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In the 50s and 60s the Forestry Commission planted vast areas of North Northumberland changing the hill shepherds way of life, in many cases for ever.

The Hoose on the Hill

Meery, dye mind the owld days afore aal this forestry took ower the place? It wis' whyles hard but man wuh hed same gud times. Ah loved yon nights ower it The Hope playing cardes we Matty an Jean, in aalwis sic a nice supper efter. Trudgin ower the hill in aal whethers, but it pit mony alangwinters night in. Dy'e mind the night they wor ower here ind Cissy in Joe landeed. Why it wasn't lang afore Joe hed the pipes genin ind Matty wasn't i bad hand wi the fiddle ithor. Aal ah meniged was two or three songs. The Road Tae Dundee wis aalwis yin i me favorits. Things livind up even mare when ye got the whisky bottle oot. Matty wis sittin in the comer yonder, the amount i drink he got through, ah thout he'll nivor git up agin, but man he still played on. If eh mind right wuh wor aal abit late arood the sheep next morning.

It wis nice seein the bairns growh up here, ind sad te see them leave but ahm pleased they've got gud jobs away. Times change Meery. The was nowt left here for them. The hills aal planteed noo, just trees instead o sheep. Nivor mind wuh've still got the use i the hoose ind yin or two acres that the didn't plant. It wis gud i yon coonsil man tae offer is a hoose in the village, but a div'nt naa if ah cud settle doon yonder, ower much noise. Its peaceful here. Lets hev a cuppa tea.

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There's a Lot of it Aboot

Doctors ill tell ye that the maist smittle virus of all doesn't have nae lang latin name.
Ah wis feelin bad this morning, ahm nowt ower grand ye now
There's a throbbing at me temples and a hot flush on me brow
Wiv aching joints and catchy throat ah hevn't any doot
Ah must have catched the bug they call - a lot of it aboot

The wife she takes yane look at me - I know jist what ye need
Het bottle on your belly and an asprin for your head
Just get yersel into yer bed and divn't ye get oot
Am ganna call the doctor - there's a lot of it aboot

The doctor diagnosis it, a new type Asian flue
Wis browt here in the baggage of an immigrant Hindu
If aah find oot whi give is it a'll fetch him sic a cloot
There's little comfort knowing - there's a lot of it aboot

Aad Charlie from next door comes roond, he sees me watery eyess,
Me hacky cough and snotty nose and starts to sympathise
Me auntie doon at Hexham says wor Willy's got a beut
Varnie to be expected - there's a lot of it aboot

Ah think the neighbour's cannie that sends a get well card
Aah owt to lovee all neighbours but I find her very hard
Showin charity to all the yanes that just stand there and spoot
He's lookin proper poorly - there's a lot of it aboot

But when ahm feelin better and ahm up and out yence mair
And hear how all them neighbour folks are feelin kinda sair
Ahl walk right, in, ahl hearty grin and look at them and shout
Aah see yiv got what aah hed, eye - there's a lot of it aboot

fine Northumbrian speech 1995 2nd

Technology (For our Mate Stew)

When they forst gat me the mobile phone
A bigger headache ahve nivor known
Things a bleepin
Things tae dial
Oh my God, what a trial.

Stew sed why man ye'll lorn
ahh sed when, he sed the morn
Noo Stew knew aboot these things
He sed he larnt then as a boy
Neyn iv these when ahh wis young, nee joy

Next me wife helped or so she thout
Sayin'things ahh knew nowt about
Look this is the menu she sed
The menu sez I, giuen i fright
Like fish n' chips on i Frida night?

No, no, no sez me youngest son
Gizit here wull seyn be on
On wat sez I
On air sez he, wuh must unlock
Then things starteet flashin', sic i shock!

Noo thores an arly mornin' caal
Ahh didn't naa wat tae de it aal
Then suddinly ahh fund me feet
Press this button ye'll be soond
Ind right away a voice a foond.

Yin day ahl conquer this phone iv mine
Aye yin day ittle torn oot fine
But until then ahl hefta mind on
Ahh divn't press button A for i bit iv crack
Or button B tae git me money back!

Terry Common - 2003

Member of Poetry Now and
Executive member of N.L.S.

Auld Ned

Auld Ned Iiked i pint , iverybody knew that but the day he got tite itha B1ack Horse ill be lang minded. Noo Ned hed tuen his wheelbarra doon the pigeon wud sumbit tae collect sum sticks fur his peas. Noo eet wis i warm day ind Ned wis feelin gie droothy so on reachin the pub he parked hes barra ind popped in for a gill of ale, "jis t yin mind" afore he went back tiv hes gardenin.

Bob- the-Keeper landed in, hoyed hes cap in the corner s eat, wiped hes brow ind gladly accepted the half iv beer that Ned stud im. Aboot 2 hoors later efter hevin "jist yin mair" on several occasions, Bob finally left tae hev "thi dinner". Aboot the same time Jimmy pulled up whe hes little van which he used tae sell groceries from. Efter seein tae the landlady's grocery needs he thought eet i gud idea tae try "a couple" afore movin on. Jimmy ind Ned had a grand crack aboot the price iv rabbits ind whe wud get Tommy Scott's job is heed wudman on the estate. A few pints later Jimmy thout, eet might be as weel tae push on i bit further up the "waater". Onybody cud see be noo that, auld Ned wis set fur the duration.

The young laddies iv the village thout eet, wis grand fun watchin auld Ned staggerin oot the pub late that afternoon, convinced that onybody cud fly given enuf practice. Efter failin tae fly doon the 3 pub s teps he landeed iva heap along side hes barra. As they helped him tiv hes feet he insisted he waas "neeun the warse" as he hed been ganninn doon "atonerat" (at any rate). Ned banged up ind grabbed the barra handles but seun tueb i side-gannin, strite ower the road ind cowped hes barra into the clarty hole that, wis still theor from the rain last week. At this stage the lads thout eet a gud idea tae inform Masie, Ned's missus. Young Willi wend ind sout hor ind when she landeed doon carryin the gibby stick she kept in the bowdy hole, many iv them med i hasty retreat. Keekin aroond trees ind waal ends from i safe distance they witnessed Ned gettin sic i bittlin whe Masie's gibby stick, been caaled i drunken ould feul ind whiles i bit warse. Whe the pea sticks noo lyin in the clarts ind Ned havin difficulty standin upright. Masie "ordered" i couple i tha lads tae hoy Ned itha barra ind wheel him hame. Naebody argeed, they whar just pleased tae get him oot the way. Ned got wheeled hame. Masie still hittin him aboot ivery 10 seconds wiv hor stick. Eet wis about 11 o'clock the next mornin when Ned cum doon tae collect hes pea sticks , jist aboot openin time ! !

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1st Story Telling 1995

2nd Short Story 1995

3rd Story Telling 1999

A Deeth I' The Valley

Ah see owld Watty gat away. He nivor did get yon hemel waal mendeed. Ah saa him ownly last week. Mon he wis full iv "gan on". Eet wis sic i glif ah got when ah hurd he wis deed. Bessie ill be sair pushed tryin tae run the place whe oot him. Aah divn't think young George ill want tae take ower, not while he's tied up whe yon lassie from about the toon.

i le

D'ye mind yon night it the Bult efter Wullie Oliver gat merried ind whe aal gat tite, Watty tuek i backgannin, ye knaa he cleared aboot fowerteen glassis off the mantelpiece afore he finally went doon in the corner yonder. Naebody complained efter aal he waas Wullie's Uncle.

Bye God he like i game i darts, he nivor waas much gud but' still he alwis torned oot even if the snaw wis abun yor knees.

Mind yon owld bike iv his whiles let im doon. D'ye mind when he tried tae git doon the glarry peth whi yon little Francis Barnett. Why mon eet wis sae clagged up whe clarts eets nae wonder eet cut oot on im.

Bessie says the funeral ill be i Munda. Wull likely git into the Bull fora couple efts.

Mon he'll be sair missed, but ah suppose sittee sivin wasn't i bad innins.

FOR WOR CISSY

Ah used tae luv yon times in the summer holidays when we wud gan ower tae bide whe uncle ind auntie Robson it The Craig. It wisn't aal that far from the village really, in fact, ye cud see the smoke from the chimleys, arly mornin, but it wis sae different. Wor brekfists tasted that much better, elwis bacon ind egg, ind mushrooms when the wis ony about.

Then we wud feed the hens we aunty Lizzy ind Sweep wud git rang of uncle Barty for loupin up it wuh.

In d'ye mind yon bright sunny mornin wuh wor doon the bottom i The Croft in ye got sic i glif we yon ather. But uncle Barty sean fettled him, he gie him sic a bittlin we his stick.

Aye ind it wis whiles gittin on inta the night afore uncle Barty got the auld coo milked but yon glass i warm fresh milk wis worth waitin for. Ind cream off the top nixt mornin wis even bettor is lang is aunt Lizzy didn't see ye usin yor finger. Ah elwis think she kenned but nivor sed nowt. As the heather startid tae lose its bloom ind show time came aroond wuh knew it wud sean be time tae gan heym ind prepare for scull again, but, mon, whit a grand time wuh had hed.

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