

HOPPINGS TIME LINE

The following Time Line shows many of the main happenings at the Hoppings. It is organised into three areas: the fairground; the Fair Managers; and the Town Moor Fair School.

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KEY:

FAIRGROUND | **FAIR MANAGERS** | **TOWN MOOR FAIR SCHOOL** | **FREEMEN**

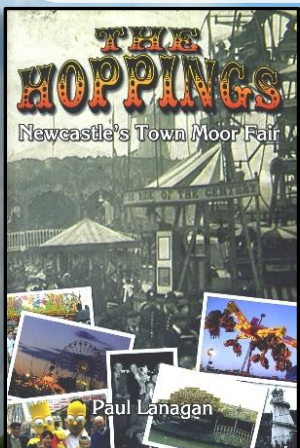
1647 - Grassmen were appointed to look after Newcastle's Town Moor pastures.

1721 - The annual Northumberland horseracing meeting relocated to Newcastle's Town Moor from Killingworth.

1771 - A dispute arose between the Freemen and town magistrates over the ownership of the Moor. Ownership was vested in the Corporation of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne, however grazing rights were granted to the Freemen.

1823 - The well-known clown, Billy Purvis, set up his booth on the Town Moor at the Newcastle Races; during a tirade with a fellow showman, he used the word 'Geordie'. Billy died in 1853 and never made it to the actual Town Moor Fair.

1881 - The Gosforth Park Racing Company took control of the races from the Grand Stand Company (a public body).



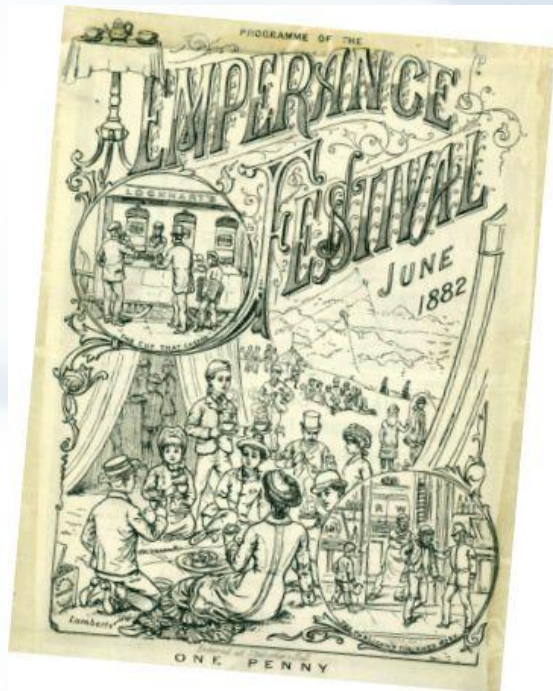
FIND OUT MORE IN THIS NEW BOOK!

The Hoppings: Newcastle's Town Moor Fair

By Paul Lanagan ISBN: 978-0-9555059-0-4

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Programme of the Temperance Festival, 1882

1882 - A dispute between the Corporation and the Gosforth Park Racing Company resulted in the races moving from the Town Moor to Gosforth. The North of England Temperance Festival Association held a festival on the Town Moor as a counter-attraction during Race Week. 200,000 people attended the two day event and no cases of drunkenness were reported. Rent paid by the showmen is thought to have been £10.

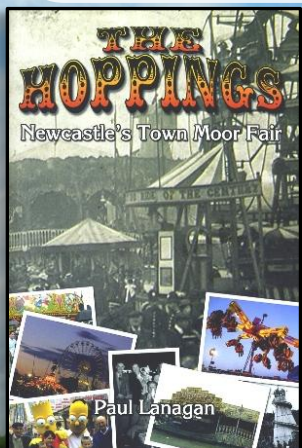
1882 - Mr R. F. W. Liddle was Temperance Festival manager.

"A Temperance Festival was held the same day on the Town Moor, Newcastle-on-Tyne, where the races have been held for nearly 150 years. The removal of the races to Gosforth Park, where the admission fee was a shilling, leads to the counter attraction in the way of public amusements. A band contest, football, cricket, foot-racing, and other sports were organised, for which good prizes were given, and addresses were delivered. The people present were estimated at 150,000. No intoxicating drinks were allowed to be sold."

Illustrated London News, July 8th 1882.

1883 - The organisers planned to make the Festival a 'Carnival of the People of the North'. Copyright

1885 - The Festival opened in the month of July, the only time it has ever done so.



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1887 - On June 29th and 30th the sixth Temperance Festival was held on the Town Moor. It was commented that: "the proceedings were in every way successful".

1888 - The Temperance Festival was extended to three days, with the opening day devoted to Highland Games.

1889 - The success of the Temperance Festival continued. People were brought to the event by train from places as far away as 200 miles.

"The eighth annual Temperance Festival was commenced on the Newcastle Town Moor in brilliant weather. Crowds of holiday-makers wended their way to the Moor on this and the two following days. The sports provided for the patrons were highly appreciated, while the showmen and roundabout proprietors did a thriving business. It was computed that between 100,000 and 150,000 persons were present on the second day. The festival was considered the most successful yet held."

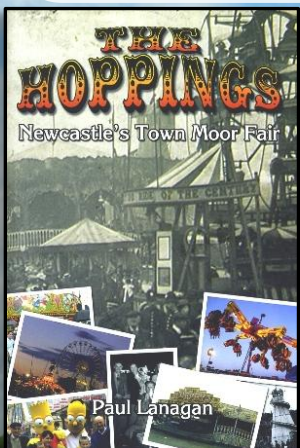
North Country Lore & Legend, 1889

1890 - The ninth annual Festival was opened by Alderman W. D. Stephens and took the usual form of athletic and military sports, juveniles' games, and treats for poor children. As a counter-attraction, the Temperance Festival Association would have had its work cut out in drawing the crowds away from the Gosforth Park races as Prince Albert Victor, the scandal-hit grandson of Queen Victoria, was in attendance.

1891 - Alderman W. D. Stephens, President of the Festival, had his watch stolen on his way to the Moor. A new watch was bought for him in recognition of his services.

1895 - The Corporation took control over the letting of the sites, with the lessee showman having to pay £500 in rent.

1897 - William Murphy, showman and lessee, paid £775 rent. A bonfire was lit on the Cowhill during the Festival to commemorate Queen Victoria's 60 years on the throne.



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1899 - John Murphy, lessee, provided shows and roundabouts at the Temperance Festival. Rent was lower this year at £735.

1900 - John Murphy paid £780 rent for the Race Week Fair. Alderman W. D. Stephens was ill and missed the Festival opening ceremony. He also missed the opening in 1901.

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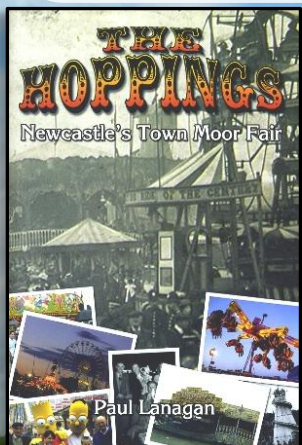


An early view of Newcastle Town Moor Fair

1902 - Alderman W. D. Stephens died and the press commented that it was sad that he did not live to see the 21st Festival milestone.

1903 - Thomas Hurst of Clifton, Manchester, was recorded as being lessee. The new President of the Festival Association, Mr Bainbridge, was unable to attend the opening.

1905 - The Town Moor was leased to showman George Green of Glasgow, much to the disdain of the northern showmen. George went on to establish a cinema business in his native Scotland having travelled with his own bioscope show - Green's Cinematograph.



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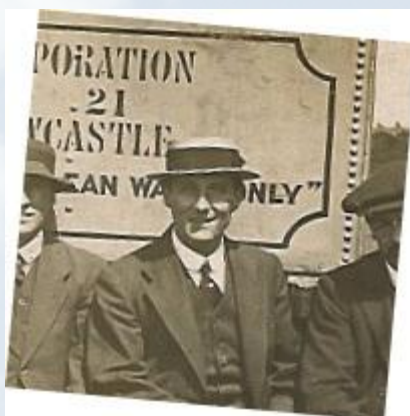
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1906 - Walker Hoadley, lessee, paid £850 for the hire of the Moor. A game of mounted pushball took place at the Festival; teams were dressed in the colours of Newcastle and Sunderland.



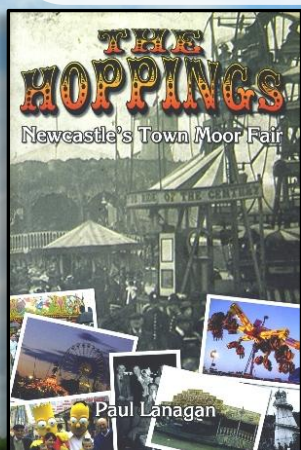
Johnny Murphy on the Moor in 1908

1907 - The North Eastern Roundabout Syndicate was formed to ensure that the Festival remained under the control of showmen from the Northern Section of the Showmen's Guild. In 1908, two tenders were submitted for the lease of the Moor: a tender of £673 from the Northern Showmen's Syndicate, comprising of Messrs James and Randall Monte Williams and Messrs Relph and Pedley; and a tender of £1,100 from the North Eastern Roundabout Proprietors Syndicate, comprising of Walker Hoadley, John, Walter and William Murphy, Harry Caris, Alfred Payne, and the Northern Stallholder's Society. The latter of the two was accepted at a meeting of the Town Moor Management.

1909 - The Temperance Festival Association and North of England Roundabout Proprietors Association suffered a loss in takings owing to bad weather. The Freemen and Corporation granted an extension to the Festival for the first time ever; two days were added to allow the showmen a chance to recoup their losses.

1911 - A young man was struck by lightning and killed on the Moor while watching the build up of the shows. Another unfortunate incident occurred that year; at the official opening, the podium collapsed during the speeches and several dignitaries were injured.

1912 - Mr Walker, Chairman of the Freemen's Stewards' Committee, allowed the showmen two extra days on the Moor following extreme weather which caused the fair to be suspended. Damage was caused to the Moor when the attractions left.



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1913 – In May, an action was brought by the Stewards' Committee of the Freemen against John and William Murphy, Walker Hoadley, and William Pedley of the North Eastern Roundabout Syndicate (Walker v Murphy). The plaintiffs asked for an injunction to restrain the defendants from 'interfering with the turf of the Moor by placing thereon any steam engines, shoe, caravan, exhibition, booth, tent or similar thing'. The showmen lost the case and had to pay damages of £214 for the injury to the pasturage. The Festival went ahead after the order was discharged by the Appeal Court on June 20th 1913. The case was, however, later reopened and it was decided that the Corporation must have the consent of the Freemen before letting sites on the Moor to the showmen.



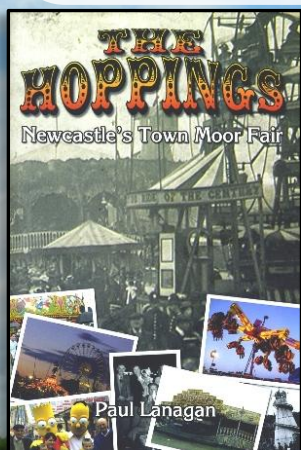
The Temperance Festival at Jesmond, c1914

1914 to 1918 - The Festival relocated to the Green Pool Field in Jesmond Vale for the duration of the Great War. Troops were trained on the Town Moor and parts of it were used as an airstrip. In 1915 the Festival was held in Jesmond Dene during Race Week. Copyright

1919 – The Festival returned to the Town Moor.

1920 to 1923 – The Temperance Festival did not take place on the Town Moor. Instead, smaller Hoppings took place at Jesmond Vale.

1923 – Councillor David Adams MP, the Sheriff of the City, proposed that the Temperance Festival be revived in the next year. Local businessman and friend of the showmen, Arthur Fenwick, commented: *"To stop the showmen coming on to the Moor was for them just as serious a business as would be the closing of the Tyne to the shipping community."*



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1924 - In January the fate of the Festival was in jeopardy when the Freeman proposed that they receive two thirds of the income from the lease of the Moor. The West Newcastle Labour Party urged the City Council to allow the Festival to go ahead regardless of whether the Freeman gave consent. The situation was resolved two months later and the original terms of fifty-fifty were accepted by the Corporation and Freeman. The Revived Temperance Festival opened on the Moor on June 24th, with rent of £1,000 being paid by the lessees. At this time, the Hon Secretary of the Lost Children's Tent was Miss Doris J. Edington. Arthur Fenwick later lamented the fact that he missed the Civic Party tour as he had had to leave for the Golden Wedding celebrations of his wife's parents.

c1924 - George Wright became Festival Site Manager and acted on behalf of the Newcastle Corporation and the Stewards' Committee of Freeman. His responsibilities included trouble-shooter, diplomat, administrator and guardian. He was in this role for over thirty years and retired in 1956.

1925 - The cost of the North of England Temperance Festival Association's official programme was 2d.

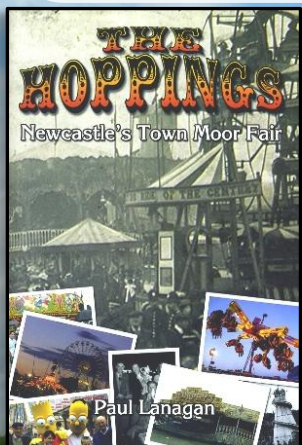
1927 - On June 22nd, a windstorm caused chaos and damaged stalls and rides.

1929 - William Murphy was thought to be the oldest showman on the ground at the age of 72. He made mention of how his rent this year was £3,100 when in 1887 he had paid between £60 and £70 for the lease of the Moor.

1930s - Daily visitors totalled 150,000 on days of good weather.



John Walter Murphy's funeral cortege on the Moor in 1931



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1931 – Rent for the lessees was £3,500. John Walter Murphy, the eldest son of Walter Murphy, died while at the Town Moor; the funeral cortege departed the fairground for his internment at Preston Cemetery in North Shields. A trade section was introduced to the Temperance Festival and in later years became known as Swag Man's Alley; it is still a feature of the Hoppings today.

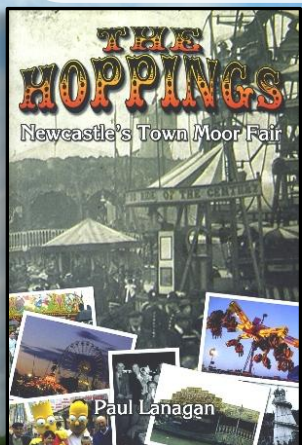


Showman Colin Noble with the Lady Mayoress and Lord Mayor of Newcastle, 2008

1932 – June 15th - Colin Noble, one of the current organisers, first visited the Festival when he was three days old.

1933 – Mrs Nellie Beatty, known as 'Ma' to the children, took charge of the Lost Children's tent and went on to provide her services at the Fair for over 30 years.

1934 – Invitations for Civic Guests to the official opening made mention that it was in commemoration of the first year of Direct Letting, which saw the Corporation and Freemen being responsible for letting the individual positions direct to the showmen. The rent to Ernest Atha for a pie and pea stall was £3 15s 0d; the rent to Mrs A. Watkins for a round game was £16 10s 0d; and rent to David Crisbone, Glasgow, for his shooting saloon was £3 0s 0d. Mr J. R. Andrews, Chairman of the Freemen, said that the new arrangements would bring in £5,500 in rent. Interestingly, this was the first year in which the showground stretched from Grandstand Road to Exhibition Park. A car park, operated by the British Legion at the north end of the Moor, was introduced.



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1935 – The showmen appear to have been unhappy with the introduction of Direct Letting the year before, as an arbitration hearing took place at the County Court on Westgate Road on June 6th; Judge Thesiger found in favour of the Corporation and Freeman but, having praised the showmen for their efforts, made suggestions of definitive prices, a longer application time, and concessions with the deposits. The Town Moor Festival plan was modified to allow for the Royal Agricultural Show to take place on the Moor.

1937 – Newcastle Corporation limited the number of round stalls on the Moor to one-hundred and seventy five. The Official Opening took place on John Powell's brand new Speedway.

1939 - Only three out of the thirty large rides in attendance were considered of the old type, showing how the public's taste for grand and ornate rides had changed to a thirst for speed, thrills and excitement.

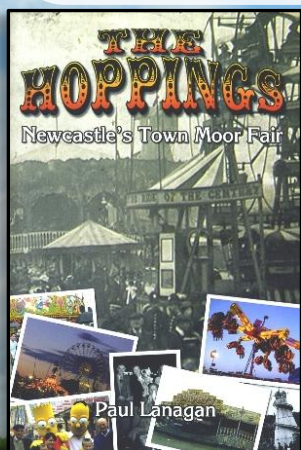
1940 & 1941 – The Fair did not take place on the Town Moor owing to the outbreak of World War II. Transport difficulties and lighting regulations were imposed, and many showmen were called up to the armed forces.

1942 – A 'Holidays at Home' fair was held in Exhibition Park for six weeks. It was open from 2:30pm until 10:00pm and aimed to reduce the heavy demands on road and rail transport.

1943 to 1945 – The fair, again, was housed in Exhibition Park for the rest of the War years.

1945 - October - A meeting about the reintroduction of the Town Moor Fair took place between the Corporation, the Freeman and the showmen; negotiations broke down and the showmen's offer was rejected. The Corporation proceeded to arrange its own fun fair.

1946 - In April, the Corporation placed adverts in the World's Fair; the Northern Section of the Showmen's Guild recommended that its members should not attend. Only six large roundabouts, six juvenile roundabouts and a number of small stalls attended the Town Moor Fair during Race Week. A Guild fair was held at Saltwell Park, Gateshead, and proved to be the more successful of the two.



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1947 - The 'Northern Syndicate of Showmen's Guild Members' was formed by Jack Murphy, William Noble Snr, Frank McConvill, Jack Hoadley and Jack Powell, and the Hoppings returned to the Town Moor. The fairground was repositioned on the Moor, running parallel to the Great North Road, because of open cast coal mining operations nearby. A heat wave, coupled with a bus strike, played havoc with the attendance. John Murphy made his first visit to the Town Moor Fair. Copyright ©

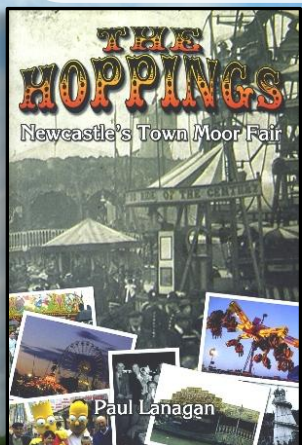
1951 - The Rotor, a spinning wall ride, first featured at the Fair. Ron Taylor visited the Moor for the first time with his boxing booth. Ron took over the booth in 1936 when his father died. A children's novel, *The Witch of Redesdale*, was published by Newcastle author Winifred Cawley and opened with: "The whole of Tyneside seemed to be flocking towards the Moor, eager to find out what this, one of the biggest fairs in the country, had to offer them."



John Murphy's Waltzer in the 1950s

1956 - The date of the Hoppings was brought forward a week so as not to coincide with the Royal Show; attendance figures dropped owing to bad publicity of the date change.

1957 - Edith Barlow, known as 'Little Edie', was the Shortest Woman in the World at 22 inches and weighing 17 pounds. She took ill while on the Moor and died in hospital from pneumonia at the age of 28 years. Edie was known to have smoked forty cigarettes a day.



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1957 - Fred Didsbury, Newcastle City Council's Chief Building Surveyor, became Fair Manager and was known to the showmen as 'The Guvnor'.

1958 - Over 200 tons of ashes were used on the ground during the week due to the wet conditions. For the first time ever, an extension of one week was granted by Newcastle Corporation in an attempt to prevent damage to the Moor occurring. A Hook-the-Duck appeared at the Hoppings for the first time.

1959 - Albert Austin assisted Fred Didsbury with the setting out of the fairground for the first time, having gained employment with the Council as a Building Inspector the year before.

1960 - Owing to the dry weather 1,500 gallons of water were used on the south entrance area and the car park entrance to dampen dust. This proved unsuccessful and produced muddy conditions.

1962 - The presence of the Royal Agricultural Show saw the Hoppings being sited further north on the Moor. On June 24th, a 70 mph gale forced emergency measures to be taken in the early morning; heavy vehicles were placed around the machines to act as wind breaks. Debris and material from the Royal Show, and in particular a corrugated steel dome, landed on the ground and wrecked one of the showmen's stalls.

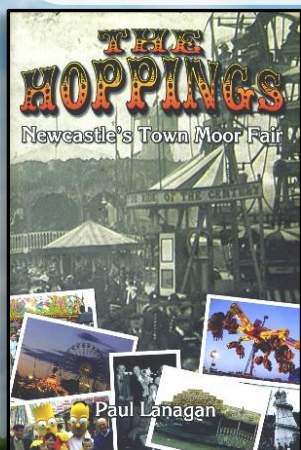
1963 - The Hoppings was extended due to the non-stop rain.

1964 - Around 200 lost children were reported during the week. It is thought that many were getting lost on purpose to cash in on the free sweets which were given to the found children.

1965 - Mrs Beatty, the lady in charge of the lost children's tent, was unable to attend the fair due to ill health.

1967 - The Hoppings was held a week late as the Jockey Club had changed the Newcastle Race Week dates so as not to clash with the Royal Ascot Meeting.

1969 - 400,000 gallons of water had to be pumped out of the Lakeland area to stop the continual overflow across the Moor, south of Forsyth path.



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1970 – Rent was reported to be £6,000.

1971 - Rent was reported to be £8,500. A licence was granted to include an extra day, allowing the showmen to open on the Friday night as compensation for the increase in rent. At this time, the cost of having your palm read was 50p or 60p.



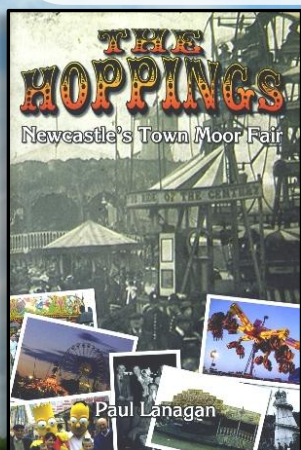
Jack Murphy and his son John in 1972

1972 – Rent to the showmen was reported as £7,500, double the rent of the 1950s.

1975 – The Hoppings opened for the first time on a Sunday (2pm – 8pm), amid objections from a minority of Sabbatarians. There was no longer a Speakers' Corner on the Moor, which had been a popular feature of earlier Festivals.

1977 – The Evening Chronicle reported a 15% increase in the rent since 1975, now at £14,500. 72 year old Gilbert Chadwick, novelty freak show proprietor, said in the press that this year would be his last Hoppings, having first visited with his show in 1934 when admission was 2d for children and 3d for adults.

1978 – The Official Opening took place on the track of Billy Crow's dodgems owing to the absence of the usual official podium.



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1979 – Frank Baron, a police inspector stationed at Gosforth, became responsible for policing the fair. He continued until 1982 and two years later published a diary-format book on the history of the Hoppings. Ron Taylor's boxing booth was wrecked in a road crash. This year Ron presented a helter skelter (known as a slip to showpeople) and said he was "broken hearted" at not having his booth on the Moor.

1980 – The Hoppings was struck by hailstones, thunder, lightning and torrential rain. Ron Taylor's boxing booth opened for the last three days of the fair, the paintwork having just been finished by artist Paul Wright, who worked under the mercy of the inclement weather.

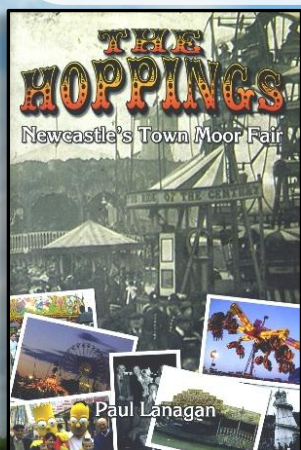
1981 – Rent was reported to be £30,000.



Crow's Easy Rider on the Moor in 1981

1982 – The Hoppings celebrated its 100th anniversary. Commemorative envelopes with special stamps were sold at £1 each, and copies of the original Temperance Festival programme cover were sold for 75p each. A heritage display was hosted by the Central Library. Unfortunately poor weather blighted the centenary Hoppings.

1982 – This was Fred Didsbury's last Hoppings and he retired from the Council the following April. William H. Tait, known as Bill, of Bedlington succeeded him as Fair Manager. When asked how he regarded the fair he said it was the low point of his year!



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c1983 – Free fairground outings for underprivileged children commenced in a small way. By 1986 around 3,000 Variety Club children were attending the Hoppings, with all rides donated by the Showmen's Guild. This was the last year in which goldfish were offered as prizes at the Hoppings.

1985 - Attendance dipped below 100,000 as the recession hit. A proposal to merge the Hoppings with the Tyneside Summer Exhibition was rejected by the City Council.

1986 – The Freeman reported that around 595 unauthorised caravans and vehicles belonging to itinerants had gained access to the Moor, a problem which had started in 1964.

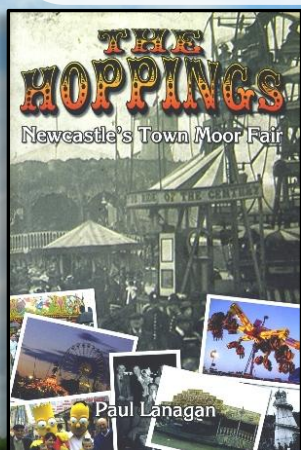
1987 – The Freeman hired security guards to turn away itinerants without official passes. The Evening Chronicle reported that those turned away had set up camp in the West End of the City. Copyright © 2010-2011 - not to be reproduced

1988 - Albert Austin became Fair Manager upon his appointment as Newcastle's Chief Building Surveyor.

1988 - A security system was introduced around the Town Moor to keep out itinerants who were plaguing the fairground. 106 balloons were released during the opening, which was broadcast live on Tyne Tees Television (TTTV).

1989 – The Showmen's Guild centenary was celebrated at the Hoppings. The City Council installed an impressive floral display at the Forsyth Road entrance to the fair. A crew filmed the Hoppings for a documentary called 'After the Lights Go Out', a behind the scenes look at the travelling community. 107 balloons were released at the opening, which was broadcast live on TTTV at 6 o'clock. Opening on the Sunday was extended from 8pm to 10pm. This year marked the last appearance of a Wall of Death on the Moor until James Messham & Sons' visit in 2008.

1990 – The Hoppings was at risk of being cancelled as the controversy over the squatting itinerants continued. It was proposed that the date of the Hoppings be changed to coincide with Appleby Horse Fair so as to reduce the number of unauthorised visitors not connected to the Hoppings. 108 balloons, donated by UK Organ Transplant Service, were released. A hot air balloon was meant to support the campaign, but was ground because of high winds.



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1991 – The City's Town Moor Management Committee, made up of representatives of the Council and Freeman, had expected to make just over £17,000 profit from the Hoppings, but actually made £35,359 as a result of reduced policing costs and greater use of the Hoppings car park. A fireworks display at 10:30pm on Saturday June 29th marked the end of the Hoppings.

1991 - The Town Moor Fair School was founded by teacher Maureen Bowman, when she asked Albert if she could come for an hour to mark the showchildren's work. This took place for two mornings during the fair week. The school went from strength to strength and soon became an established part of the Hoppings.

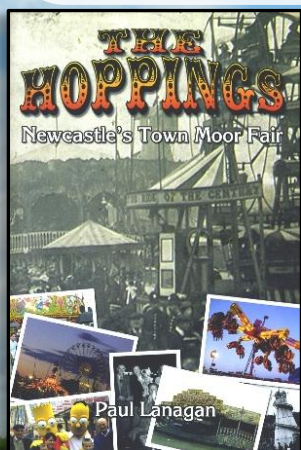
1992 – The fairground went ahead regardless of sensational headlines claiming that the Hoppings could be banned because of the itinerants. A model galloping horse was presented to the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor C. A. Cook, by John Murphy and Colin Noble and is still on display in the Mayor's Silver Gallery at the Civic Centre.

1992 - The Town Moor Fair School was open for 6 days. 62 pupils attended on the first day.



[www.NEWCASTLE-HOPPINGS.CO.UK](http://www.newcastle-hoppings.co.uk)
Sue Stokel Walker, the only female fair manager in the Festival's history

1993 - Albert Austin was made redundant from the City Council following a departmental reorganisation which saw the responsibility for the Hoppings pass from the City Engineer's Department to the Leisure Services Department. Susan Stokel-Walker became Fair Manager. Sue came to the UK from Arkansas, USA, in 1977 and is the only female Fair Manager in the history of the Hoppings. Sue shadowed Albert in his final year as Manager, but he continued to be involved with the fair - he was hired as the Fairground Surveyor. On November 10th 1993, Albert was presented with a certificate which read as follows: 'By Resolution of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain, Mr Albert Austin has been granted this Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of distinguished services to the Northern Section. Signed for and on behalf of the Northern Section this tenth day of November 1993'.



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1995 – Ron Taylor’s boxing booth visited the Hoppings for the last time. A demonstration took place on the Moor to promote a Charter of Rights for fairground workers. Over 300 people attended the civil rights event and signed a petition which called for better status and less discrimination, better access to education, and parity with European showmen. One of the largest travelling wheels made an appearance at the Hoppings for the first time. A roadshow from Metro Radio visited the Hoppings.

1996 - Albert Austin was approached by the Northern Syndicate and became the administrator responsible for the Syndicate’s sub-leasing arrangements for the fair.

1996 – For the 6th year, a firework display marked the end of the Hoppings, however this year's display faced competition from a show at Newcastle's Quayside.

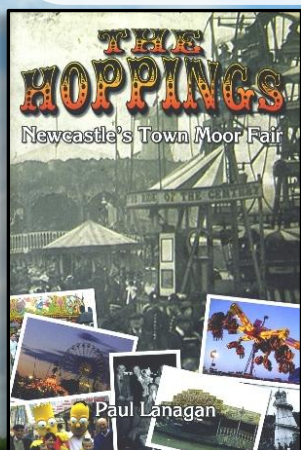


1997 – Severe weather turned the Town Moor into a quagmire. The Journal newspaper reported the cost of repair to the Moor as £30,000.

A bad year with lots of r*** in 1997

1998 - The Hoppings was postponed for a week to prevent a similar situation as the previous year from occurring.

1999 – The Town Moor Fair School was organised by Alisdair MacKenzie, Education Welfare Officer, and a Newcastle teacher. Diane Barlow got involved as a traveller teacher from Northumberland.



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By Paul Lanagan ISBN: 978-0-9555059-0-4

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2000 - Discussions between Valerie Moody and the Newcastle Local Education Authority led to Diane Barlow being asked to be Project Organiser for the Town Moor Fair School with Celia Datta, the Newcastle temporary Traveller teacher. The school took on the theme of 'Myths and Monsters'. Copyright © 2010-2011 - not to be reproduced without permission. This

2001 - Foot and mouth restrictions across the country led to many fairs being cancelled but fortunately the Hoppings went ahead. Big Ben Tower and the Bomber first featured at the Hoppings.

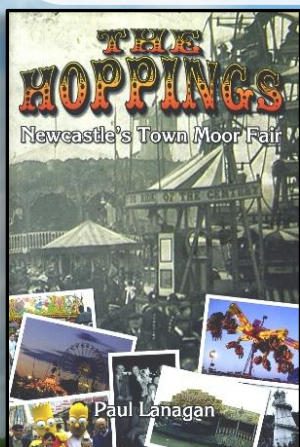
2001 - The Fair School was organised by John Braithwaite and Diane Barlow.

2002 - The 120th anniversary Hoppings started on Friday, June 21st and ran until Sunday, June 30th. The Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor John Marshall, officially opened the fairground, which had three full sized rollercoasters in attendance. This was a year of record numbers; the Hoppings had almost one million visitors and police records showed that crime and arrests had gone down from 2001. The Fairground Association of Great Britain staged a fairground model show in the University.

2002 - Diane Barlow made modifications to the organisation of the Town Moor Fair School, as attendance had increased with lots of younger pupils. Extra help was provided by volunteers from Northumbria University and Gosforth High School.



A leaflet for the Hoppings, 2004



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2003 - A 30 ft silver and blue sculpture was unveiled at the Hoppings by artist Boris Howarth. The artwork, which was shaped like a triple helix, was erected as a gateway to the fairground. 'Ginger' Johnny Brown celebrated his fortieth year on Keith Turner & Sons' Imperial Waltzer. A surprise presentation was made to him on the Moor. The Fairground Association of Great Britain's model show relocated to the Moor thanks to the assistance of Albert Austin. Copyright © 2010-2011 - not to be reproduced without permission. This Time Line is commercially available and should not be reproduced without permission

2003 - John Braithwaite and Diane Barlow organised the Fair School. Paul Lanagan first visited the school as part of his research for a Town Moor Fair book, but ended up returning each year with greater involvement.

2004 - Councillor Margaret Carter opened the Hoppings for the second time and became the only Lord Mayor in the history of the Hoppings to have done so, when her term of office was extended to allow the local elections to take place on the same day as a European election.

2004 - Supply Teacher Bob Day got involved with the Fair School and introduced more physical and practical activities to the proceedings.

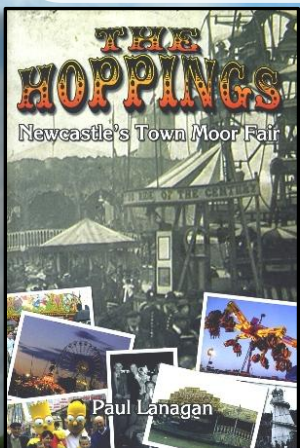
2005 - Murphy's Waltzer returned to the Hoppings for the first time since 1982.

2005 - Diane Barlow retired as organiser of the Fair School.

2006 - Showman Keith James almost missed the Hoppings when his fair permits ended up 18,000 miles away in Papua New Guinea instead of Selston, Nottinghamshire. England playing in the World Cup quarterfinal had an effect on the fair - many showmen could be seen watching televisions in their roundstalls.

2006 - Sarah Edgar, from Newcastle Ethnic Minority, Traveller & Refugee Achievement Service, became teacher in charge of the Town Moor Fair School.

2007 - This year's Hoppings was regarded by some as being the worst in living memory. Powerful tractors with treaded wheels had to be used to drag the attractions out of the mud. The repair of the damaged Moor was reported in the press to have cost over £50,000, and it was even suggested that the Moor needed a year off from the event!



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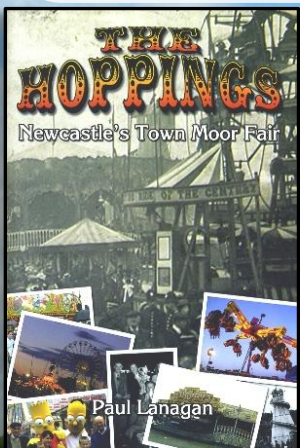
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2007 – Peter Scott, Recreational Development Officer, started to shadow Susan Stokel-Walker, Fair Manager, as the City Council’s onsite representative.



2008 – A bond of a substantial amount was paid by the showmen in advance of the Hoppings to ensure the cost of any potential damage to the Moor was covered. A food kiosk at the lower end of the Moor caught fire; during the official opening members of the Civic Party could see the plume of smoke from the top end of the Moor. Police praised the good nature shown by the tens of thousands of attendees to this year’s fair, as only minor incidents occurred, with the police handing out 48-hour ban notices to only six people who were deemed too drunk to participate. Showfamilies from the Hoppings raised £2,300 for the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation at a social event in Newcastle.

2008 – Albert Austin retired from his role as Fairground Surveyor owing to the City Council’s policy of not employing anyone over the age of 75. A surprise afternoon tea, arranged by Susan Stokel-Walker, was hosted by the Lord and Lady Mayoress of Newcastle at the Mansion House, Jesmond, on September 6th, in recognition of Albert’s services to the Hoppings. A severe downpour occurred on the day – true Hoppings weather – and many of the City’s roads were flooded out.



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2009 – As a precaution, extra fertiliser was added to the grass on the Moor to ensure it was longer and thicker prior to the fair's arrival. The news of the death of pop star Michael Jackson broke on the Moor and many of the rides could be heard playing his greatest hits.

2009 – After the Hoppings was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Albert Austin was surprised with a presentation of honorary life membership of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain and was given an ornate model traction engine which featured the words: 'Mighty in Strength and Endurance'. Later in the week, the children from the Town Moor Fair School presented Albert with a handmade card congratulating him on becoming a showman!

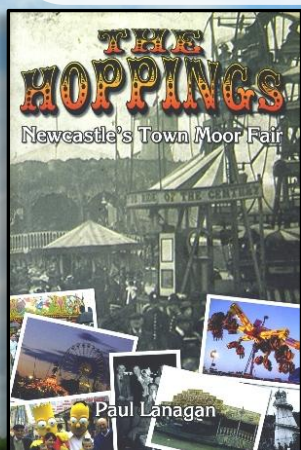
2009 – The Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor Michael Cookson, visited the Fair School and gave out certificates to the children on the last Friday. Later in the year, on November 24th, he hosted a tea party at the Civic Centre as a thank you for all the organisers and volunteers from the school.

February 2010 – Albert Austin died unexpectedly on February 23rd 2010. His funeral was held a week later at the West Road Crematorium and was attended by family, friends, showmen, Freemen and civic dignitaries. A large number of mourners attended, testament to how well respected Albert was by those who knew him. His wife, Maureen Austin, took over Albert's duties as administrator for the Northern Syndicate, organisers of the Hoppings fairground.

2010 – The Hoppings fairground was set out by Peter Scott, a Recreational Development Officer. On Saturday June 19th 2010 a new book about the Hoppings was launched on the Moor; the book was dedicated to Albert and Maureen Austin, two heroes of the Hoppings. On Sunday June 20th 2010, a memorial bench was unveiled at the north end of the Town Moor in memory of Albert Austin and was aptly named as 'Albert's View'. The ceremony of dedication was performed by David Wilson, Vice-chairman of the Steward's Committee.

2010 – For the second year, the Mayor of Newcastle visited the Town Moor Fair School and gave out certificates of achievement.

2010 – The Fairground Association of Great Britain's model show, which had been housed in a marquee since 2003 thanks to the help of Albert Austin, was renamed as 'The Albert Austin Memorial Model Show'.



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Jan 14th 2011 – A surprise announcement was made in the World's Fair newspaper by the Freeman of the City of Newcastle, stating that they had decided not to renew the annual licence with the Northern Syndicate for the organisation of the 2011 Hoppings and that the fair would instead be organised by the Freeman. An advert invited established tenants to apply to the Freeman for positions at the 2011 fair. The World's Fair also ran an article in which the Chairman of the Stewards Committee, Sir Leonard Fenwick, explained the reasons behind the change of organisers. A 'late' advert was placed in the same edition of the newspaper from the Northern Syndicate advising that "negotiations were not complete".

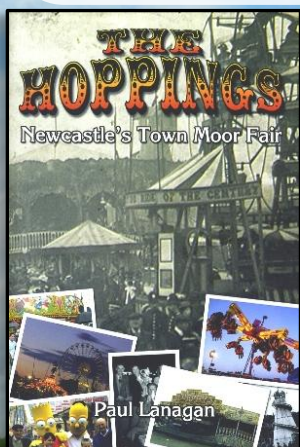
Feb 4th 2011 - A further advert appeared in the World's Fair inviting applications for floating sites at the 2011 fair. Copyright © 2010-2011 - not to be reproduced without permission. This Time Line is

Feb 11th 2011 - Via their website and the World's Fair, the Freeman made a request for participants to join a Hoppings Advisory Panel that shall "address the way forward over the coming years. The aim is to be inclusive, ensure equity and openness..." On the same day, the Evening Chronicle newspaper ran a front page headline about the situation ('HOPPINGS MAD' and 'UNFAIR FUNFAIR'). The article advised that there was a threat of boycott by the showmen should the Showmen's Guild decide in favour of the Northern Syndicate.

Feb 17th 2011 - The Evening Chronicle reported that a boycott of the Hoppings loomed following the collapse of talks between the City Freeman and Keith Miller, General Secretary of the Showmen's Guild on Tuesday February 15th.

April 2011 - Announcements on the Hoppings Facebook group confirmed the event was taking place on June 17th - June 25th 2011 and stated: "The Hoppings 2011 is a joint project between Newcastle City Council and the Freeman of the City".

June 2011 – The Hoppings fairground went ahead as planned and was organised by the Freeman of the City, with Jim Johnson as the Freeman's onsite representative. This was the first time that the Hoppings had been organised by non-showmen since 1945 and 1946 (see also 1934 for the first Direct Letting). The experience was very much a learning curve for the Freeman; the fair's layout was amended slightly and some machines and stalls were in different positions to previous years. Maureen Austin, wife of the late fairground manager, Albert Austin, continued in her volunteer role manning the police mess room. For the first time in its history, the Hoppings fair was opened by 6 year old Lucy Jamieson, a Chronicle competition winner, with the Lord Mayor assisting.



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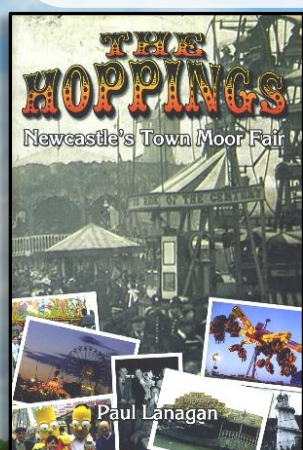
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June 2011 – Sir Leonard Fenwick (above, centre) gave out certificates of merit to the showchildren on the final day of the Town Moor Fair School.

December 2011 – A Hoppings Consultative Group was established by the Freeman and had its inaugural meeting in the Guildhall on Newcastle's Quayside in December 2011. The group consisted of sixteen members of the Showmen's Guild and six members from the Freeman's Event Group.

To be continued....



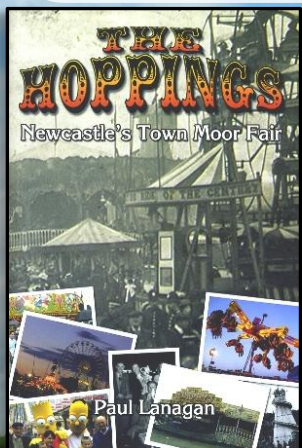
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