

North Berwick
June 24, 1905

WAYZGOOSE

The Origins of the Wayzgoose

This exhibition charts the history of the social activities of those involved in the printing, publishing and papermaking industries in Scotland. It focuses on the importance of the annual trip, or Wayzgoose, to those who worked in those industries and also in the communities based around the areas where these firms were located. It also charts the many and varied sporting and other social activities that were organised by employers, employees and print unions within these industries.

There is no definitive explanation for the origin of the word. However, it is clear that this word was being used as early as 1683, when Joseph Moxon in his 'Mechanic', writes:

The Master Printer gives them a Waygoose; that is, he makes them a good Feast.



The Wayzgoose would be held annually on the eve of St. Bartholomew's Day (24 August). This date in the work calendar heralds the end of the summer and the start of working by candlelight. On this day the master printer would provide a feast for his workers; in later years this evolved into an outing known as the Wayzgoose. Much speculation exists as to whether the name comes from a waygoose or stubble goose that would have been served at the original feasts. However, there is no evidence to suggest that a goose was served to workers as part of the Wayzgoose.

Another possible origin is in the duty of the apprentice who has just finished serving his time to provide a meal for the journeymen. This meal may have included a goose as its centrepiece.

