



58th MORPETH NORTHUMBRIAN GATHERING



Friday 10th to Sunday 12th April 2026

GROUP B COMPETITIONS **Writing & Composing**

Dialect poetry & prose, Standard English short stories and poetry, songs and tunes, for children and adults, judged in advance

Entry deadline: Saturday 7th March 2026

General Rules for all Writing & Composing Competitors

(1) ENTRIES LIMIT: no more than 4 entries per class from an entrant or collaboration.

(2) ENTRY FORMS: A separate form per competition is needed, but it may include more than one entry to that class by the same entrant/writers' group/collaborators/school. Entry forms **must be filled in fully (including year, competition numbers & names, contact details)**. Printouts or photocopies may be used by post.

(3) ENTRY FEE: Children's competitions are free. For each other class an entry fee of £4.00 is due for one or more items entered, up to a maximum of £16 covering all writing/composing classes entered by any one entrant, to be paid on sending/delivering entries and forms. Please make any cheques payable to **MNGC**. If you need to pay electronically, please email for the Gathering's banking details. N.B. The entry fee needs to be received before judging!

(4) CLOSING DATE Saturday 7th March 2026. BY POST: to Westgate House (see 14 below). **BY EMAIL:** to john@bibbymorpeth.plus.com with entry form as attachment.

(5) ENTRIES: Each entry must be the entrant's own work, and, unless significantly altered for improvement, must not have been entered before in the same class.

(6) MANUSCRIPTS/CDs/MP3 FILES: Hard copy sheets must be marked on the front with titles/class no./entrant's name. CDs and MP3 sound files may be entered without manuscripts to Classes B1, B2a/b/c only (one CD per composing class is needed for judging purposes, except that B2a/b/c can share one); manuscripts must be entered to

all other classes. Manuscripts will not be returned; CDs can be returned in due course, but see publication note below. Alternatively, sound files can be submitted by email.

(7) PUBLICATION: The Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering Committee and the Northumbrian Language Society aim in time to publish in full or in part entries via newsletters, publications or recitals. Delays in this process must be expected. Classes B1/2: while CD/MP3-only entries suffice for judging, a score (especially if camera-ready) speeds up publication.

(8) COPYRIGHT: Your entering authorises publication/recital of your entry in newsletters, publications or events of the Morpeth Gathering and the Northumbrian Language Society, with such abbreviation and adjustment as is needful, but you retain full copyright in both entered and published/recited versions, and enquirers will be referred to you (please inform us of any change of address).

(9) AWARDS: First in each class receives and keeps a plaque, and in most cases holds a trophy for the year. Other placed/commended entrants receive certificates. Awards are presented at the Dialect Recital, or held at Westgate House until collected (name & year may then be engraved on trophy at entrant's expense; please advise us if repairs are needed or if there is no space left for name). Full results are published on the website and Facebook as soon as possible, or send sae for leaflet.

(10) DIALECT RECITAL, Gathering Saturday, 11th April St Robert's Church Hall (rear of Collingwood House, Oldgate). Entrants to Dialect Classes B3a/B3b/B5 are requested to attend to recite one or more entries, or provide deputy-reciters. A free ticket is sent to each entrant to Dialect Classes B3a/B3b/B5 (Recital and other B award presentations follow the live speaking classes which start at 1.45 pm.). Please make every endeavour to contribute to the recital in return for your ticket.

(11) "NORTHUMBERLAND"/"NORTHUMBRIAN" refer to the area Tweed-Tyneside (including both banks of the Tyne; including "Geordie"). **DIALECT AREA:** Entrants may wish to indicate area (e.g. Tyneside, Coquetdale, general) applicable to their entry.

(12) GRADED CLASSES: Where there is a Novice Class, no item may be entered in both Novice and Open class in the same year.

(13) BARRED ENTRANTS: Having been 1st in a Morpeth Gathering Novice class, an entrant may not re-enter it, nor enter a class after being placed in a higher class. Anyone winning a Morpeth Gathering Open class thrice in succession is barred from that class the following year (only). No restriction on winners of other festivals.

(14) COMPETITION ENQUIRIES to Westgate House, Dogger Bank, Morpeth NE61 1RE (sae please); phone 01670 517397 or 513308; email queries to john@bibbymorpeth.plus.com. Leaflets including Performing and Crafts competition details, entry forms and all festival details from www.northumbriana.org.uk

Competition Rules

COMPOSING

B1: SONG COMPOSITION: an original song, words and music, in a Northumbrian tradition, by the entrant, or composer-lyricist collaboration; Northumbrian language welcomed; Northumbrian setting/theme expected; entry by score and/or CD and/or MP3 sound file (see Gen. Rules 5 and 6), preferably both, but judged on merits of song, not of manuscript, CD or MP3. NB: Original words for an existing tune should be entered in Class B3 or B16 as appropriate, but not in B1; and an original tune for existing words in Class B2a, not B1; permission to so use another's copyright tune or words having been obtained.

B2a: MELODY COMPOSITION: an original melody in a Northumbrian tradition; entry by score and/or CD/MP3 as in B1 above.

B2b: COMPOSING EXCELLENCE: the entrant of the best group of three melodies, not all in the same rhythm, to Class B2a. Separate entry is not needed: the judges will review all entries of 3+ melodies in Class B2a.

B2c: VARIATIONS COMPOSITION: original variations in a Northumbrian tradition on the entrant's or another composer's melody (permission of copyright-holder being already obtained if necessary); entry by score and/or CD/MP3 (see Gen. Rules 5 & 6).

DIALECT NORTHUMBRIAN LANGUAGE WRITING

B3a: NOVICE DIALECT VERSE: an original poem in a Northumbrian dialect of up to about 5 minutes' recitation time; manuscripts judged on literary and dialect merits and traditional verse forms.

B3b: OPEN DIALECT VERSE: as for Class B3a.

B4: JUNIOR DIALECT VERSE: entrants, children aged under 14 on Gathering Saturday; entry, as for Class B3a, except for recital requirement; school multiple entry welcomed,

B5: DIALECT PROSE: an original prose piece in a Northumbrian dialect; judged as in Class B3a excluding verse requirement.

B15: JUNIOR DIALECT PROSE: entrants as for Class B4; entry, an original prose piece in a Northumbrian dialect of up to about five minutes' recitation time; no recitation requirement.

- Entrants to these dialect classes are invited to recite their entries at the Dialect Recital on Gathering Saturday (see General Rule 10).

STANDARD ENGLISH WRITING CLASSES

B8: SHORT STORY: an original story of up to 1200 words, set in and characterizing Northumberland / Northumbrians in any period; in English or Northumbrian or both as appropriate.

B16: ENGLISH VERSE: an original poem (not in dialect) relating to Northumberland; entrants of any age.

ALSO OF INTEREST TO WRITERS:

SPEAKING COMPETITIONS

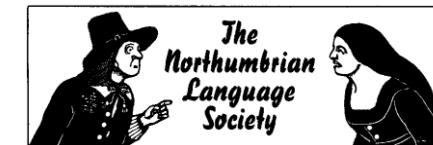
at St Robert's Church Hall at 1.45 pm on Gathering Saturday
(for full details see GROUP C information (see note 14)).

C28: ALEX SWAILES MEMORIAL TROPHY for children's speaking/reciting.

C18: NORTHUMBRIAN SPEECH: dialect verse or prose reciting.

C22: STORY TELLING.

C26: HOAFY TROPHY – tall tale telling.



The Northumbrian Language Society

exists to promote, research, publish and enjoy Northumberland's own unique language and its dialects. See the Northumbriana and Northumbrian Language Society websites for details of the Reed Neet Supper on or near 30th April and the annual Roland Bibby Memorial lecture in October.

Dialect books and CDs are on sale at the Town Hall exhibition during the Gathering, online and at good bookshops – including dialect handbook "A Northumbrian Wordhoard" with Northumbrian to English and English to Northumbrian dictionary.

Details: <https://northumbrianlanguagesociety.co.uk> including online shop.

**Next (59th) Gathering 2nd to 4th April 2027, the weekend after Easter
(to be confirmed)**

A large format version of this leaflet is available:
please ring 01670 513308

www.northumbriana.org.uk Look out for us on Facebook and find videos of past online events on our Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering on YouTube