



Members' Newsletter

Number 115
Winter 2020

"Keepin Ahad O Wor Tung"

Waad Yuh Hev Thowt It?

Whaat a yeor 2020 hes been!

Nivvor afore, an hopefully nivvor agyen, hev wuh haad ti cancel si monny o wor happnins.

Yon virus hes changed thi way wuh dee things, an theor's nee way things is ganna be the syem ivvormair.

Forst off, though, wuh mun think about thi folks whe's lost someone ti thi virus, an ti them whaat's had it an reecuverd. It's a dreedful thing, an it's been a dreedful yeor fer aall o wuh, ivvorywheor.

Wuh divvent knaa whan, if ivvor, us'll be yebbel to meet up agyen at one o wor happnins, but wuh hope ti dee si syun. Us'll keep yuh aall up ti date wi whaativvor wuh can dee.

Until then, keep safe an healthy, an whaativvor yuh dee, keep taakin proppa, an dee yor bit ti keep wor tung gannin!

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**See below for details
of our new website ...**

We have a new website!!

NLS member Richard Wilson, together with members of the NLS Committee, have been working on a new website over the past few months.

It has now gone live, and you can find it at :-

NorthumbrianLanguageSociety.co.uk

We regret that, because of Covid-19,
The 2020 Yule Meet

our early Christmas Get-Together, will not be taking place. Instead, why not spread a little happiness, and share our local culture, by sending friends and family our

dialect Christmas cards, t-shirts, books and CDs,
or join the Society for the latest newsletter featuring tales, poems and the Northumbrian word-bluffing game, **Whe's Tellin Hoafies?**

(See website for all details)

The above items are sold at Morpeth Chantry TIC (when it's open), or you can get them from John Davidson, our merchandise seller. His details are on the front page of this Newsletter.



Hazel's Knock-Out Punch - usually served at the annual Yule Meet, so why not make it to have while you are tackling the Hoafies on page 7?

Alcoholic

2 bottles of red wine
1 bottle of white wine
A quarter of a bottle of brandy

Non-Alcoholic

1 bottle of bitter lemon
1 carton of red mixed juices
1 two-litre bottle of lemonade
1 carton of unsweetened pineapple juice
1 carton of apple juice

For both

1 lemon, sliced
1 orange, sliced

Important Information

If you have an almost complete set of the "Northumbriana" magazine, but not the 50th and final edition from Autumn-Winter 1996, previously out of print, it has been reprinted in a very limited run. Anyone who in recent years has bought a complete set minus no. 50 can contact Kim Bibby-Wilson directly, (contact details on the front page), to order the missing item for merely the cost of post and packing (plus any donation to the Morpeth Gathering that they may feel they can manage).

What Do You Think ?

NLS member Peter Weightman has sent us this short piece written by him to stimulate discussion and debate about language and dialect. What do you think? Please think about what Peter has written, and we'd love to hear from you with your own response.

An item in a recent Newsletter concerning the origin of the Northumbrian "R" or "burr", prompts thoughts of how we search for the source of those elements of local character that make our area distinctive. Some of our traits or practices may be a lingering shadow of those people who inhabited our region further back than many may have thought, perhaps before the Anglo-Saxon era.

For the last half century enlightened historians have been distancing themselves from the popular foundation myth of the English as invaders displacing "Celts". These academics saw too many continuities from the Roman era. In 2015 the first extensive DNA analysis of the UK, by Oxford University working with the Wellcome Trust (Leslie et al, 2015, in Nature), showed the ancestry of the north east's indigenous population is overwhelmingly of ancient British descent - and more closely related to the people of modern Scotland than of most of England - but nevertheless a distinct local group. (Such an analysis could prompt a most improper assertion of native superiority, such would be indefensible as we are all a product of many ancestors.) Whilst it looks like Northumbria may have been under nominal Anglo-Saxon control, the people were British. If you have internet access take a look at this:

<https://peopleofthebritishisles.web.ox.ac.uk/>

it has a simple map and "family tree" of the UK with the Northumbrians identified.

What is significant about the DNA analysis is that it establishes continuity, a continuity of immense importance to our interpretation of local music, art, behaviour and perhaps our speech.

In respect of our ancient languages we cannot expect science to give us credible evidence, such as it now does for ancestry. Quirks of speech are even less likely to be proved, however folk tales should not always be entirely discounted - though a very heavy dose of scepticism is due. The "English" language of Northumbria was undoubtedly different from that of southerly areas, but just when it arrived - and from where - is open to discussion. A related matter of interest could be the growing view (a minority view) that the earliest forms of the English language preceded the Anglo-Saxon invasions and may have been used in parts of Britain much earlier than assumed, partly suggested because by the eighth century the language had evolved to such a great extent from its Germanic roots. By then, insufficient time had elapsed since the invasions for such a degree of change.

All of this may be a little far away from our sometimes folksy studies of local culture but need not be a threat; this can complement our studies. Can we hope for some free thinking and debate?

Could the "burr" be a survival from the ancient pre-Northumbrians - even the people of Berneich? It won't be possible to establish this; it's perhaps very unlikely, but it's maybe worth a thought.

Other parts of our islands assert ancient origins for their traditions; couldn't we do the same?

Weather Lore bi Nick Short

Reed sky i thi mornin is thi aald herd's warnin,
Ti carry ees coat on ees back.

Reed sky at neet is thi aald herd's deeleet,
For then nee coat will ee lack.

(This was the version that my dad would use - he would always use this version and not the better-known short one.)

✱

If thi Ash is oot afore thi Oak,
Then thi summer will be a choak.

If thi Oak is oot afore thi Ash,
Then thi summer will be a splash.

✱

If thi onion skin is thin, then thi winter snaa will be thin.
If thi onion skin is thick, then thi winter snaa will be thick.

✱

Yuh should not chorn butter when theor is thunner in thi air, cos thi butter willna set.

✱

Mist in thi holla,
Fine weather ti folla.
Mist on thi hill,
Bad weather still.

✱

Broof aroond thi moon (A halo around the moon)

A neor-hand broof means a far-off storm.

A far-off broof means a neor-hand storm.



Sleepin Beauty bi Bob Bolam

Once upon a time there was a king an queen an they wanted for nowt they'd got, cept they had nee bairns t' pull the place doon nor nowt. Anyway one day the queen went for a dook i the Darwent an she come on a taalkin frog sittin on a clemmie.

"What cheer?" says the frog, "What fettle the day?"

"Wey just middlin," says the wife. "Aa've been wishin Aa could hev a family."

"Say nee mair," says the frog. "Ye'll hev a little lass afore the back end."

'N sure eneuf it come true. The king was chuffed t' bits, he ordered a grand christnin tea an hunted oot aall his best boody, just for swank. The twelve local good fairies wor axed t' come an the aall wished the bairn good health, an sayed the hoped she wad be top of the class, when aall of a suddin the wicked fairy borst in. What a gliff ivverybody got. Pointin at the poor bairn she says,

"That bairn'll dee when she's fifteen. She'll prog horsel wiv a spindle 'n she'll be a gonna."

Taalk aboot pandemonium. Thor was folks dunchin intiv each other tryin t' get a bat at the witch but she soon fliggied. The queen was bubblin, thor was hell on.

"Tek yor pipe a bit," says a voice. It was the twelfth fairy, she'd been weshin hor hands oot the back when the bomb had dropped. "Aa say the bairn'll not die, insteed hor 'n ivverybody in the palace'll gan t' sleep for a hundred years."

"Oh, that's not se bad," says the king, "Aa'll stop the papers."

Wey on the princess' fifteenth borthda she was rakin about the palace when she fund an aad door at the top o' some stairs 'n in she bools. As ye've guessed thor was an aad ganny sittin spinnin.

"What's yon contraption?" asked the bairn, not bein backward at comin forwards.

"Oh wey it's a spindle hinny," says the owld crone.

"Wey Aa wadn't mind a shot at it," says the princess. "Shove ower a bit."

"N lad stright away she progged a finga an doon she went heed laang. The sarvants heered the commotion an just managed t' lift hor ontiv hor own bed afore ivverything in the palace noddled off t' sleep, gallowas, dergs, cushats, the whole shuttin match.

A muckle geet dike sprung up roon the place, an aall ye could see was the top o' the flag keekin oot. Enyamoont o' princes come t' the palace t' try an bray thor way through but it was nee use. Till finally one day a canny lad from Alyinton landed on the scene. Drawin his gully he managed t' mek a road in. He was fair dumbfounded when he seen ivverbody lyin about the place. Findin the reet room ee gives Sleepin Beauty a kiss. Lad afore he had time t' read hor the telegram off the queen she shot past him mekin for oot the back.

"Aa'm fair borstin!" she says.

Wey ye knaa the rest of the story



Mental Fatigue bi Tom Hadaway

Work!
Ye caal that work?
Aal day,
Sittin on ya hint end,
Pushin a pen?

Work!
Yesterday
Me an big Jacky
Lifted ten ton
Ti the Grimsby waggon.
Ten bloody ton!

Box bi box.
None o yon fancy fork-lifts.
Hundredwite bi hundredwite,
An the rain beatin on wu.
That's work!

Not a writer born
Can set it doon.
Aa knaa, cos Aa've tried.
Man, efter the forst two
sentences
Aa were that exhausted
Aa fell asleep ower the tyeb!



The Editor writes ... Tom Hadaway was President of the Northumbrian Language Society at the time he wrote this poem. He was attending our Reed Neet celebration in 2001, and while he was waiting for his turn to speak, he composed this poem on a scrap of paper and gave it to me as he went up to do his 'torn'.

Aa the wawld's u styage

(A bit frae Maistor Willy Hogg o Rathberry's play "Waativor Ye Fancy", an set ower fer soothrons bi Maistor Willy Shekspeer o Stratford upon Avon, whe nyemd it "As You Like It")

Aa the wawld's u styage,
An aa thi foaks yi see is nowt but guisors.
Thi mek thor ingans an thor ootgans;
An each yin in ees teym plays mony pairts;
Whey, sivin ye can coont. At forst thi babby,
Whinjin an wowin i thi mithor's airms;
An then thi snivlin scheul baiorn wi'yis poke
An fyace nigh rubbystyaned, aye claartin on,
See sweer ti gan ti schyeul. Then thi fond lad,
Pantin leyk th'aad coo, wi'ya dowie dorge
Praisin ees lass's neb-end. Then thi sowjer,
Cockmadendy, yetlin on cropt heid,
Gobbin queor oaths, bobbersum an fratchin on,
Scrafflin fur a mite o kittle glory,
Evin if ut kills'm. Noo thi toon bailiff,
Wi greet roond keyt, saft stufft wi paatridge pey,
An gaggle ees, an chollors, hingin chops,
Teemin saft crack ti thim thit's jintry
An dads fi thim thit's not. Th'sixth pairt's sai-id.
Heor eet's thi dowie, dozzint, daft aad fyul
Wi glist'rin ees an heid, nee theakin left;
Ees happins oot u dyate, an rum fa twee;
Aye dodd'rin, cowpin cups, an nee veyce hord,
Baarin thi peypins uv a scrattin hen'
Whappin an whus'lin ern. last pairt uv aal's
Nee more thin mime, a fit end fu me tyale:
Ee's baiorn agyen, propt i th'ingle-nuek,
Nee teeth, nee wads, nee wits, nee nowt at aa.

GLOSSARY

Guisors - actors
Ingan - entrance
Whinjin - whining
Wowin - whimpering
Poke - sack, bag
Rubbystyaned - sand-
polished
Claartin on - idling
Sweer - unwilling
Dowie - dull, ailing
Cockmadendy - self-
important

Yetlin - cauldron
Gobbin - mouthing
Bobbersum - bothersome
Fratchin - quarelling
Scrafflin -scrabbling
Kittle - uncertain
Keyt - belly
Pey - pie
Daggle - moist
Ees - eyes
Chollors - chins
Chops - cheeks
Crack - talk
Dads - blows

Sai-ad - sad
Dozzint - stupefied
Fyul - fool
Glist'rin - glistening
Happins - clothing
Rum - room
Twee - two
Dodd'rin - doddering
Cowpin - tipping
Veyce - voice
Peypins - pipings
Scrattin - scratching about
Whappin - whining
Whus'lin - whistling

Whe's Tellin Hoafies?

Wey, hinnies, wu cannut hev wor word-bluffin panel ghem at an ackchewal porson-ti-porson Yule Meet, but mebbies ye divvent mind on whaat aad Northumbrian words wor used back in 2010, so ye might fancy tryin them oot wi yor families at hyem instaird.

One of the definishuns given belaa in each group of meanins is sartinly the reet one, but the ithers are propa hoafies (if ye're frae the Upper Coquet ye'll knaa that a hoafy is a half-truth or fib).

Mind, ye'll hev te guess cuz these words are canny obscure, and nee cheatin wi sneakin a leuk in yor copies of local glossaries or goggling online!

We thowt mebbies te keep ivvorywern hingin on ti the next newsletta fa the answers, but ye'd best be put oota yor misory sharpish, so afore ye borst just torn te thi last page.

1. **HAMMY**

- a. a proud, overbearing person
- b. a fidgety, nervous person
- c. a sheepish or cowardly person

2. **SLOGGERY**

- a. loose, shaky, as in: "The ice and snaa myed the roof gutters aal sloggery"
- b. slavery, hard domestic work: "Wor Bella went into service an it wes nowt but sloggery"
- c. being reluctant, lethargic, apathetic: "Shift yersel, ye sloggery pudden!"

3. **SNOWK**

- a. a gossip, a derisory term for an old woman
- b. the sneezing sound made by a dog burrowing
- c. part of a door latch - the lever, operated by the thumb, that lifts the horizontal sneck

4. **ARF**

- a. unwilling, sorry, pitiful
- b. a dog's bark, short and gruff
- c. the nail that fastens the handle to the rim of a wooden bucket

5. **STING**

- a. to lie in wait in a narrow alleyway on the quayside, between public houses, often used by the press gang or robbers
- b. a high-toned singing voice often used by street vendors: "De ye heor the sting o the Chronicle man?"
- c. to protect a haystack from the weather with a thatched roof

And now, to finish off the day, why not get yourselves some refreshments, and sing our Yuletide Carol, written by NLS Fellow, Hazel Dickson

1 A C E7 Am
 One dark neet in Beth-le-hem. Sing 'Ha-way me lad'

5 C D G Em C D A
 Christ was born in hem-mel then. 'Ha-wa-y me bon-ny lad'

One dark neet in Bethlehem.
Sing, 'Haway, me lad.'
 Christ was born in hemmel then.
'Haway, me bonny lad.'

He was happt in hippins waarm.
Sing, 'Haway, me lad.'
 Mary rocked Him on hor aarm.
'Haway, me bonny lad.'

Shephords cum ti keek at Him.
Sing, 'Haway, me lad.'
 God's aan bairn was welcomed in.
'Haway, me bonny lad.'

Angels cum doon from aheight.
Sing, 'Haway, me lad.'
 And aal the orth waas filled wi light.
'Waat cheor, wor bonny lad.'