

# 58<sup>th</sup> Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering

10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> 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 300<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> April:

During today performers will visit local care homes

9.30 - 5.00 **CRAFTS EXHIBITION** + refreshments; craft competition entries (rec'd Thur. 9<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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, Bakehouse Millen 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' BELL**; 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** Venue tbc (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, FIDDLIES, 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 Silly Song spots St James Centre £3/£1 requested 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 MUSICLES** Early 18<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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** Dialect hymns & items from Gathering performers St George's URC (new venue)

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