



58th Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering



10th–12th April 2026 Programme (details subject to change) Edition 2

Annual festival of Northumberland's traditional music, dance, dialect, crafts, stories, heritage, family events - + special themed *Vanbrugh Revisited* events for 300th anniversary of Town Hall architect Sir John Vanbrugh.

Before the Gathering: Friday 20th March

7.30 pm **NORTHUMBRIAN CONCERT** with Alistair Anderson, Graham Bell, Border Directors, Teddy Cuthbert, Sophie Fraser, Miggins Fiddle, James Tait, MC Ron Forster *Town Hall £16/£8*

Many free events. Prices: adult /school age. Under 5s free. Sorry no card/phone payments – please bring cash/ cheque. Festival office: Fri/Sat - Town Hall; Sun - Chantry front shop

Friday 10th April:

During today performers will visit local care homes

9.30 - 5.00 **CRAFTS EXHIBITION** + refreshments; craft competition entries (rec'd Thur. 9th April 5.30 pm–7 pm), craft displays, stalls, CDs, books, posters, archive photos *Town Hall 50p at door/ accompanied under-12s free*

10.00– 4.00 **OUTDOOR ENTERTAINERS** Punch & Judy, music, song, history *Market Place, Arcade Free*

10.00 – 4.30 **DANCE WORKSHOPS** 10.00 –11 Historic dances from early 18th century; 11.30–12.30 Clog (bring flat shoes); 1–2 Maypole or Circle dance; 3–4 Longsword *Town Hall Ballroom £3/£1 at door per session*

11.00–1.00 **HAVE-A-GO NORTHUMBRIAN PIPES** drop-in (beginners; pipes provided) to be conf'd *Bagp Mus £3/£1*

1.30 – 2.30 **SHANTIES IN THE CHANTRY** Singalong with Ian McKone *Bagpipe Museum £3/£1 at door*

2.00 **OFFICIAL OPENING** of Gathering by the Mayor of Morpeth, Cllr Rachael Hogg *Town Hall Exhibition*

2.15–4.00 **TOWN TREASURES** Tours of Mayor's Parlour, Council Chamber, civic silver, portraits, etc, with Mayor & councillors as your guides *Town Hall Free*

3.00 – 4.00 **GAELIC SONGS AND DULCIMERS**

WORKSHOP with Linn Phipps and Sandie & Ken Hudson (bring any instrument and/or voice!) *Bagp Mus £3/£1 door*

4.30– 5.30 **FAMILY STORIES** Taffy Thomas *Library Free*

4.30 – 5.30 **THE BAILIFFS' BALL** dance event recreating a Morpeth grand assembly of 1726 *Town Hall £3/£1 at door*

7.30 – 9.45 **SIR JOHN'S DELIGHT** Ray Alexander as John Vanbrugh presents his lifestory "A Life of Irony" with Stewart Hardy (fiddle) *Town Hall Ballroom £9/£5 ticket*

8.00 **SINGAROUND** led by Ed Lawrence and Sam Dodds *Venue to be confirmed Free (donations welcome)*

8.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** *Tap & Spile (donations)*

Saturday 11th April: 9–4 FREE Park&Ride at County Hall

9.30 – 4.30 **CRAFTS EXHIBITION** as Friday *Town Hall*

9.45–10.30 **FAMILY STORIES** Taffy Thomas *Library Free*

10.00– 4.00 **OUTDOOR ENTERTAINERS** Punch & Judy, music, Ellington Colliery Band, local morris, clog and rapper teams *Market Place, Park, Bakehse Millenn Green*

10.00 – 4.00 **MORPETH CASTLE OPEN DAY** history, stories & music. Arranged with Landmark Trust *Free*

10.00 – 10.45 **MEET THE NORTHUMBRIAN PIPERS** Drop-in to hear the small pipes *Bagpipe Museum Free*

10.00 – 10.50 **POP-UP FOLK ENSEMBLE** Prepare for tonight's concert (tunes: <http://phoenixfolk.co.uk/morpeth> to download, or just turn up *St Robt's Hall (donations)*

10.15 **RING O' BELLS**; Clock Tower tours from 12 approx

11.00 **PROCESSION** Gadgy's Welcome at Market Place (road closed 10.30–11.45am from Chantry to Manchester St, traffic diverted Dark Lane/Stanley Terrace/Wellway).

12.00– 4.00 **STORYTELLER'S GARDEN** Taffy Thomas's stories, dancers, music *Old Bakehouse Yd Millen Green*

12.00–1.15 **CATERWAULING SCRAPES OF THRASHING FIDDLERS** Vic Gammon *St Robert's Ch Hall £4/£1 door*

12.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** *Tap & Spile (donations)*

12.00 – 3.00 **SINGAROUND** *Joiners Arms (donations)*

Competitions: All-venue passport ticket for Saturday comp'n entrants/audience including craft exhibition £3.00/£1.00. Doors open 30 mins before times below to allow entrants to register.

12.00 **CLOG DANCE** solos & groups **competitions relaunch** with demo by Two Step *Town Hall Ballroom*

1.45 **SPEAKING & WRITING:** dialect, stories, results of pre-judged written items-deadline 7 Mar. **featuring launch of Alex Swailes Memorial young performer award** *St Robt's Ch.Hall*

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

2.00 **BANDS, ACCORDIONS, FIDDLES, OTHER INSTRUMENTS, DUETS** *St. George's UR Church*

3.30 **SINGING:** solos and groups *Town Hall Ballroom*

1.30 – 2.30 **FAMILY SHOW** Storytellers' Street Band and friends with silly song spots *St James Centre £3/£1 at door*

4.00 - 5.00 **WOR HOOSE** Heather Laurence introduces her dialect play on NE life *St Robt's Ch Hall £3/£1 at door*

4.00 - 6.00 **SLOW & STEADY** session led by BITS NE for beginners+intermediates *The Wansbeck, Kirkhill (donations)*

4.00 – 5.15 **MORPETH'S MERRIE MUSICKES** Early 18th century music from countryside and theatre (Vanbrugh's vintage) with Bennett Hogg, Matt Seattle and friends on strings and Border pipes *Bagpipe Museum £6/£2 ticket*

6.30– 8.30 **WINNERS' CONCERT** 2025 winners, Pop-up Band, guests Ape House *Town Hall £9/£5 ticket (time tbc)*

8.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** *Tap & Spile (donations)*

8.00 **NORTHUMBRIAN & BORDER PIPING SESSION** *Venue to be confirmed Free (donations welcome)*

8.30 – 11.00 **BARN DANCE** Blue Hat Ceilidh Band, guest spots. Bring own drinks *Town Hall Corn Exch £9/£5 ticket*

Sunday 12th April: Sorry, no Sunday Crafts Exhibition this year

10.00–4.00 **MORPETH CASTLE OPEN DAY** as Saturday

10.30 – 2.30 **OUTDOOR ENTERTAINERS** Punch & Judy, Duke's Dandy Clog, musicians, maypole *Market Place*

10.30 – 12.00 **MORPETH HERITAGE WALK** from Market Place (must book in advance 01670 513308) *Donations*

10.30 – 11.30 **CHURCH SERVICE** with dialect hymns & items from Gathering performers *St George's UR Church*

11.00 –12.00 **GAELIC PIPING SONGS WORKSHOP** with Linn Phipps *Bagpipe Museum £3/£1 at door*

12.00 - 3.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** *Tap & Spile Free*

12.30 – 1.30 **TAFFY THOMAS & MOSSY CHRISTIAN** - new show of music & stories *St James Cent £5/£1 at door*

12.30 – 1.30 **MUSIC EVENT** to be fixed *Bagpipe Museum*

2.00 – 3.00 **DROP-IN DULCIMER WORKSHOP** Nonsuch Dulcimer Club 'Come and Try' session on hammered and mountain dulcimers *Bagpipe Museum £3/£1 at door*

2.15 – 3.30 **FAMILY CEILIDH** Little Big Blue Ceilidh Band plus storytelling *St James Centre £4/£1 requested at door*



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| ♿ 1 TOWN HALL | 7 CLOCK TOWER | ♿ 16 THE WANSBECK PUB
Abbey Meadows |
| ♿ 2 MARKET PLACE | ♿ 8 ST. JAMES' CENTRE | ♿ 17 COUNTY HALL |
| ♿ 3 CHANTRY TIC AND
BAGPIPE MUSEUM | 9 TAP & SPILE | 18 OLD BAKEHOUSE |
| ♿ 4 ST. GEORGE'S
CHURCH | ♿ 10 SANDERSON ARCADE | ♿ MILLENNIUM GREEN |
| ♿* 5 BLACK AND GREY
COACH HOUSE | 11 ST. JAMES'S CHURCH | ♿* 19 CONSERVATIVE CLUB |
| ♿ 6 ST. ROBERT'S
CHURCH HALL (Rear
of Collingwood House) | 12 RUGBY FIELD | ♿ 20 JOINERS ARMS |
| | ♿ 13 NEW LEISURE
CENTRE & LIBRARY | ♿ 21 WILLIAM TURNER
HERB GARDEN |
| | ♿ 14 CARLISLE PARK
(Bandstand) | |
| | 15 MORPETH CASTLE | * Staff Aided Access |