, Westgate House, Dogger Bank, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1RE; phone: 01670 513308; email: kim@northumbriana.org.uk

DIALECT COMPETITION RESULTS

GROUP B : WRITING & COMPOSING

B3a Novice Northumbrian Verse: 1, "The Dancin' Haa" Don Clegg (Yarrow).

B3b Open Northumbrian Verse: 1, "Thi Sang o' thi Cullercoats Toorist Offis" Peter Arnold (Hexham); 2, "Kielder Osprey" Nick Short (Hexham); 3, "Geordie's Pigeon" Brian Dawson (Blyth).

B4 Junior Northumbrian Verse: 1, "A Waak doon the Street" Bertie Marr; 2, "Knitting" Ava Davidson; 3, "Climbing" Erin Brown (all of Thropton First School); Comm. "Crawley Hoose" Gabriella Stirling, "Bords You've Nevor Hord" & Oscar Chisholm (both of Whittingham First School); Comm. "Me Sore Arm" Olivia Rose & "It's Aal about the Money" Chloe Scott (both of Thropton).

B5 Northumbrian Prose: 1, "Bohrunsyde Hyke" Nick Short (Hexham); 2, "It's a Derg's Life" Peter Arnold (Hexham); 3, "Bein Alone" Herbert Savory (Gateshead).

B8 Short Story: 1, "When Feathers Fly" Bill Kendal; 2, "The Trombone Corner" Hilary Elder (Bedlington); 3, "Bank Holiday Monday Dudley 1923" Maisie Polwarth (Morpeth); HC, "Trip to the Source of the North Tyne" Nick Short; Comm., "Was it Fun, Grandad?" Bill Kendal & "The Elves and the Shoemaker" Herbert Savory.

B15 Junior Northumbrian Prose: 1, "My Life" Noah Hal(Whittingham); 2, "School" Finlay Stanislavski (Whittingham).

GROUP C : PERFORMING

C22: Storytelling: No entry.

C18 Northumbrian Speech: 1, Nick Short; 2, Bob Bolam; 3, James Tait (Rothbury).

C26 Hoafy Trophy: 1, Peter Arnold (Hexham); 2, Stuart Lawson (Choppington).

At this year's Annual General Meeting, the following members were elected :-

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 Hon Mem

Newsletter Editor - Peter Arnold

Honorary Auditor - Mr T Horne

Press/Publicity - vacant

Audio-visual - Ian Elliott

Executive Committee - Avril Common, Hazel Dickson FNLS, Ron Forster, Alex Swailes FNLS, James Tait

Following discussion at the AGM, it was agreed that we would seek permission from the Charity Commission to alter the number of Vice-Presidents we could have. At the moment, our Constitution only allows us to appoint one person to the role.

The Charity Commission has approved the change, so we can now have as many Vice-Presidents as we think we need.

The newly-elected Executive Committee (Officers and ordinary members as set out above) will be considering what changes we want to make to allow our current Secretary, Kim Bibby-Wilson, to stand down from the post to enable her to take on a new role in the Society.

Any changes we make will need to be approved at the next AGM, but the new flexibility we now have will help us to try out new ways of working before then.

Northumbrian Language Society

Annual General Meeting, 25th April 2015 - Executive Committee Report

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, some of our members have given talks about the dialect to local community groups, and these have been much appreciated. Unfortunately, very few of these events have led to an increase in membership, even though membership forms have been left. It appears to be a sign of the times.

National Dialect Day - This was held in the Lake District in October 2014. Again, we were well represented by members, either as competitors or supporters. Some were able to stay for the whole weekend, and others for the main event on the Saturday.

Kim Bibby-Wilson, Johnny Handle, Bob Bolam, Nick Short and Peter Arnold were our competitors and performers in a number of different events. Johnny Handle won the Bill O Bowes Cup for performing a piece he had written himself; and his success means that the Northumbrian Language Society has come out top of the nation for writing and performing in our marvellous regional dialect for three years in a row! What a great achievement! Johnny, Bob and Kim also won the "Best Overall Performance" trophy in the evening "Hentertainment" spot. Johnny's success got a lot of good publicity for the Society, both regionally and nationally.

This year's National Dialect Day will be in Wednesbury in the West Midlands, and we are hoping for another good turnout of members and supporters on the 17th October, which we think will be the main competition day at the event.

Dictionary - Work is progressing on the dictionary, albeit rather slowly, but we have set ourselves the target of having it finished and published in 2016. We're keeping everything crossed!

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. This has almost become a full-time role for Kim, and the pressures on her are immense, so much so, that she has decided, reluctantly, that now is the time when she needs to give up her role of Secretary of the NLS and concentrate on ensuring the Gathering's survival. We will have a chance to debate the consequences more fully later on in this meeting tonight.

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 linked to the Gathering, we know how hard it is to keep going in these difficult times. For example, the number of people entering the dialect competitions is now very small, and 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 members and supporters will volunteer to do what they can to make sure that the Language Society survives as well.

Thanks - the Northumbrian Language Society is a voluntary organisation. We have no premises, and we don't 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, both at home and abroad.

**Here is Peter Arnold's winning entry from this year's
Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering Hoafy Trophy competition :-**

Buried Treasure

Noo then! Yous'll mind on that Aah went ti Lunnun last yeor ti see thi kween an tell Horsel an a few freends aboot me adventures i thi snaa. Whan Aah got back hyem, Aah waas that full o mesel wor lass tellt is ti gan inti thi gardin an dee sum diggin ti bring mesel back doon tiv orth. Waad yuh beleev it? Me, a VIP, howkin i thi clarts?

Onyroad, theor Aah waas, howkin a bit space ti plant wor beans an onions an stuff. Bye! It waas hard work! Theor waas styens, an aall sorts o ket!

An then, Aah howks up this geet pile o clarts an metal. Aah banged it aboot a bit ti git thi maist on it off, like, an then Aah saa coins in amang aall thi clarts, so Aah shooted fer wor lass ti cum an giv is a bit hand.

"Hey up!" shu says, shaain is one. "These isn't yor modern coins, yuh knaa. This isna thi Kween's heed, cos shu's not got a beord, has shu?"

"Aye, yor reet theor" Aah says, but Aah thowt Aah'd seen thi fyec on thi coin afore, so Aah slipped one iti me breeks, an Aah kept keekin at it ti see if'n Aah cud put a nyem ti thi fyec.

Then Aah seen summat stickin oot a thi grund wheor thi coins had been. "Whaat's yon?" Aah says.

"It looks like a byen" shu says.

"Aah wunda whe's it is?" Aah says. "Is't human or animal, or whaat?"

"Aah divvent knaa" shu says. "Yuh'll hatta phone yon clivvor folks at Vindolanda. They'll knaa whaat ti dee". So that's whaat wuh did.

Whey, the waas that excited bi me findins, the dug aall ower thi gardin an the fund mair coins, an byens, an bits a claes, an gulleys an stuff. The waas diggin fer weeks, but it waas nee bother at aall, cos it ment Aah didn't hatta dee it. Then the led it aall off ti Vindolanda ti finnd oot mair aboot it.

Aah thowt nee mair aboot it fer a while, cos wuh had plants ti put i thi grund, an weedin ti dee. Yous knaas whaat it's like whan yuh've got a gardin, divvent yuh? But Aah kept keekin at that coin Aah'd fund, tryin ti jaloos whe's fyec it waas.

An then, one mornin as Aah waas shavin, it hit is. Thi fyec on thi coin waas the syem as thi one i thi mirror! "Bugger me!" Aah says, an wor lass axed is whaat waas wrang, like. So Aah tellt hor.

"It's tekkin yuh a lang time ti jaloos it" shu says, deed calm like.

Aah gov hor a leuk, an axed hor whaat shu ment.

"Whey" shu says. "Aah may as weel tell yun noo that yor haaff way theor. Yuh'll mind on that Aah'd cut yor hair thi day wuh fund thi coins and thi byens. Sum a thi lowsens must hev fallen on thi byens, cos whan the got ivvorything back ti Vindolanda, the cuddent jaloos wheor thi hairs had cum frae, so the rang is up. Ye waas oot deliverin leaflets fer thi election at thi time, so the axed is fer a sample a yor hair, an Aah sent them sum frae yor beord whaat Aah'd trimmed that mornin, an whan the tested it, the fund it waas varry like thi DNA frae thi byens."

"Gerraway!" Aah says. "How di yuh knaa that?"

"Aah got a letter frae them thi day," shu says, "tellin is aal aboot it. The sayd thi byens waas frae thi last king a Northumbria, an the rekkon yor related."

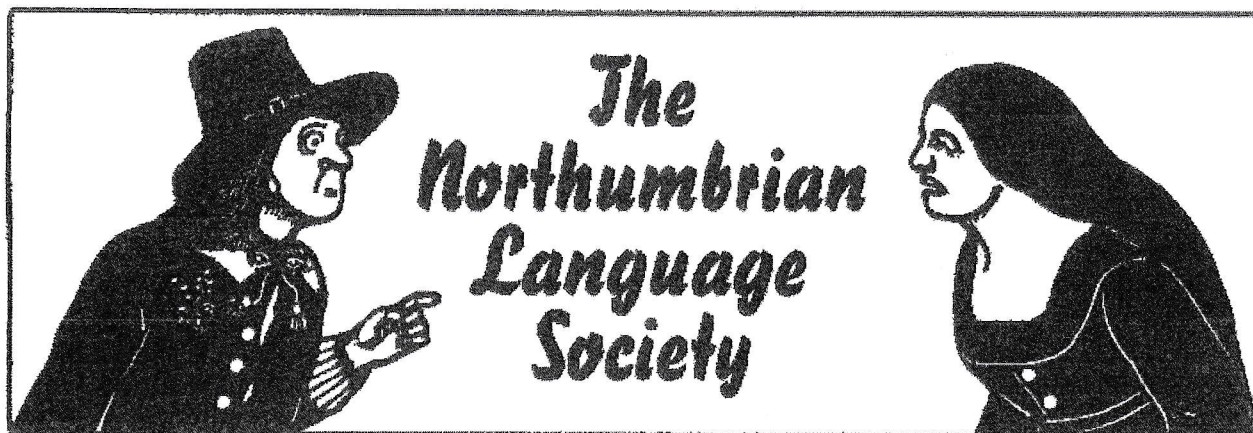
"Gerraway!" Aah says agyen. "Whaat for did yuh say nowt tiv is?"

Shu sayd shu haddent tellt is cos whan Aah had went ti see thi Kween last yeor, Aah'd been that full a mesel efforwards that shu jist knaad Aah'd be a reet pain i thi arse if'n Aah'd knaan Aah waas ganna be thi next king a Northumbria!

Yuh cud a dunshed is doon wiv a stotty.

Waad yuh beleev it?

Me! Thi next king a Northumbria!



Keepin ahad o wor tung

The 2015 Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture

Saturday 24th October at 2 pm

The Northumbrian Language Society presents

Jamie Fairbairn

(Banff Academy) ON

**A Gift from Northumbria:
the Journey of Scots
back to the Classroom**

**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: Mrs Kim Bibby-Wilson, Westgate House, Dogger Bank, Morpeth,
Northumberland, NE61 1RE. Tel. 01670 513308

Website: www.northumbriana.org.uk