



58th MORPETH NORTHUMBRIAN GATHERING



Friday 10th to Sunday 12th April 2026

GROUP C COMPETITIONS

Performing - singing, playing, clog dancing, reciting, storytelling

N.B. All classes held on Saturday **11th April**. If you wish to enter classes at different venues at around the same time, please notify Steward at each venue in advance.

General Rules for all Writing & Composing Competitors

(1) ENTRY FORMS: a separate entry form per competition is needed, **to be handed to the Competition Steward at the venue** before the session's judging begins. **Please fill in all details – year, class name and number, contact details** - on the form. Late entries, up to the class judging's start, are accepted at the Steward's discretion.

(2) SONG/TUNE LIST on the entry form must be filled in before the class's judging begins. Give composer's name, if known, or mark as "trad." (traditional).

(3) NORTHUMBRIAN MUSIC: each entry to a singing or playing class must include at least one traditional Northumbrian item, i.e. a song or tune customarily held to be Northumbrian, or certainly Border or possibly Northumbrian (Tweed-Tyneside, including "Geordie"), e.g. miners'/sailors'/fishers'/anglers'/Geordie music hall songs/Border ballads or items eligible for Gathering composing competitions. If no entrant complies with rule 3 in a class, the trophy is withheld. In doubtful cases the judge's decision is final.

(4) ENTRY FEE: none, but each participant must buy a Saturday afternoon ticket. See Rule (9) regarding under 18s. Junior Ceilidh Band competition **only**: junior groups may claim up to two free tickets for accompanying adults.

(5) BARRED ENTRANTS: in **Graded Classes** (novice, intermediate, open) an entrant may enter one or two but **not all three** classes for clog/the same instrument. No winner of a Morpeth Gathering **Novice or Intermediate** class may re-enter that class subsequently, and anyone winning a Gathering **Open** class thrice in succession is barred from that class the following year (only). (No restrictions on winners of other festivals.)

(6) SINGING/PLAYING FROM MEMORY is required of Open Singing entrants, and credited in Open Playing classes. No coaching allowed from the audience during judging.

(7) DEFINITIONS: "Traditional Instrument": any portable folk/traditional instrument reasonably common in "Northumberland," Tweed to Tyneside (both banks, including "Geordie"); "Northumbrian" refers to the same area. Electric piano & bass acceptable.

(8) NO VIDEOING/FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY/UNMUTED MOBILES during performances.

(9) CHILD PROTECTION: A parent/guardian/teacher or other responsible adult must accompany under 18s and pay for a Saturday afternoon ticket. See Rule (4). *Copies of the Gathering's Child Protection policy are available from the Gathering Office on request. Please notify us in advance if you have any relevant special needs.*

(10) AWARDS: **1st Placed** entrant receives and keeps a Gathering Plaque or Medal, and in many cases holds a Trophy for a year, before returning it for the next Gathering. The year and holder's name may be engraved on trophy at winner's expense. (Please tell us if repairs are needed or no space left for name.) A single entrant to a class will be judged winner if judged satisfactory. **2nd/3rd/Highly Commended*/Commended** entrants receive a Certificate (*if awarded). Entrants to children's classes receive certificates (or medals for clog). Awards are presented at the relevant session. Certain open class and child prize-winners may be invited to perform at the following year's events. Full results are published on the website and Facebook as soon as possible, or send sae for leaflet.

(11) ENQUIRIES: to Westgate House, Dogger Bank, Morpeth NE61 1RE (sae please); Tel. 01670 513308; kim@northumbriana.org.uk; website:www.northumbriana.org.uk.

(12) COMPETITION LEAFLETS, ENTRY FORMS & EVENT TICKETS: (including the other categories – A: Art/Craft; B: Writing/Composing) from the above at any time; also, after 1st March, at Morpeth Chantry Tourist Information Centre (01670 623455), Bridge Street, Morpeth, NE61 1PD) or during the Gathering from Town Hall exhibition on Friday & Saturday, and at other song /music venues on the Saturday

(13) ORDER OF CLASSES printed below may be varied on the day.

Competition Rules (all classes Saturday 11th April)

NB: All venues fully accessible, Town Hall & Chantry by lift.

TOWN HALL BALLROOM 11.30 a.m. for 12 noon

Clog Dancing, Northumberland & Durham Traditional Style:

C15: JUNIOR CLOG HORNPIPE SOLO: entrants aged under 10 years on Gathering Saturday; entry, six completed steps and final double shuffle off the toe; *clogs must be worn; costume optional; the official musician must be used; judged on time, beat, carriage & presentation; tie-breaker, one complete step and final double shuffle off the toe.*

C16: SENIOR CLOG HORNPIPE SOLO: entrants aged 10-14 years; entry as for Class C15.

C17a: NOVICE CLOG HORNPIPE SOLO: entrants aged 15 years & over; entry as Class C15.

C17d: THE NORTHUMBERLAND CLOG DANCE SOLO CHAMPIONSHIP: CLOG HORNPIPE SOLO, OPEN: entrants aged 15+; entry, ten complete steps & final double shuffle off toe.
C23c: GROUP CLOG, OPEN: entrants: 2 to 6 dancers (any age); entry, waltz or hornpipe routine lasting up to 3 minutes. (Performance area approx. 4 x 3 metres). Own music permitted (involving no infringement of composer's/ performer's copyright).
C25: SPECIAL CLOG AWARD: presented at judges' discretion.

CHANTRY BAGPIPE MUSEUM 1.15 for 1.45 p.m.

C10a: NORTHUMBRIAN SMALLPIPES SOLO, NOVICE: as for Class C9a.
C10b: NORTHUMBRIAN SMALLPIPES SOLO, INTERMEDIATE: as for C9c.
C10c: NORTHUMBRIAN SMALLPIPES SOLO, OPEN: slow air & any two of march/hornpipe/jig/rant/reel, one of the tunes to have variations.
C10d: MOST PROMISING YOUNG NORTHUMBRIAN SMALLPIPER: awarded at judge's discretion to outstanding entrant aged under 16 on Gathering Saturday in Classes C10a & C10b; no entry form needed for this class.
C14: BORDER / HALF-LONG / LOWLAND / SHUTTLE / SCOTTISH SMALLPIPES, OPEN: two tunes of own choice played on bellows-blown pipes.

St ROBERT'S CHURCH HALL, Oldgate 1.15 for 1.45 p.m.

1.45 Speaking, Dialect & Writing Awards

C28: ALEX SWAILES MEMORIAL AWARD for CHILDREN'S SPEAKING: best performance by a child under 14 of a poem or tale lasting up to three minutes, spoken in Northumbrian dialect or on a Northumbrian theme, preferably delivered from memory. Entries may be judged in two groups - 6 to 9 years and 10 to 14 years (age as on Gathering Saturday).
C18: NORTHUMBRIAN SPEECH: one entry per entrant; a recital of up to 5 minutes' duration (including any introduction), of all or part of any piece of Northumbrian verse or prose, by any writer; entrant to supply judge with a copy of text before reciting; judged on understanding of text, oral delivery and quality & consistency of Northumbrian accents & vocabulary. Entrants are recommended to choose texts rich in Northumbrian words, expressions & character. District dialects of the language are acceptable; entrants may wish to specify on entry form the dialect area (e.g. Tyneside/Geordie, Coquetdale, general).
C22: STORYTELLING: a story set in Northumberland; by entrant or another person or traditional; up to 5 minutes (including any introduction); dialect as appropriate; judged on presentation, atmosphere, character, dialect quality and use of memory. District dialects: see C18.
C26: HOAFY TELLING (OR PULL TOTHER ONE): a tall tale, judged for convincing delivery, use of memory, depth of deception and audience amazement; Northumbrian theme or setting; preferably to include dialect; up to 5 minutes (including any introduction). Hoafy Trophy in memory of Terry Common.

SESSION INCLUDES WRITING AWARDS & DIALECT RECITAL:

Presentation of writing awards (composing, junior & adult dialect, stories), interspersed with live performances of entries to this year's verse & prose competitions (judged in advance - closing date **Saturday 7th March**). For details of the pre-judged writing competitions please contact addresses given in Gen. Rule 11

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH (*N.B. venue change*) 1.30 for 2.00 p.m.

C7a: JUNIOR CEILIDH BAND: entrants aged under 16 on Gathering Saturday (one adult permitted): one tune or set of tunes played without pause, dance tempos preferred, of up to total of 7 minutes' performance time (Gen. Rule 6 not applicable).
C7b: COUNTRY DANCE BAND, OPEN: as C7a, excluding age restriction.
C8a: ACCORDION* SOLO, NOVICE: two tunes, one slow, one quick, each twice through. *Piano/button accordion (melodeon/diatonic accordion should enter class C11)
C8b: ACCORDION* SOLO, INTERMEDIATE: as for Class C8a.
C8c: ACCORDION* SOLO, OPEN: two tunes, one a jig/reel/rant/or hornpipe, and a second of contrasting tempo, each twice through.
C9a: FIDDLE SOLO, NOVICE: two tunes, one slow, one quick, each twice through.
C9b: FIDDLE SOLO, INTERMEDIATE: entry as for Class C9a.
C9c: FIDDLE SOLO, OPEN: two tunes, one a jig/reel/rant/or hornpipe, and a second of contrasting tempo, each twice through.
C11: MISCELLANEOUS TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENT SOLO, OPEN: one or more tunes of up to about 4 minutes' performance time, played on traditional instrument (see Gen. Rule 7) other than small, Border & Highland pipes, fiddle & piano/button accordion (see C8a).
C12: TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENTS DUET, OPEN: one or more tunes of up to about 5 minutes' performance time in all, played on traditional instruments (see Gen. Rule 7); extra marks for entry played as melody & seconds.

TOWN HALL BALLROOM 3.00 for 3.30p.m.

C1: JUNIOR SOLO SONG: entrants aged under 14 years on Gathering Saturday; a Northumbrian song or part, of up to about 4 minutes' performance time, unaccompanied or accompanied by the singer or an accompanist .
C2: NOVICE SOLO SONG: a Northumbrian song or part, of up to about 5 minutes' performance time, unaccompanied or accompanied by the singer or an accompanist.
C3: UNACCOMPANIED SOLO SONG, OPEN: a Northumbrian song or part of up to about 5 minutes' performance time.
C4: ACCCOMPANIED SOLO SONG, OPEN: entry & accompaniment as C2.
C5: TRADITIONAL BALLAD, OPEN: singer or singer-instrumentalist, or group of singers/instrumentalists; all or part of a traditional Border or North Country ballad.
C6: FOLK GROUP / CONCERT BAND, OPEN: two or more singers/ instrumentalists, not eligible to enter Class C4 or C7a; entry, one or more songs/ tunes/parts of these, of up to about 8 minutes' performance time in all.
C27: EMILY INSPIRES! TROPHY: best performance by a female singer (any age) of a song by or about a woman/women, preferably of local relevance.

www.northumbriana.org.uk

Next (59th) Gathering 2nd to 4th April 2027 (to be confirmed)

A large format printed version of this leaflet is available
(please ring 01670 513308)