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NORTHUMBRIAN ANTHOLOGY NO. 1

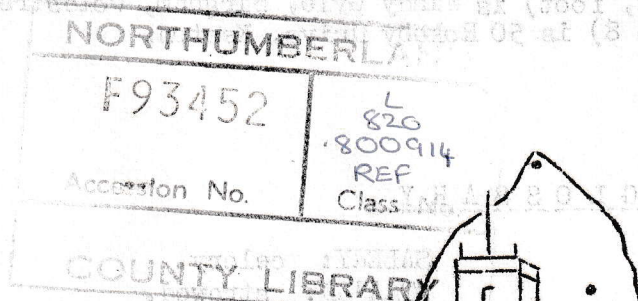


ORIGINAL DIALECT WRITINGS
ENTERED FOR COMPETITION
at the
4th MORPETH NORTHUMBRIAN
GATHERING (1971)

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NORTHUMBRIAN ANTHOLOGY ONE



PUBLISHED BY THE MORPETH NORTHUMBRIAN GATHERING COMMITTEE IN 1972.

FOREWORD.

On launching a Northumbrian Dialect Writing Competition in the 1971 Northumbrian Gathering (then called "Northumbrian Festival"), the Committee resolved to assist amateur dialect writers by publishing entries. The object of the Anthology is simply that, to publicise the writings and the writers. THE COPYRIGHT OF EACH ITEM REMAINS THE SOLE PROPERTY OF THE WRITER, and publication here must not be taken to diminish such copyright.

The writings here have not been selected, but are the whole 1971 entry, published regardless of quality, in furtherance of the Committee's wish to encourage amateur writers. The Committee has no responsibility, of course, for the contents of any item.

Through the kindness of M.G. Bartlett Esq. of Mitford, in presenting a second trophy, the competition is divided into two classes from 1972, one for verse (the Esther McCracken, formerly Rothley, trophy) and one for prose (the Bartlett trophy).

C O R R E C T I O N S .

We apologise to writers and readers alike for several typing errors. Members are not expert typists!

The first title should read "FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL". In verse 4, the correct word is "Spook't", not "SPPOK'T", and in the 9th verse, please read "wad" not "WAS".

In "The Brotherhood", line 3, read "Bill" not "BILLM", and in line 16, read "e porrs", not "PORRS".

In "Bobby Moncur's Cousin", line 7, read "brassy" for "GRASSY", and insert "began" before "TO-BREAK".

On page 6, 6th last line, "FOOR" should read "foot".

On page 7, line 17, insert a comma after "BY". In line 20, "LIS" should read "his"; and in column 2, line 5, "IT" should read "in", and in line 11, "IT" should read "i".

On page 8, in column 1, line 9, "OF A SUP" should read "or a sup".

Mr. Davies' new address (Page 2, foot) is Windy Gyle, Birgham, Coldstream.

Mrs. McCullough's address (Page 8) is 50 Rokeby Drive, Kenton.

G L O S S A R Y .

CHEY'S: chains.

CRACKET: small 3-legged stool.

CYEVILS: covils, pit working places drawn by lot.

DADDED: cleaned or dusted.

FORENEENST: against.

HOGGERS: pit trousers.

HUNKERS: haunches.

KEP: cap.

KEPS: catches, the mechanism that secures a mine "cage" (lift) while it is halted for loading/unloading.

PLACE: domestic service.

SALERY: celery.

STRA'AD: strawed.

STELLS: sheep shelters on the hills.

SPYINGE: sponge.

WICKEN: wick.

YARK: a push or blow.

N O R T H U M B R I A N P L A Y - W R I T I N G C O M P E T I T I O N 1 9 7 3

A further opportunity for Northumbrian writers is to be presented by the Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering's new competition for play-writers. It begins in 1973 and the closing date will be in the late winter of that year.

The requirements for 1973 are simple — one-act plays in Northumbrian dialect or set in Northumberland, suitable for amateur groups to produce, and to be judged both for theatrical quality and as expressions of the quality, Northumbrian-ness. Drama and comedy are equally acceptable.

Greet big tears rowled doon ne cheeks,
The Teacher yells, "Ye've wet yor breeks;
Niver mind -- ye'll sit there
Till ye dry."

Ye think yersel' -- this awful man
That drives ye back into the pram,
An' dissent seem to care a damn,
As if the blame wor mine!

Woolkin' hyem that frosty neet,
Heed hung wi' shame an' teeth set tight,
Handin' back the spasms of fright,
An' far from feelin' fine

Learnin' on yon cold gate post,
A face soe white was gliff a ghost,
Wi' cold behind soe syeun to roast,
O, the plight I be!

Now to see the way she blows --
But may hand stretch up to reach the taws;
Shame on them there nivor was,
As it aa' comes back to me.

BROTHERHOOD OF THE TERRACES (I): PYEPER TALK

(Continued overleaf)

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED TO ENTER THE NORTHUMBRIAN GATHERING'S ANNUAL DIALECT COMPOSITION COMPETITION, PLEASE SEND YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS TO ROBSON HOUSE, 29 NEWGATE STREET, MORPETH (3367) AND WE SHALL ADD YOU TO OUR MAILING LIST.

Then little Chorlie started up.

"Ee, ye knaa, Aa sent away a new fifty penny bit for a dep. camera. It was aal a dorty fraad. The' kep on writin' tiv us f' mair munny -- until Aa got fed up an' sent the camera back. Lyuk 'ee -- heer's the advort, Joe. It says, 'Pockit cameras, fifty new pence.'"

Joe taks the pyeper an' lyuks it ower. "Aye," 'e says, "but y' shudda read the smaal words. It aalso says, 'an' twenty-fower instaalments o' twenty-five pence. These advorts can be varry misleading."

Noo, it wesn't until then that Aa realised that something was missin' thet eftornyun -- wor yewsul backgrund music o' Joe's coughs an' sneezes. Well, Joe catches a caad if 'e loses a shart button, se Aa axes 'im hoo 'e managed t' cure hissell'.

'E says, "Aa saa an advort, ' the pyeper for a fifty-penny caad cure, an' since Aa started tyekin' it, Aa've been champion, man. Aa hevvent seen the doc for a week noo."

Y' see wat Aa mean? Y' divvent knaa wat t' believe i' the pyepers these days. But Aa'll bet it winnit be long afore Joe's back to the sorgery. He's the oney chep Aa knaa whee's gotten a season ticket t' ivory waitin' room in toon. 'E elwes storts t' worry whenivvor e' feels a bit better. 'E says it's sich a relief to knaa theor's summat wrang, instead o' worryin' hissell sick incyase theor might be."

Onnyway, it wes time for the kick-off, an' taalk aboot not believin' wat y' read i' the pyepers! Wey, that eftornyun, w' could hordly believe wat we saa oot theor on the field! Wor team scored se many goals, w' lost coant.

An' that reelly storted it!

It wad be aboot five minutes from time, when w' scored wat tordned oot t' be wor last goal, an' little Chorlie storted t' coont up t' sivven.

Caase, Bill hed summat t' say aboot that. "Aa, hadaway, Chorlie, it's ite," 'e snarts like 'e wes the heed of a babbies' skyul. "Aa tell y' y' canna coont, man."

Well, theor wes oney yen o' us whee dorst set up a bit cheek at Bill -- an' Jack reelly let 'im hev it.

"Noo, Bill," 'e storts in 'is perfessional sikylogic manner. "Y've f'getten that own goal w' got, jus' afore horf-time. The ref disallooed it."

Aa thort Bill wes in for an apologetic fit!

'E tords an' lyuks Jack strite i' the eyes, an' says vorry deliberate like, "Gerraway, Jack, man! Y' canna expec' us t' believe that. That reet, Ted? Eh. Joe?"

As yewshul, Joe was on Bill's side. "Well, Bill, Aa wedn't like t' contradict y'..."

Bill gie's us aal a lyuk like 'e'd jus' won "The Brain o' Britain" competition, an' smorkin' aall ower 'is fyece, 'e says, "Thoer y'are, then. That's wat Aa said, didn't Aa? Aa'll betcher wat ye like, it wes ite. Aa'll tell y' wat t' dee -- gerra pyeper, th' neet. If y' canna believe me, mebbies y'll believe it in black an' white!"

Mesell -- well, Aa jus' divven' knaa wat t' believe noo!

(Copyright of the writer, Mr. Philip Knox, "Devonia", Longframlington, Morpeth, Northumberland.)

A . C H E V I O T . M I L E .

(Placing: 2nd)

Oh, slar's the gait an' lang's the mile
Frae Windy Gate tae Windy Gyle;
Nae bittie fence nor ae lane stile,
But hags o' peat in tumblin' pile,
An' black-faced yowes in stragglin' file.

But langer, sairer still's the gait
If, forbye, ye gan back tae Gate;
Ye'll ficht wi' winds as dour as Fate,
'Neath glowerin' skies as black as slate;
An' ye'll tae bed be unco' late
Gin ye get back frae Gyle to Gate.

(Copyright of the writer, Mr. W.A. Davies, North View, Nedderton Village, Bedlington, Northumberland.)

One goalpost was a dustbin, the other a blue wool sweater thrown carelessly on the dusty concrete. The owner of the sweater stood between the goalposts, knees bent, hands hovering apart, eyes concentrated on the football. Around the ball, a motley crowd of boys, arbitrarily divided into two unequal teams, milled and fought for its possession.

Unnoticed, behind the goalkeeper, a teacher came out of the school with the handbell that would end the football game. She gave it into the eager clutch of a small girl, who grasped it in both hands and shook it vigorously. Its grassy clang echoed round the yard and was lost in the sordid recesses of the outdoor lavatories. The mêlée round the football to break apart, and the goalkeeper bent down to reclaim his sweater. Then the football rolled past his outstretched hand and a voice shouted: "It's a goal!"

The goalkeeper straightened up and glared.

"It wasn't! The bell's went, Bob!"

Bob grinned. He was small and sturdy with no front teeth.

"It was a fair go-al, so ye can gan an' loss yersel', Chris Haall!"

He tucked the football under his arm and carried it in triumph to the classroom, to receive the congratulations of his team: Bobby Dawson, seven years and one week old, and supremely confident in his own abilities. The team knew that Bobby's goal had not been a fair one, the bell had gone before he had scored, but it had given them victory. They were noisy in their praise.

"She's comin'!" came a loud whisper from the door, and they scuffled to their seats with muted voices.

The new teacher came in. They summed her up silently. Soon they would begin to test her authority, and Bobby Dawson would be expected to lead their baiting.

They were silent while she called their names in the register, answering the names demurely.

She closed the big, blue-covered book.

"I want two boys to carry the milk crate into the classroom."

Every boy's hand shot into the air.

"The fair boy in the red jersey -- you're Robert Dawson, aren't you?"

The boy stood up, grinning -- "Bobby Dawson, miss."

"Bobby, then. And the boy next to you. Go to get the crate now."

Bobby jerked his head. "Howway, Alan."

"We'll need twenty-eight bottles of milk."

Bobby Dawson stopped. "Hoo nenny?" he muttered at Alan.

The teacher began to regret her choice. He must be a dull child unable to count to twenty-eight, in spite of the bright grin.

"Twinny-ayet," Alan said.

"Oah!" Bobby turned the grin on the teacher. "Aa didn' unnerstan' ye, miss. Reet, twinny-ayet bottles o' milk. Come on, Alan."

The rest of the class giggled. The teacher tried to quell them with a glance. So she had met the one to be wary of, the one to win over, the ringleader.

When Bobby and Alan lugged the jangling milk crate into the classroom, and put it down noisily in the corner by the door, the rest of the children were gathered round the teacher at the front of the room, telling her about themselves, their families, the school, their academic achievements. Bobby dragged Alan to one side of the group and curbed his grin into an expression of mild boredom. He made occasional comments to Alan, just loud enough to annoy, but offering no contribution to the general discussion.

"Aren't you going to tell us anything about yourself, Bobby?" the teacher asked.

Bobby shook his head, with a silly smirk. Alan sniggered sycophantically. The teacher quickly passed on to more promising material.

She read them a story. Some show-offs showed her how well they could read. The class played "I-spy" while Bobby and Alan sat aloof. The teacher glanced at them occasionally, but otherwise ignored them. Bobby began to feel piqued. He had just decided to cause a diversion by drumming his heels on the floor when the teacher looked at her wristwatch.

"Oh, it's nearly play-time," she said. "It's time to drink your milk now. Then you may go out to play."

Bobby and Alan gave out the bottles of milk. The children sucked noisily at their straws, then one by one replaced the empty bottles in the crate. and hurried out to play, to race away the strain of sitting still. Bobby, last to finish because of his job of distributing bottles, dropped his carelessly into one of the little square holes in the crate, then went to the furthest corner of the room to get his football. The teacher watched him covertly.

"That's a nice football, Bobby," she said.

"Aye. It's me best 'un. Me kee-asser."

"Kee-asser?" the teacher asked, puzzled.

"Aye. Ye knaa, a proper baal wi' a kee-ess on, wat ye kin blaa up." His voice was contemptuous. Everyone knew what a caser was.

"Do you ever go to football matches, Bobby?"

"Aye. Me Dad tyeks us ti see United when they're playin' at hyem. Aa wes there on Sat'dee."

"That was a fine goal in the thirty-third minute, wasn't it?"

"Dee ye gan tiv footbaal matches, miss?" Bobby said, surprised.

"Oh, yes, often. I support United too. I have to. Bobby Moncur's my cousin."

"Is 'e?" Bobby looked at her suspiciously, to see if she was telling the truth. She looked as if she was. He said, "Can Aa gan out ti play noo, miss?"

"Yes, of course. I hope your team wins."

He gave her his best grin and swung out. The teacher smiled. It had worked. She hoped that the footballer, a remote family connection, would forgive her for shortening their relationship, if he ever heard of it. She had done it in a good cause.

Christopher Hall, aspiring goalkeeper and Bobby's chief rival, was waiting for him by the school door.

"Howway, Chris, let's gan an' git two teams together," Bobby said.

They walked towards a knot of boys loafing near the tall iron gate.

"Wat's yer new teacher like?" Christopher asked. "Alan Robson says she's soft."

Bobby bristled.

"Alan Robson doesn't knaa nowt!" he said crossly. "She's reet canny! An' Aa'll tell ye somethin' else -- she's Bobby Moncur's cousin!"

(Copyright of the writer, Mrs. Margaret Anderson, 14 Roxburgh Close,
Winlaton, Co. Durham.)

THE OLD FORE SHIFT SCENE.

(Placing: 4th)

The bairns at last hev gyen t' bed,
Thus ends thor neetly din,
The oil-lamp glows, the fire's red,
And aal seems peace within.
But Fathor gans t' th' pit at two,
The thowt fair meks him glum,
And Muthor wi' hor wark t' git thru'
Tippy-toes about the room.
Me fathor sits on his fav'rite chair

His feet on the chimley breest,
He luks the pictur' o' despair
As he tyeks a wee bit reest.
His pit claes on the cracket lie,
Laid one atop o' th' uthor,
Aal dadded, aired, and folded b'
Me patient hard-rowt muthor.
His beuts weel layered wi' dubbin grease
Stand warmin' next the jamb,

Th' pull on, ye see, wi' greater ease
 And save him many a "damn".
 It's Thursday neet and in the morn
 The cyevils 'll be draan,
 An anshus time and of consarn
 T' ivvery lad and man.
 The fire-tongs hing on a heuk
 Ahint the pantry door,
 Th' say it brings a hewer luck,
 And neboddy needs it more.
 For quarters he had draan Low Main,
 Aal clarts and flinty coal,
 Hard wark and sweat for little gain,
 The "mini" was his goal.
 He hoped this time a Yard Seem flat,
 Wi' less graft and better pays,
 The chance to buy the wife a hat
 And the bits o' bairns some claes.
 These things weyghed heavy on his mind,
 As his kitchen bed he sowt,
 The time was barely ha'f past nine,
 Three 'coors' sleep seems nowt.
 His body, tired oot, overcums
 A sairly troubled mind;
 He varry syun t' sleep succumbs,
 His cares aa' left behind --
 And just as his and his gud wife's snores
 Are blendin' nice and even,
 And dreams of riches op'nin' doors --
 He's roughly snatched from hiven.
 The ringin' 'larm his ear drums pierce,
 But not his sleep-drugged brain,
 And tho' the clamour fills his ears,
 His eyelids closed remain.
 A stritchin' hand shuts off the noise
 (Some minutes mair he'll try),
 But Muthor's nudge and muffled voice
 Brings oot a growlin' "Aye."
 Still ha'f asleep, this deid o' neet,
 He grapples for a match,
 He finds the lamp and strikes a leet,
 And var' nigh borns his 'tache.
 Off cums his linin's, vest and sark,
 He strips reet doon t' th' buff,
 Me muthor gi's his arse a yark,
 And he cries, "Noo, that's enuff."
 He dons his hoggars, badly worn,
 His pit sark and his vest,
 He pulls his beuts and stockin's on,
 F' then he's aa' but dressed.
 Subdued, me muthor meks the tea,

And joins him in a cup;
 Ne word is spok' as he and she
 In sulky silence sup.
 She packs his bait, it's varry sma',
 Just a slice o' breed and butter
 Wi' sugar sprinkled on, that's aa',
 Forbye a bottle o' wettor.
 His bottle, shotbox, lamp and bait,
 Across the tyeble gyps,
 The beggars seem t' mock his fate,
 The flamin' skitt'rin' yeps.
 He watches them wi' baleful eye
 And wonders if he dore
 Wi' one mad final fling let fly
 And swipe them on t' th' floor.
 But sanity agyen retorns
 And meekly, as time's pressin';
 The divil in 'm draas in his horns,
 And he finishes his dressin'.
 His pit claes hez that special tang
 Of oil and grease and smoke
 That t' colliery hooses aa' belang,
 And singles oot pit folk.
 He ritches for his cap and scarf,
 And last of aal his jacket,
 And there reveals that stordy dwarf,
 The hyem-med wooden cracket.
 He pockets shotbox, bottle and bait
 Afore he leaves his hyem,
 Nods t' the wife and shuts the gate,
 As he's dun time and time agyen.
 The cool neet air the cobwebs shift,
 His rank bad temper banishes,
 The starlit sky his spirits lift,
 And gloomy thowts syun vanishes.
 He gans along the cobbled street,
 His hob-nailed beuts a-clatter,
 He falls in step wi' kindred feet
 And joins in wi' their chatter.
 Th' reach the pit in ha'f a mile,
 Thor respective tallies get,
 These men whe's destiny's t' oil
 The pulley-wheels wi' their sweat.
 Me fathor clim's the pit-heap steps,
 Gets three sharp picks, for nickin',
 Then joins a group fornenst the keps
 And carefully trims his wicken.
 Composed, he cracks, on hunkers sat
 Wi' marras aal aroond.
 Th' taak o' this, and them, and that,
 Gud fellas, rough but soond.

The buzzer blaas and man t' man
 Th' queue in front o' th' cage,
 For ten lang 'oors belaa they'll gan,
 T' mek a livin' wage.
 Then whe wud dore the man t' judge
 If Sat'day neet he boozes?
 Aye! whe amang ye wad begrudge
 That cumfort, if he chooses?
 That self-same man cum Sunday neet
 'll waak the country lane,

His wife aside him trim and neat,
 And the bairns aroond them playin'
 Se much of his life is undergrund,
 Se much to danger host,
 Se much b' cheyns t' hardship boond,
 That he's easier pleased than most.
 The frinds he numbers b' the score,
 That cosy fireside,
 The fam'ly weel provided for
 Gi'es mair than joy -- gi'es pride.

(Copyright of the writer, Mr. W.B. Coombs, 84, Eighth Row, Ash-
 ington, Northumberland.)

(N.B. Certain passages omitted for competition purposes, because of the time limit, have
 been restored above -- Editor)

BROTHERHOOD OF THE TERRACES (2): ...THE HARDER THEY FALL!

In pewaterly physical terms, me mate, Bill, stan's oot in any company -- a sarta lion
 amang men, sorveyin' us lesser leets across the terraced jungle. At least, that's hoo we'd
 alwes thowt ov 'is six feet fower inchis -- until las' week's hyen gyem.

We gorrone taalkin' about wimmin. It aall storted when little Chorlie appened 'is pyep-
 er an' read oot that the big signin' ivory body hed been expectin' f' days wesn't comin',
 eftor aall -- caase 'is missus couldn't beor t' be se for away from hor ma.

An' this gie Bill 'is sormun f' the eftornyun. 'E says, "bi the way some o' these
 lasses gans on, y'd think they wes kickin' the baall. Theor's some fellers got nee mair
 guts than a stick o' soggy salary. Y' gorra stand up t' these wirmin -- mak 'em respec'
 y', like."

Well, for a feller stortin' 'is hollerdays, that eftornyun, Bill wes in a reel pugnastic
 fettle. Ee, lad, 'e wes a fine sight, stickin' 'is chist oot, showin' off 'is new blue
 short, wiv 'is yaller tie an' black kep. 'E wes a vision t' strike terror into the varry
 hort ov any man -- or woman!

Then Ted axes Bill's advice.

"Aa say, Bill, wat wad y' dee in my case? The brother-in-laa browt 'is wife an' fower
 kids t' stay a week, aboot six munths ago, till 'e gorra job. They're still heor, an' Aa
 canna get shot on 'em."

Bill squared his showlders an' put a fetherly hand on Ted's heed, an' began t' spoot
 'is worldly wisdom. "Aa'll tell y' wat t' dee, Ted, lad. Jus' divven' be se soft wi'
 yor lass. Put y' foot doon, an' say that they'll hev t' gan. Hev y' done that?"

The way Ted lyuked at Bill, y'd hev thowt he wes a love-sick lass lissenin' tiv 'or
 favourite slop singer.

"Well, no, not reelly," 'e says. "Y' see, Aa divvent want t' be ower hord on 'em. But
 it's gettin' us doon, Aa can tell y' . . ."

Then Bill unfolded his master-plan f' aall henpecked hubbies.

"Y' makkin' a big mistyek, Ted," 'e says. "Y' knaa, Aa hed me mither-in-laa spendin'
 a fotneet wiv us ivory time Aa hed me hollerdays. She wes heor ivory yeor up t' twe
 yeor ago. Then, Aa put me foor doon. Aa says, "Gerroot, an' divvent come back agyen
 when Aa'm hevin' a bit o' time off work. She's nivvor been back since. Theor y'are, noo
 -- show 'em whee's boss."

Well, Ted's chist swelled oot o' the top ov 'is muffler, an' Aa began t' feel reel
 sorry f' 'is brother-in-laa, eftor the match.

When the match storted, Aa thowt wor convorsashun wad mebbes tak a difforent torn, as

ent of grimace and madhouse tam ew nard, samalytawoo ment 'o eme tnsia 'milsaio new w
7. We was creatin' along one o' them country lasses, when we met another bus coming in the
opposite direction

ye might say. But hoo can y' gerraway from it when y' see greet daft cuddies kissin' an' cuddlin' ivvory time th' score a goal!

Onnyway, wor ootside reet wes playin' aaful baad, an' Bill purrit doon t' trouble at hyem.

Bill shoots oot as though he wes taalkin' t' the feller hissell, "Taalk about loss o' form! Wey, the feller's wife's been gettin' at 'im! Aa tell y', winmen's the roomination o' football. By, Aa waddent stan' ferrit, mesell."

Well, es we wes winnin' five-nowt, wi' oney ten minnits t' gan, Bill says e' might as weel gan hyem. Noo, when Bill torns, w' aall torn. But, that eftornyun, 'e didn't seem vorry keen for us t' faller 'im, at aall. Onnyway, it wes stortin' t' come doon in buckets, and me an' Charlie thowt we'd better be gammin' along afore we wes droonded.

An' then, we saa Bill revealed in 'is trew cullers!

We'd hordly gorroot the grund, when w' hord a voice like a storvin' craaw's -- Bill's aad woman, dolled oot in hor Sunda' best. T' this day, Aa can rimimbor hor varry words. "Hey, wheor y' been?" she croaks. "Y' said y' wes comin' oot at horf-time. Y' knaa vorry weel w' elwes ketch the fower-twenty train t' meet me maa -- and', noo, we've missed it. By the forst time in the last twe year. Me maa's gan t' be aaful mad wi' y'. It's a dorty shyem -- the oney two weeks w' can hev hor in the year . . ."

An' theor wes Bill fallerin' hor like a lamb t' the slaaghter.

An' theor wes Ted, porsin' lis lips an' shakkin' 'is heed.

Well, Aa saa Ted about a week later, an' Aa axed 'im hoo he'd gotten on wiv 'is relations.

"Ee, Champion, man, champion," 'e chortles. "Aa've gotten shot on 'em. Aa just telled wor lass, 'It's them -- or me. Tak yor choice,' Aa says, 'but yen ov us is gammin'.' Y' knaa, Aa'll hev t' tell Bill hoo t' dee it, when Aa see 'im, at the next match."

Noo, Aa'm vorry fend o' Ted, an' it tyuk us the best port ov an hoor t' porsuade 'm that it wad, mebbes, be better for 'is own sake, if 'e just telled Bill that 'is relations hed just disappeared of their own accord!

(Copyright of the writer, Mr. P. Knox, "Devonia", Longframlington, Northumberland.)

L I Z Z I E H I M E S

(Placing: 1st)

Lizzie Himes is lang 'nd skinny
An' thor's nivvor enyuf uner hor pinny;
Nee butter, ner jam, ner bullets, ner beef,
Cas th' whole u' the famly's on "Relief".

Th' hev cabbage, 'n' rhubarb 'n' lettuce,
'n' neeps,

Th't cum fr'm th' lottments abacka th'

heeps;
But sumtimes th've only got thin tattie

broth,
When th' pantry's bare, 'n' th' weather's
wrath.

Sh' weers black byuts wiv a lace-up frunt.

Sh' got th'm frum skyul frum a fella caald

Grunt.

A big fat chep frum Charity Street

Giz byuts t' bairns wi' nee shoes t' thor feet.

Hor hayor's cut short becas u' th' nits,
An' hor claes is just a jumble o' bits
She got frum hor bettors, except for her

sark. It
Wuz bowt for a penny it Paddy's Market.

Hor frock hes nee shape an' it's far ower wide
An' th' hem kings reet doon, 'n' aal t' one
side,
An' sh' weers hor Gannie's hug-me-tight.
Truth t' tell -- sh's an aaful fright.

Sh's a clivvor lass 'n' knaas a bit
Aboot workin' wet 'n' beein' laid off it th'
pit,

An' th' dole beein' stopped, 'n' th' Means
Test Man

An' gan t' pick coal wi' th' bairn's owld
pram.

An' hevin' t' mek dee wi' nowt it aal,
An' not beein' in when th' Insurance caal,
'N' scrubbin' floors, 'n' possin' claes,
When sh's dyun wi' skyul sh'll gan t' Place.

But, times've changed, th' yeers rowl on;
Lizzie Himes is Lizzie Donn.
Hor famly's dyun weel, th've aal grown up
'N' thor's nyen on th'm short on a bite of a
sup.

Th've got hooses, 'n' cars, 'n' plenty o'
munny,
'N' th' gan away foreign where th' weathor's
mair sunny;
'N' Lizzie, horsell, has gotten a job
I' th' works canteen. Sh's one o' th' mob.

Sh' dis hor layor luvly, aal high 'n' big,
Wi' greet fat corls; but mind, it's a wig.
'N' sh' weers fancy tights through which ye
c'n see
'N' hor skorts rich up, reet up past hor
knee.

Sum times, iv a Sunda', hor grandowter cums.
She gans t' collidj; sh's gud it hor sums.
A canny bit lass, not one for trashin'
But sh's elwis dress'd i' th' latest fashin.

Lizzie's grandowter's lang 'nd skinny,
An' sh' winnet put much under hor pinny.

Nee butter, ner jam, ner bullets; nowt
fried,

Cas Lizzie's grandowter's on a diet.

She'll only eat lettuce 'n' stuff like that.
Nowt wi' nee calories for feeor sh' gets fat.
'N' sumtimes thin broth is aal th't sh'll
sup.

She gets fair put oot if th' scales gans up.
Sh' weers black byuts wi' lace-up frunts;
"N' th' price o' them byuts," hor granfathor
grunts.
'N' hor hayor's cut short wiv a straggly
quiff.

It lyuks like sumboddy's gov hor a gliff.
Hor frock hes nee shape, 'n' it disn't lyuk
reet,
'N' th' hem hings doon, var nie tiv hor feet.
But th' best thing uv aal accordin' t' hor,
Is hor Geet-Gannie's hug-me-tight, fund iv a
dror.

The grandowter tyeks a lyuk it hor gran
'N' shakes hor heed fondly, ses hor claes is
aal wrang.
Gran sighs deep. . . 'n' thinks on Lizzie
Himes,
Smiles, "Yor reet, bonny lass, Aa shud move
wi' the Times."

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W O R T E A M (1) : E N T E N T E C O R D I A L E .

Well, Aa divven' knaa! Ivory time wor village footbaall team hes an away match, we hev t' wait f' the bus cummin'. In fac', w've nivvor gotten away t' time, this season. It wes neerly horf-pas' three when w' left las' week -- jis' because Tatey 'Olmes, wor driver, hed t' foller a crood o' sheep f' twe mile (at least, that's wat 'e telled us).

Onnyway, w'd jis' sat doon when wor secriterry, Donkey Maison, yells oot thet 'e'd f'getten 'is "tool kit" -- that's 'is spyinge an' bottle o' caad wetter.

"Aa'll hev t' gan an' gerrit," 'e sez.

Aa sez, "Divvent taalk se daft, man. The way we're gannin on, we'll nivvor get t' Belchford the day. Onnyway, y' winnat need yor wetter -- it's gannin t' rain syun."

But Donket waddent lissen tiv us -- at least, not until Aa telled young Tom t' gie 'im 'is bottle o' limonade an' Aa gie 'im me kep for a spyunge.

Noo, nee matter wheor y' gan, y' meet some daft cuddies. W'd gotten horf-way t' Belchford when Dippy Upson, wor centre-half, annoonces t' the company at large, "It dissent lyuk as though Geordie's comin'. The' must hev kep 'im in hospital."

We coonted three times -- but Geordie wesn't theor.

"Wey didn 't y' tell afore?" raars Donkey.

"Well, 'e telled us 'e wes playin', las' neet, when Aa seen 'im at the darts match, but Aa hevvent seen 'im since -- 'cep' when the' tyuk 'im away in th' ambylance this mornin'. Even then, Aa didn't hev a chance t' speak tiv 'im, like."

Noo, w' dorsent say nee mair -- Dippy can kick a baall from one end o' the pitch t' the uther. Onnyway, w' heddent been gannin f' mair than twenty minutes, when somethin' happened t' change the whole sityayshun, as y' might say.

We wes craalin' along one o' them country lanes, when we met anuther bus comin' in the opposite direckshun. Well, bein' in a bit o' a howwy, like, we wesn't gan t' revorse -- nee feor -- an' we aall trooped oot o' wor bus t' argie the point.

Well, y' cudda chopped me heed off wi' a stick o' Shields Rock when the Belchford team come jumpin' oot o' the uther bus.

That's when Donkey showed hissell complete master o' the most delickut sityayshuns.

'E baalls oot, in 'is persuasive draarin'-room voice, "D'y' not knaa we gorra gyem wi' ye this eftornyun, y' greet cloonies?"

"Y' mean t'neet," shoots back Belchford's captain, Rocky Bonnet. "W're playin' youse lot t' neet, at yor place."

Well, eftor a bit ov argyun, Donkey begins t' think on hoo he'd hed t' change the time an' grund, on accout o' wor team gettin' up a bit late, eftor the Frida's darts match, like.

"It's too late t' gan t' either place, noo," says Rocky. "We'll jist hev t' play y' some uther time."

Of carse, he'd noticed we'd gotten ten men -- but he'd oney gotten nine.

Donkey clicks 'is tongue an' gi'es what can oney be caalled a disdainful snart. 'E sez wi' a smile as lang as a footbaall field, "Wat aboot playin' y' in that field ower the hedge?"

'E'd noticed Belchford's nine men!

So, eftor a bit mair argyun, we got worsells changed an' lined up. Then -- wad y' believe it? -- w' jist thowt on -- neebody'd browt a baall!

Noo, y'd mebbes think that that wes -- well -- that!

Not on y' life!

As far as Aa rimiber, it wes Donkey whe orned the plaadits o' both teams when 'e suggisted w' caall it a draa -- a goalless draa, which, tiv onnyone whe knaas hoo wor team is run, wes wat y' might caall a varry appropriate result!

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THE SHEPHERD'S DRENCH

Nay wunder Coquet Shepherds
Hev acquired sic aa thorst,
droonen' sorrows i' tha lambins,
Wi' the weather at its worst.

Whisky to aa perished lamb
with nay taste or smell;
far better it afore the fire,
and tyek the drench yorsel'.

It's aa the same ootby or in,
to herd these wintry artes;

if the sheep aren't lyin' happ't
we snaw,
thor foondered in the clarts.

The frost nips off the femma grass,
nay sun te waarm thor backs,
and if for ony troubles new
it breks oot i' the packs.

Walkin' roond the stells aa'
stra'ad,
as a doctor i' the wa'ard,

we aa the tackle i' the cap
and nay sic kind i' card.

As aal the cases that ye tend
are stored up in the heed,
mindin' hor that needs a jab,
and the lamb that needs aa feed.

As caald wind's blaw around the hoose

and doon the chimla' sows,
pour oot aa nip te gie ye strength,
aye, and drink another te yor ewes.

Ye've walked yorsel' into the groond,
and earned yorsel' aa dram,
and when ye dream yor dreams the
neet,
ye'll see nay perished lamb.

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framlington, Northumberland.)

W O R T E A M (2) : A C H A N G E F ' T H ' B I T T O R !

Theor's yun thing y' can say aboot wor village footbaall team -- it is consistent. In fac', it must be the most consistent team in the North-East -- bottom o' the league five times runnin'!

It wesn't until the' put us on the s'lection committee, the uther week, that Aa fund oot wat the trouble wes -- the' will put forst things forst. An' if y' will keep things i' the proper perspectuv, as y' might say, Aa reckon y' desolve t' be last.
Aa'll tell y'.

Aa went along the uther neet, t' me forst meetin' t' gie 'em aall a piece o' me mind -- but Aa might es well hev syeved me time. T' stort wi', aalthough Aa wes forf-an-hoor late mesell, like, Aa wes the forst theor. Well, when it got t' nine o'clock, Aa thowt Aa must hev gotten the wrang neet, an' Aa wes jist thinkin' o' gannin' hyem, when in comes Donkey Maison, wor secriterry, wi' aboot six mair ov 'em.

'Carse, Aa wes in a bit ov a funny fettle, bi then, like, an' Aa axed Donkey when we wes gannin' t' start.

"Wey, w' cannot start until ivorybody's heor," he sez. "Theor's oney ten mair t' come."

Noo, Aa hed a bit o' milkin' t' dee in the mornin', se Aa telled 'em t' get on wiv it, an' nivvor mind them wat cannot get on time. But it wesn't till Aa telled 'em that they'd hev t' change the team f' Sadda, that Aa managed t' stop 'em taalkin' about the darts match which wes gannin' t' tak place laterm at the "Broon Bottle".

D'y' knaa, Aa've nivvor hord sich a commotion since wor cat got hissell shut up in the henhoose.

Theor wes Chorlie Wapload on aboot if his laad wesn't good eneuf, 'e'd resign strite-way. Then, aad Chucky Dunkers said it wes a varry funny thing when the' wanted t' sling 'is laad oot jis' 'cos 'e'd gone courtin' the week before.

Sez Chucker, "My laad's fotty-twe on Sunda, an' 'e's still faster than some young uns o' thorty-five."

Aa neorly said, "Aye, thorty-five styun."

Then Munbo Ranshaa's fether lost a couple o' trooser buttons explainin' hoo his laad wes improvin' wi' ivory gyem.

'E shoots oot, "Y' rimimbor w' lost twenty-nowt, forst gyem o' the season?"

"Wat about it," Aa says, offhand like.

"Next match w' oney lost fifteen-nowt, an' las' week w' oney lost ten-nowt," 'e saz.

"Dissent that prove 'e's gettin' better?"

Then 'is weskit borst reet open!

Well, 'fore Aa cud say oot, Barney Borns chips in t' tell ivorybody hoo 'is laad hed stopped a sartin goal, wiv 'is heed, three years back -- but 'e forgot t' mention it wes wi' the back ov 'is heed!

Be noo, Aa'd jist aboot hed eneuf, an' Aa stortid t' get up. But, jus' thin, some-
thin' happened t' put a different perplexion on things, es ye might say.

Tatey 'Olmes, wor bus drivor, comes staalkin' in t' tell us thet the ithers wesn't com-
in' becaas they wes playin' in the darts match at "The Bottle".

Noo, Aa've aalready telled y' thet theor's nee fyulin' aboot wi' wor lot -- forst things
forst ivvery time.

In twe flips ov a cuddy's rudder, we'd telled Donkey t' keep the syem team f' Sadda, an'
we wes myekin' full steam f' "The Bottle".

Well, Aa suppose if y' keep choppin' an' changin' aboot se much, ye'll nivvor get a
winnin' team, will y'?

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ton, Northumberland.)

W O R T E A M (3): Y' N I V V O R K N A A W I ' W I M M I N !

Wimmin! Aa'm fed up wiv 'em. Aa've aalwes said thet if a feller starts playin' aboot
wiv 'em, 'e nivvor knaas wheor 'e's gannin' t' land hissell. But, man, y' canna tell these
yung uns oot.

Luik at Baaldy Bortenshaa -- he owt t' knaa better at his age. Fowrty-twe last borth-
day, an' not a hair on 'is heed, he got hissell mixed up wi' Bella Lickerish fowerteen
yeor ago. It wesn't ten yeor since Aa towled him it wad be the roomination ov 'is foot-
baall. But, as Aa said before, y' canna tell these yung uns oot. He's still courtin'
Bella -- at least, he wes until las' Sadda.

They say thet ivvorything comes t' them wat waits. Well, Baaldy waited a bit ower lang.

Baaldy plays full-back in wor village team, an' las' week 'e played a stormer. Aa've
nivvor seen 'im kick se many folks since wor last Christmas dance. But Baaldy can use 'is
heed as weel -- 'e isn't perticklor whe 'e bats wiv it.

Weel, he'd stopped six goals in the forst horf -- twe ov wor opponents an' fower o'
wors. He wes playin' like a man expired, as ye might say. It sartinly luiked as if he
wes rid o' Bella at last.

Then, ten minutes efter the second horf hed stortid, up comes Bella wi' hor ma.

Wivoot se much es a "by yor leeve", they jist staalked up t' Baaldy an' set aboot 'im.
'Caase, the ref wesn't hevvin' thet, an' 'e stopped the gyem, ten minutes later, when he
saa wat wes gannin' on, like.

Then, Bella an' hor ma startid t' chase Baaldy roond an' roond the goal.

Then Bella's ma startid t' gallop the uther way, an' ran smack into Baaldy. Noo, Aa
divven' knaa whither it wes the aad wife's brolly or Baaldy's ribs wat cracked, but 'e
ended up wi' hor fowerteen styun on top on 'im.

"Noo," yells hor ladyship, "wey did y' break off the engagement wi' me dowter?"

'Caase Baaldy wesn't in a speakin' position, as ye might say. Se, Bella's ma batted
'im agyen wi' ivvorything she hed. Aa tell y', it wes a good job for Baaldy thet most ov
it wes behind hor. But it made n^{ee} difference -- Baaldy couldn't say owt wi' 'is heed
stuck in the clarts.

Then Bella reveals Baaldy in 'is trew cullers, in a manner o' speakin'.

"'E broke off becaase me engagement ring wore oot, an' 'e's ower mean t' buy another!"

Y' could hev hord hor in a fifty thoosand crood.

'Caase, we wes aal varry sorry f' Bella, an' she cyuled off a bit when w' telled hor
thet she wes still yung eneuf t' wait another fifteen yeor. We wanted t' get the gyem
gannin' agyen. But it wesn't until Aa heppened t' mention thet theor wes even hope f' me

gettin' married yet, that they come off the pitch.

Noo, mebbies y' waddent believe it, but it wesn't till Sunda morning thet Aa thowt on wey them twe fortune hunters fallered us off the field se quick, like.

But Aa'm hevvin' nyen ov it -- Aa'm giein' Baaldy the munny t' buy another ring!

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P.S.

THE NORTHUMBRIAN BURR.

All Northumbrians will know that these compositions should be liberally decorated with the celebrated Northumbrian burr, whenever they are read or thought or recited. It is something that does not write very well, and perhaps the best one can do is to insert a "y", so that "crow" becomes not merely "craa", but "cryaa". The stranger can be advised only to choke whenever he finds an "r" or "ry" in these compositions!

The burr, like the Northumbrian dialect, is an element of history, as much of an ancient monument as the Wall, Hexham Priory, or Bamburgh Castle. It is a genuine relic of the past, somewhat eroded by time and education, but no less worthy of attention and preservation than a somewhat decayed castle or pele.

The burr's existence was recorded by travellers and others in the last century, the 18th, 17th and, for that matter the 16th century, when Shakespeare wrote of Hotspur's "speaking thick". Moreover, the travellers did not meet the burr elsewhere -- it was a trick of the speech of Northumberland, where everyone had it. The popular explanation has long been that the Northumbrians imitated the great hero, Harry Hotspur's "thickness" of speech, some sort of impediment, but in that case why all the Northumbrians, and why nobody else? It seems much more probable that Hotspur simply shared this "thickness" with his fellow-Northumbrians, that it was the burr that Shakespeare was referring to.

That leaves the questions why the Northumbrians had the burr, and why others did not, and to explain this one turns to history. Suppose all the Angles had the burr in their speech! They settled the whole eastern coastal plain from Suffolk to the Firth of Forth, and burred away merrily throughout their lands. Then the Danes invaded and settled amongst them and the two languages and intonations merged (They were related languages, but not the same by any means). The Angle burr could well have been one casualty of the merger -- it would have been much easier for the Angles to lose it in time than for the Danes to acquire it! Notice, however, that the Danes did not occupy Northumberland, and so could not have affected the speech of the Angles here.

To the north, in south-east Scotland, the Angles in due course were heavily influenced by the speech of the Scots, of whose kingdom their territory became a part. Again, there would have been a merging of cultures and languages, and again the burr could well have been a casualty. With it vanished both south and north of Northumberland, that remnant of the great kingdom of Northumbria was left also as the last stronghold of the unadulterated Anglian tongue, and the only survival in this country of the burr. Hence the agreement of the travellers that the burr belonged to Northumberland and nowhere else. As confirmation of this explanation, I should add that something very like the Northumbrian burr has been reported in south Denmark and neighbouring North Germany, the very territory from which the Angles came to conquer and occupy lands in this country.

It should follow that there are other elements in the speech of Northumberland, both accent and vocabulary, that, like the burr, were once commonplace on the country's eastern seaboard, but now are preserved uniquely in Northumberland's "dialect" (a term which depreciates the historical and linguistic importance of this ancient language).

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