

UK: Partnership with Sedbergh Booktown Literacy Trust



Durham University's Department of English has announced that it has agreed a formal partnership with **Sedbergh Booktown Literacy Trust**.

The aim of the partnership is to stimulate new interest in literature and generate new audiences for books, especially in the north of England.

The partners will work closely together to organise a series of lively events, including lectures, writing workshops, and readings. Plans are already underway for a programme of events exploring the evolution of English poetry from Beowulf to Brigflatts.

Durham University holds the archive of the Northumbrian poet, *Basil Bunting*, who was a frequent visitor to Sedbergh, and who titled his best-known work *Brigflatts* (1966) after the nearby Quaker hamlet of that name. Bunting praised the spiritual solace and tranquility of the place and took inspiration from the local landscape around Sedbergh, including the River Rawthey.



The English Department at Durham is one of the top university research departments in the country (currently ranked 1st for teaching and research in *The Complete University Guide*). It teaches all aspects of English literature from Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse to the present day, and it has particular strengths in the study of British, Irish, and American poetry.

Professor Stephen Regan, who is leading the collaboration for the University, has a strong attachment to Sedbergh, having spoken about Basil Bunting on several occasions at the Sedbergh **Books and Drama Festival**. He commented that it was 'an enormous pleasure and a privilege for Durham University to have such a good working relationship with the people of Sedbergh and to have a partnership with one of the UK's premier book towns'. He hoped that support would be forthcoming from many good-willed individuals and organisations, and that the shared endeavours of Durham and Sedbergh would generate new cultural events and new creative projects for both places.

Read more about Sedbergh and its Book Town: www.sedbergh.org.uk/booktown