

Let's Hoist the Hippin on the 2025 Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering!

Calling all gadgies, morts and bonny bit bairns! The Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering is back the usual weekend after Easter with the 57th annual celebration of the NE's traditional music, song, craft, dance, dialect, stories and heritage from 25th to 27th April, with concerts, competitions, a barn dance, displays, bellringing, tours and have-a-go workshops.

Over 50 events include free outdoor entertainment for all ages, the Saturday morning procession and annual open weekend at Morpeth Castle featuring wandering entertainers, and affordable indoor activities headlined by legendary NE folk duo Bob Fox and Stu Luckley (reuniting for a special Gathering concert) and rising stars Megan Wisdom and Mossy Christian. **STOP PRESS: Bob and Stu tickets are now sold out!!**

Shonaleigh returns to Morpeth for the first time after being Storyteller in Residence during Carlisle Park's Millennium Project revamp, with a retelling on Sunday of her Myth of Morpeth created in partnership with local schools and community groups. Earlier in the weekend Shonaleigh tells family stories at the Library and the Gathering Storyteller's Garden at the Old Bakehouse Yard Millennium Green, itself celebrating its 25th birthday with tales and dancing. This year sees the quarter-century of another Morpeth institution – Voice Male choir – who welcome its slightly older sister, Werca's Folk women's choir, to share the singing duties at a grand concert on Friday night. An even older group is Ellington Colliery Band, mainstay of the Saturday procession and performances in the Park, marking its formation exactly a hundred years ago. There are plenty of chances to join in as well as spectate over the weekend, with even a church service including dialect hymns and readings, and a rare chance on Friday to view the civic silver and medieval guild boxes in the Town Hall. (To help visitors to the town on Saturday there's a free vintage bus Park and Ride from County Hall.)

Events will be tinged with sadness this year following the recent loss at the age of 92 of Alex Swailes MBE, the much-loved entertainer and the Gathering's longest-serving Morpeth Gadgy, figurehead MC for the showcase Market Place procession. Last year Alex handed over the Gadgy's role to Ron Forster, who will now lead performers and crowds in a tribute to his predecessor and then hoist the hippin on a muckle fligarishon – that's Northumbrian for raise the curtain on a great celebration, since as Alex knew, the show must go on!

For programme details see www.northumbriana.org.uk with updates on Facebook, call in for tickets at Morpeth Chantry TIC, 01670 623455 or direct queries to 01670 513308 or kim@northumbriana.org.uk