



LETTER OF THE LAW:
Doric champion Gordon Hay was brought up in a farming community but went on to be a solicitor.

MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Ellie House meets the Doric aficionado helping to ensure the next generation's delight

If you picture a solicitor's office, you'll no doubt imagine formal conversation and legal jargon.

You certainly wouldn't be greeted with "fit like", unless you happen to come across Gordon Hay.

Now retired after more than 30 years spent working as a solicitor in Peterhead, Gordon had no issue with slipping into Doric when occasion called.

It should come as no surprise, for he has championed the language for decades having spoken it since childhood.

Gordon is a renowned Doric aficionado, whose work includes translating Handel's Messiah and the Bible into Doric.

He now wants to make sure that the next generation can take delight in a language of

their own, as opposed to viewing Doric as the lingo of yesteryear.

Having been a member of the Doric Board since 2019, he is part of an exciting initiative which could see people around the world share their favourite Doric phrase.

It is the first project of its kind, with Doric Phrase Week commencing today, April 24.

Gordon hopes that the event will encourage people from all walks of life to revel in Doric's heritage, as well as promoting its use in the modern era.

"I was brought up as a Doric speaker in a Doric-speaking household," said Gordon, who lives at Longside near Peterhead.

"I grew up on a farm near Turriff; it's a long story as to why I didn't go into farming.

"I didn't have the love for it."

Gordon took a different path and swapped working the land for learning the law, after going on to study at Aberdeen University.

There was once a time when Doric was a persecuted language, with children physically punished for speaking it in the classroom.

Gordon thankfully never experienced such cruel treatment, and continued to use Doric as he progressed in academia.

"I was very lucky that way, we were encouraged to speak Doric at school," he said.

"We studied the poet Charles Murray – and I had to recite one of his poems for the school concert.

"I can still remember it by heart, and I went on to be appointed a member of The Charles Murray Memorial Trust.

"Even when I went to university, I continued to speak Doric with my local friends. We all



FUTURE PROOF: Mintlaw Academy is proposing to have a Doric Phrase Week including a creative-writing element.



communicated in Doric. This continued in my working life.

"If a client came into the office and spoke Doric, I would speak it back.

"I think most Doric speakers consider themselves to be bilingual.

"There's no difference between speaking English and Doric than there is in speaking English and French.

"I think my love for the language started at a young age.

"I had a love for Doric literature and writing from around eight years old.

"The Doric Board was set up in 2019. I'm the treasurer and was involved from the very beginning."

The group is supported by the Scottish Government, although its aims are cultural as opposed to political.

It is headed up by broadcaster Frieda Morrison, who works alongside passionate volunteers.

But rather than purely celebrate Doric's past, the group has its sights firmly set on the present.

From promoting the use of Doric in the workplace to creating language resources which can be used both at home and in education settings, there's never been a more exciting time for the north-east dialect.

But what impact has the Covid lockdown had on the lingo?

"We haven't been able to meet up in person as a group, but we're still excited for Doric Phrase Week," said Gordon.

"It was initially planned as just one day, before we realised there was such a wealth of

material. A number of schools have already done Doric projects.

"Mintlaw Academy, for example, is also proposing to have a Doric Phrase Week, and we will be supporting a creative-writing element.

"We hope that with children spending a lot more time at home, they may have been speaking Doric with their parents.

"Our hope is to take Doric into the future and out of the past.

"It is not a language only used in the gutter or in comedy. It should be brought more into the open and used more regularly in places of work. People shouldn't feel obliged to speak English."

That does not mean to say that the past is unimportant however, particularly for the older generation who may fondly recall phrases from their childhood.

"We hope that people of all ages will get involved with Doric Phrase Week from around the world," said Gordon.

"The youngest members of the community can ask their grandparents about phrases they used in the past.

"The project could evoke memories from people who heard these phrases in their younger days.

"There are so many Doric words that have no English equivalent.

"We want to get away from the idea that Doric is a means of preserving the past - this is a living language."

For more information and to take part, visit <https://doricboard.com>

“**THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPEAKING ENGLISH AND DORIC THAN THERE IS SPEAKING ENGLISH AND FRENCH**”



MY LIFE BOO HEWERDINE

Songwriter Boo Hewerdine has released a new 20-song compilation album featuring many of his best-loved hits along with a new recording of *The Village Bell* with label mate Kris Drever; 2021 single *The Language of Love*; and previously digital-only single tracks that appear for the first time on compact disc. Visit: www.revealrecords.co.uk/artists/boo-hewerdine

First record bought?

The first album was Ian Hunter's self-titled debut. Still love it. To my eternal shame my first single was *Blue Is The Colour* by Chelsea FC... I liked the tune.

Book that changed your life?

Confederacy Of Dunces - John Kennedy Toole. Made me accept the absurdity of things.

Most expensive purchase?

My flat. I don't have many expensive things.

First job?

A photo retouching company. I saw some troubling things.

Favourite time of day?

Early morning and late at night.

Last time you cried?

Thinking about my old man.

Worst fashion faux pas?

Trousers with more material than sense in 1984.

Favourite holiday destination?

Scarborough, Victoria, Australia. Malta. Perthshire.

Idea of holiday hell?

Organised fun.

Biggest phobia?

Dentists and angry tigers.

What are you watching on TV?

Offspring (set in Melbourne), *The Flight Attendant* and anything made by Reel One Entertainment.



Tom Waits.

Favourite movie?

The Hill, with Sean Connery

How do you relax?

Making up songs. Playing table tennis with Mrs H.

Best advice you've been given?

Don't fall out with anyone, you'll meet them again.

Who you last spoke to on the phone?

Mark Freeguard, recording engineer of note.

First thing you did this morning?

Took the dog for his constitutional.

Worst mistake?

Not paying attention when I was younger.

Your inspiration?

It's everywhere!

Would most like to meet...

Tom Waits, Barack Obama, Billie Holiday.

Childhood crush?

Elizabeth Montgomery, from *Bewitched*

Weirdest present?

A bust of my own head from my folks. It's on my piano.

Quirky habits?

Saluting magpies.

Worst meal?

A pastry from a vending machine in France. I can still taste it.

What makes you laugh?

The unexpected.

Most embarrassing moment?

Singing to a record company whilst standing on a table in Milan whilst they stared at me with borderline pity.

Sean Connery or Daniel Craig?

Did Daniel Craig make *The Hill*? I think not.

Beauty is?

To quote one of my songs, "Each of us know in our hearts we must go that's what beauty is".