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*Where winning and 'placed' items were entered into competitions results are shown as footnotes*

## 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.

*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.*

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262 words

## There's a Lot of it About

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 hev'n't any doot  
Ah must have caught the bug they call - a lot of it about

The wife she takes yane look at me - I know jist what ye need  
Het bottle on your belly and an aspirin 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 about

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 about

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 about

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 yaness that just stand there and spoot  
He's lookin proper poorly - there's a lot of it about

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 about

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293 words

fine Northumbrian speech 1995 2<sup>nd</sup>

## 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 about 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!

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201 words

## 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. About 2 hours later efter hevin "jist yin mair" on several occasions, Bob finally left tae hev "thi dinner". About 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 about 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 around 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 about 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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482 words

1<sup>st</sup> Story Telling 1995

2<sup>nd</sup> Short Story 1995

3<sup>rd</sup> Story Telling 1999

## Theres Alwis The Morn

It, wis a nice dry mornin, end i May- Thinks I ahl1 jist doon the Oak Tree Field ind build up yon dry stone wall thet fell doon it the start iv lambin time. Ahl take me molin spade ind a couple iv traps as weel, ind see if ah connot catch yon mole itha wood it the bottom iv the field yonder. Ah gits tae the field gate when whes comin along but John Davison. Ah told John what ah wis up tee, ind when he saa the molin spade, he axed if ah cud pop along sumtime ind try tae catch i yin he hed in his garden.

"Ahl1 jist cum along noo John while ahve got me spade ind traps otherwise ah might forgit." ah sez. So whe gits along tiv hes place, "the Birks", ah finds a gud run ind sets baith traps.

Are yuh cumin in fora cup?" says John.

As it waas noo torned 10:00 ah accepted. Efter a gud bit crack about whe wis gonna win the next election ind the merits iv Alan Graham's new tractor, ah got back oot ind on me way. Ah got about half way along the bottom road when ah meets Adam Turnbull on hes Quad, luckin gie 'het up'.

"Ye hev'n't seen a Collie dog gannin aboot?" sez Adam. "Moss hes disappeared this mornin, its not like him tae wonder off. Ah wadn't like tae lose him, man he's a gud dog, ind worth a bit tae. Ahm just wonderin if he's folleed yon hikers up abun the snout arlier this mornin."

Ah best gie ye a hand tae find him." ah sez. So ah louns into the back i the Quad, molin spade as weel, ind off whe sets for the hill. Just afore tornin onta the right of way ower the hill whe meets owld Bella walkin back from the village. "Hev ye seen a collie dog gannin aboot?" shooted Adam.

"Ay", the've got him barred in at the Post Office, one iv yon walkers tuck im there, Minnie sed she thought he wis yor dog."

"By God ahim relieved," Adam declared, "We'll jus pop along ind git im."

After collectin Moss Adam thought eet a gud idea tae hev a pint as it wis now 12:30. So we bools into the Rose. After "Just yin mair." on a number of occasions whe finnaly sets offhame.

It wis about 4:00 when aah rowled into the hoose. Aah hed just gat the kettle boiled when the Mrs returned from hor shoppin it Alnwick.

"Hev he hed a big day?" says she.

"Ay" ind aahve jist minded Johnnie Deakin is droppin off sum fertilizer about noo, so aah better gan ind meet him at the top field."

"Divn't, forget ye've got a Flower Show committee meeting the night at 7:00." she shoots as ahm gannin oot the back door. End of a perfect day thinks I as ahh tripped ower me molin spade lyin in the back yard.

Ah why, there's alwis the morn.

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513 words

commended short story - Storytelling 1996

## Man, Times Hev Changed

Farmin folk ill tell ye how times hev changed. It one time a gud dry windy March day ment plowin we horses (ah kin mind them) ind then tractors (the auld type, Fordsons etc). Get the land right ind get hor sowed in April, then its lambin time. May, get the torneeps in.

June, git the hay field cleared iv stock, tae let the grass gro for this years hay crop. Clippin time then dip the sheep. July/August hay time, kyles ind pikes. September, showtime ind then right into the harvest whiles be the light itha moon.

October, harvest festival 'aal is safely' gathered in. But, noo-a-days!

Hay time is ower afore July, the harvest is in be Aagust. The fields are plowed we muckle upside-doon plows ind inverythings sown ind ready for next years crops be the end iv September. So wat dye dee noo? Git the tups oot iv course, lambin time is now in January/February. Ye see whe divn't git bad winters noo, mebee a couple iv frosts, mebee i bit coverin iv snow, but nowt tae harm the lambs which are nearly aal born inside noo-a-days onyway. Swede tarneeps , (bagies ) "had yor tongue", ower much bother, they are ownly grown for the hoose, noo, usually in France or Spain. Oi1 seed rape is wat ye want, much mair profitable. Ind clippin time! Whe thets a laugh. Naneiv yor clippin shears noo, jist muckle droves iv broon people wi New Zealand accents clippin thor way across the world, clippin about 6 or 7 thousand sheep a day, we fancy electric machines. Ah wonder hoo much tax they pay?

So there ye hev eet , 'progress'. Mind eets done nowt for employment. Ah mind when a biggish farm hed about a dozen men ind one, mebee two tractors. Noo there's 2 or 3 men ind a "dozen tractors". Aye thets progress.

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319 words

1st. Dialect prose 1996

## 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.

D'ye mind yon night it the Bult efter Wullie Oliver gat merried ind whe aal gat tite, Watty tuck i backgannin, ye knaa he cleared about fowerteen glassis off the mantlepiece 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 efta.

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

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224 words

## Cars Divint Just Disappear

Watty had a car, not many people had a car in 1934. Mind it was 12 years old and in 1934 the word servicing wasn't often heard. But, it got him don tae the pub once a week, or maybe twice a week in summer if funds permitted. It was late June and Watty had just finished the "clippen" (sheep) and he was bonnie ind droothy, (that is thirsty and needing a pint or two) So he set oot, doon the burn wi th the old car tae the village some 8 miles away. He got weel served and after half a dozen pints the nips (small whiskys) started comin in. It would be turned midnight afore Watty set off back up the valley, the old car chugging merrily about 25 mph.

However about half-way home Watty thought it may be in order to stop the car, walk doon tae the burn, as he felt the nights excesses could be comin back up again. After 10 minutes of 'bowkin ind howkin' (belching and being sick) Watty returned to his car which wasn't there! Thinking in his confused state that he had never brought the car, he set off to walk back home. On arriving home, by now daylight, he looked in the shed where his car was normally housed, (no doors on the sheds in those days) but there was no car. Watty thought it was sensible tae slide quietly inta the hoose afore his wife Nellie awakened. Ahll sort this lot oot the morn he thought. 'Them Bs from the Hope will hev taken it ahll bed', thought Watty, ind off he went next morning tae sort them oot. No, they hadn't taken his car even oot iv devilment in fact they had nivor been oot it all last night, knacked after the clippin. Had somebody taken it and crashed, they might be hurt. About a dozen locals searched the valley but found nowt. So they informed the police. Ye see naebody stole cars in those days especially in the Upper Coquet Valley, and more especially after midnight on a weekday. The car at the time of its disappearance had only about 1 gallon of petrol in it. It was never seen or heard of again.

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378 words

1<sup>st</sup>, Storytelling 1997

## A Country Land Gans West

Ned was born up the Coquet, but unlike maist of his kind who hed nivor been beyond the next village or hamlet of even Alwinton. Ned hed itchy feet ind thought it wud be gud ta travel the world ind hopefully make hes fortune. This wis a lang time ago, in fact in the 18 hundreds. Noo it thet time America wis "the place". So arly yin morning off he sets, trevellin doon tae Liverpool, "how on earth he knew how tae get theor God knows" but this wis the gateway tae America. He duly arrived in New York ind thocht he might try a pint. Whe ye knaa the ways ye git on taakin in a pub so he axes this fella if theor wis any work about. "Why aye" says this New Yorker, git yersel joined in the army, they alwis are luckin for blokes like yersel". "The Army" ses Ned. Why aye, ye git a barri uniform wiv i lovely stripe runnin ah'll the way doon yer strides, i gud pair iv buits, ind i bonnie hat, gan on man git yersel into the Cavalry. Ye git paid tae. So Ned duly attended the recrutin shop. Ah understand the Countrysid sez Ned ind ah kin fire a rifle. Ah used tae shut rabbits fer me Uncle Robert. You're in then sed the O.I.C. Why Ned wis thet happy he weat ootside ind couped hes creels 2 or 3 times on the green. Wat Ned didn't knaa, the time wis rite in the middle iv the American/Indian wars ind in a short time he wis taken oot tae yin iv yon Wild West places, Arizona, or Colorado or yin iv them oot yondor. The takes him tae this muckle big fort stuck in the middle iv naewhere. He wis greeted be this Colonel, ind thinks Ned, he's cartinly got a big hat.

The Colonel axe\* him where in England he wis from, London, Birmingham, Liverpool. Whe-no sez Ned ahm from the North man. Ned thought eet sensible tae sae near Newcastle. Ah Newcastle sez the Colonel, the tell me iverybody up yonder is named efter wor great furst president Gorge Washington. Whe sort of sed Ned. In that case sed the Colonel (who waas obviously i cliver man) from noo on ahm gan tae caal ye Geordie. The tell me ye're got a gud knowlidge iv the countryside so ahve got jist the job for ye. There's sum Indians campin doon the bottom iv the syke yonder aboot fower miles away. Ah want ye tae gan doon ind keep an eye on them for a couple iv days ind see wat they're up tae. But divnt let thm see ye mind. Nae bother sez Ned but ahll need a gallaway ind a bite iv bate tae take with us. So they gits him a gud horse, fills him i flask iv tea ind away Ned gans tappy lappy doon the back lonnen towards the Indian camp. Gud luck George shoots the Colonel behind im. Whe two days gans bye ind Ned doesn't show up, three days no, fower days, five days still no Ned. Sixth day he returns tae the fort. Whe Geordie sez the Colonel, ah thought ye wis i gonna, tell us wot ye found oot. Whe divn't take our lang sed Ned, ahm fair scrannie, in fact ah wis thet hungry ah cud iv eat the Gallaway. Mind yon Indians is queer buggers, letting oot strange gollers, lightin fires ind sendin great plumes iv smoke up in the air, smokin the queerist luckin pipes, ind the drums, gannin aboot bittlin them day ind nite. Drums George, sed the Colonel with a strange look on his face, were they war drums. Naw, naw sed Ned, fair do's, they wor theirs

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638 words

3<sup>rd</sup> Fine Northumbrian Speech 1999

## A Night oot whe me Marras

Ahh went oot whe me marras  
A rougher place ah nivor seen  
Tae me the waiters lueked like poofs  
Even the Landlord wis i Queen.

Drinkin something vary strange  
The sed eet wis broon ale  
But ahve nivor drunk nowt like yon afore  
Ahh think eet cam in, in a Pail.

Aal the young lassies lueked like dergs  
Ahh wis surrondeed be bloody witches  
Divn't worry ahh cud say warse  
Ahh cud iv caaled them bloody "bitches"

But the say beauty is ownly skin deep  
Sometimes eets reallY deep inside  
Tho' ahh knaa the one thet tapped me up  
Sartinly had not much tae hide.

We boobs on hor belly  
Ind limmers up hor back  
So ahh thout ah'l hev anithor drink  
Ind mebe find i different crack.

Ah chat whe i fella it the bar  
This is better, so ahh thout  
But he knew nowt about anything  
Ind iverything about nowt.

Ah've teld me marras, noo thets me' finnish  
Ahh canna tuek nae mair  
Ah'l jist settle for the Golf Club  
Ind i barri comfy chair.

But nothin's elwis aal bad  
Yuh kin elwis torn aroond ind laff  
But wat ahh want maist it this time  
Is tae git hyem and hev i bath.

Mind the night eet ended in gud cheer  
A cigar atween me liPs  
A stagga alangtae Fat Eds' shop  
Ind i barri feed iv Fish n' Chips.

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## Raynard And The Goose

Ah stud on the ridge  
Abun the bridge  
When i feoks cam doon the born  
Ahh lucked eet him closely, ahh knew he'd seen me  
Then he sccidadilt into the corn

A nicer beast ahh nivor saa  
He even made the corbie craw  
Not me best freend ahh must say  
But i beauty aal the same  
Ahh may weel see him anithor day

Autumn came ind the days gat short  
Ind for Christmas sum geese ahh bort  
November came ind eet wis caad  
The snaa cam doon far oor sharp  
Wud this winter be the warst wuhve had

The wind blawed caad een thro yer floors  
Even the cuddy stayed indoors  
The ootlyerrs wah fed eet the regular time  
Eet gat sae caad the well frozz up  
The aad church clock een lost eets chime

The geese ind hens wah shut up tight  
Jist correctly ivery night  
A nice big coop ind i pen whe net  
The poultly are safe ahh told the wife  
"Aye divint coont your chickens yet"

Noo the feoks liked geese ahh cud see  
Arly morn tae cut me Christmas tree  
Ahh saa him hingin roond the pen  
A glif ahh give him ind off he ran  
But ahh knew thet he'd be back agehn

He cam roond maist ivery night  
He's tracks in the snaa the morn in sight  
He became fer me almaist i pal  
Tho' wan thet ahh cud dae withoot

As ahh deeked him theor agin the waal

Jist afore Christmas i goose ahh lost  
But not really at tae much cost  
Ahh hope he didn't feel much pain  
Cos on Boxin Day the hunt wis oot  
Ind ahh nivor saa him again

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281 words - Rothbury Festival

## The Morn

A see you hav'nt stopped smokin'yet.  
Oh but I'm gannin tae the morn.

Ind I see you're still drinkin, ah thought ye were giv'en that up tae.  
Aye ahm finished the night, ah start stopped, the morn.

Its about 6 weeks ago ye teld me ye were gan tae loose weight.  
Why ahm thinkin' about startin, the morn.

That neighbour i yours nivor cut his side iv the hedge, ye sed ye might  
heftae dae eet aal.  
Ahh but he's intendin' daein eet the morn.

Did yon mechanic ye knew ivor gat yor car fixed.  
Not yet, he's been on holiday, but ahh think he's back, the morn

How's yer dowta keepin, the yin fra about Carlisle.  
Oh grand, she wis cummin' ower last week, but gat held up we lots iv  
bissy, however she hopes tae be here, the morn.

Did ye ivor geet yor tetties howked.  
No, man eets been that wet but the forecast says eets gan tae be fine,  
the morn.

A fella in the pub yince axed is, wat de ye think is the best day in the week.  
Ahh kin answer ther easily my friend, the best day is elwis, The Morn.

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198 words -

3<sup>rd</sup> - Dialect Prose 2004

## Car Boot Sale

The mornin of the car boot sale  
Ind we are aal aglow  
This day we'll mak Wha fortunes  
Don't you know

Tho wh'ed nivor been afore  
Wha confidence ran high  
Eets not alwis easy, wha nabor said  
But whe cudd'nt think for why

The bairns, the dog, ind dear owld Gran  
Wh'ed be theor in force  
Wh'ed rid whar'sels iv aal wor rubbish  
Whill the buy eet?, whi iv corse

The punters starteet poukin strite away  
Eet things that worn't for sale  
"Git yor fingers oot iv theor"  
Thems me cans iv lunch time ale

Aal gie ye fifty pence for this  
Tho eet's marked up et fower pund  
Then sed Mr, how much fer this?  
For a beuk thet she hed fund

Aye whe fund oot kinda sharp  
They're not aal fun these car boot fairs  
Sum folks Wha gannin pokin about  
Like wolves roamin oot of their lairs

It the end iv the day whe hed plenty stuff left  
In fact whe hed mair than wh'ed brout  
Eet didn't add up, this car boot sale  
So ahh sat doon ind ahh thout

Whe hed bout from thet lady  
Whe hed bout from thet man  
The bairns they bout toys  
Ind an owld glass dish fer tha gran

Ind so whe went hyme  
Wuh the car laden doon  
Whe'r cummin nae mair tae boot sale days  
Wat whe want wh'e1 buy in the toon

So av ordered I skip  
Ind eets cheaper by far  
Then gannin tae I car boot sale  
Ind still hefta pay for the car

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## Simply Northumberland

Ah've waalked the beach in Tenerife ind wonderful sights ah've seen. Mexico's Sierra Madre. The harbour lights in Crete. Spain's snowclad Sierra Nevada. The High Atlas. Sahara's burning sand. But ah wis born in Northumberland whe the wooli sheep ind kind owld folk, free range eggs ind a welcome hand. Not the folks ah've been amang sometimes say whaats aal thet aboot, then ah kin say ye may be wrang. Yve nivor been on Windy Gyle, or Chevi0t's flat topped hill, Simonside whe eets views sae grand. Ah love the World ind the nice people ah've met but mony div'nt understand, there's nae better place on eirth than Northumberland.

3<sup>rd</sup> Dialect prose. Northumbrian gathering 2005

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## 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 tasteed that much better, elwis bacon ind egg, ind mushrooms when the wis ony aboot.

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 around 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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## Pikin Time

Ah mind grand yon days ind nights i the summer holidays when it wis hay time, but. pikin time wis the best iv aal. The grass hed been cut, we the owld reaper, winned tord, raked ind kyled then left another day tae dry. Then sic discussions aboot the weather, wad eet bide dry the night. Iverybody wis exports luckin it the sky, kickin the grass but still naebody wis surtin, but iv course it would carry on bein discussed in the pub later ind efter a few pints iverbody wud be convinced we wud be pikin the morn. It was arly August ind the morn wis bright and sunny, but the night hid been cool ind the kyles hev tae be shook oot, still we shud be pikin be tea-time. Eddie we the owld Fordson tractor wud fit the "sweep" on the back. A funny luckin contraption we aboot 8 or 10 wooden prongs aboot 6 fut lang ind a fut apart. We this he would push the kyles togithor, enough tae make a pike. He did this aal ower the field. Ind so the pikin starteet. Us laddies job wis tae rake up aal the louse hay. We warn't allowed tae fork unto the pike. Auld Geordie wud be struttin aboot, tab in the mooth not sayin much but makin sure we wor dyin the job right. Ethel ind hor father wud be doon tae help, then auld Jock the cobbler wud land. Afore lang nearly aa the village wud be theor lendin a hand. We wud hefta hevoer piked the night, it might rain the morn! Then the midges starteet! How us laddies wished we were allowed tae smoke, out tae git rid otha little beggers. Auld Billy Scott laandeed convinced he cud help but man he wis that bad wi the pains he had difficulty even awaken. then the Vicar arrived white shirt, sleeves uptake the elbow, but still weerin the "dog collar". Mind he had gud reason tae git involved, we in acre ind a half iv grass yeildin yin pike if he wis lucky but we a couple i ponies tae feed he wud be around "scroongin" for some hay afore the winter wis oot. Us laddies enjoyed yon two bottles i pop even if the war i bit warm. The sun slid ablow the hill. The men dragged theirsels doon tae the pub. The pike was finished for the day but wha herd sumbody mutter "Ah wonder if Jimmy it the Craig ill be pike the morn".

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## Teethache Varsus Gout

Maist folk divn't like the dentist's chair  
Say they'ed raither hev a heedache  
But if ye get hor really bad  
Theres nowt can beat the teethache.

Ye' el be glad tae see yor dentist  
Even tho he maks ye shoot  
Cos when yon tooth gits really sair  
Yor pleased tae git eet oot.

Ahh yince hed teethache owerneight  
Noo that must be the wurst  
The pain went roond me jaaw ind heed  
Until ahh thought she'd burst.

Of course eets not a new disease  
Ancient Egypt had eet tee  
Rabbie Burns whiles mentioned eet  
Ind nae bettor poet than he.

He caaled eet Hell of aal Diseases  
Eets not gud ther is nae doubt  
But believe me thro experience  
He must nivor hed the "gout".

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*The Duegar is a fearsome, bad tempered creature who hates humans and supposedly lives on Simonside. Strange how he only came to notice in about 1980!!!*

## The Duegar

The folk who cum to Rothbury  
knaa its beauty is renooned.  
But dye they knaa the secrets  
of the hills there that aboond.

Now Simonside has lang been knawn  
by local folk for years  
tae harbour surtin fairies  
whe could drive a man te tears.

These wicked little blighters  
make the traveller their prey  
loupin up the rock face  
tryin tae force him doon the brae.

A traveller one night med camp  
on a narra little ledge.  
In the mornin varnie lost his life  
as he toppled off the edge.

The fairies wor tae blame for this  
of that there is nae doobt.  
They hed tried this trick afore  
as other folk fund oot.

But now wuh hev the Deugar  
I know not from whence he came.  
But ah've got a funny feelin  
it's a kind of modern name.

Ney Duegars there when ah wis young,  
least not as ahh recall.  
Ah expect the local dance hall seyn  
tae howld the Deugar ball.

But publicity is a grand thing  
It nivor did nae harm.

Is lang is the tourist spends hes cash  
who are we tae qualm.

Tae hunt the Deugar is'nt hard  
ye div'nt need a car.  
Just hire yersel a moontin bike,  
reckoned the best by far.

Ridin up some clarty track  
up tae the oxters in glar  
Nae success, but somehow happy  
tae think ye got that far.

Ah think ahl git mesel a stall  
ind set hor up this spring  
sell Deugar beuks ind Deugar dolls  
ind the popular Deugar ring.

For me the Deugar dont exist  
tho the quarrel ahl evade  
but yin thing ah knaa for surtin,  
he helps the toorist trade.

Ridin up some clarty track  
up tae the oxters in glar  
Nae success, but somehow happy  
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tho the quarrel ahl evade  
but yin thing ah knaa for surtin,  
he helps the toorist trade.

## Crack Ower A Hill Dyke

Auld Jack mermer be see weel, he hasn't been around yon hogs i his this mornin.

Ah kin usually set me watch by im as he gins oot abut the syke yonder wi his two collie dogs.

Bella towld the Mrs he'ed been off the crooks for a week or sae.

Yon faal he got i the lamin time gard him a glif, he sed nowt was the mitter but he's no been the same since ah divn't think.

Ah see yon esh tree cum doon at the creel. Ah mind the hoolets nestin yonder when ah wis a laddie. We aall yon winds here wis boont tae be damage. Ahm pleased ah got the hemel mucked oot, the stock wor bonnie and pleased otha shelter.

Yon gimma i yours that got fast doon the burn is luckin gie crus ye-now. Ye must a been gid tiv hor since.

Ah seen Jock Armstrong at the mart last week. Man he's luckin weel. Hes dowta got married tiva herod from about Kelsa but he seems tae be menigin grand by hesel. Hegits doon tae the Plow ivery Satda night fora game i dominos.

The tell me the had a gud hunt it The Shank i Munda.

The killed one ablow the snoot efler a gud run.

Ah mind losing fower yows yonder i the big storm.

Why the laddies taken Meggi into Woller tae git i bit shoppin. The shud be back about noo so ah best git doon an pit the kettle on. If ah hed the hens fed that'l be it for the night.

Weel likely see yuh it the darts i Tuesda.

Keep ahad.

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## Be Happy

Wat ahh hev tae tell ye is simple tae say  
Enjoy yor life in ivery way  
Nae trouble or strife  
Allowed in your life  
Jist elwis be happy ivery day.

Life can be cruel or so they say  
But ye kin win thro come wat may  
Luk fer the gud things  
Ignore the bad  
Jist elwis be happy ivery day.

Ye kin mak badness jist slip away  
Ind ye kin mak happiness stay  
When darkness surrounds ye  
Ye kin still laugh till dawn  
Ind elwis be happy ivery day.

When ahh leave this world ind gan on me way  
Ahh knaa ahh will meet someone, who will say  
"Ye didn't elwis win"  
Then ahh will retort, "Eets mebee true wat ye say"  
But ahh still remained happy ivery day.

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## The Stane Outside Bob Coffee's Door

Theor's I sweet wee spot I me mem'ry  
Eets wheor ahh wis bom ind raised  
Eets lang ago since ahh left eet  
But return ahh will if ahm spared

As young 'uns we wid gather taegithor  
Usually sometime efter four  
It Bob Coffee's shop how ofton wiv sat  
On the stane that stud ootside hes door

When skule wis ower wid aal meet theor  
Winter or spring jist the same  
Aal laddies ind lassies taegither  
Ind mebe play sum simple game  
Auld Coffee wid bring oot hes fiddle  
While hes doughthers' kept in eye on the store  
The night air rang we the sangs thet whe sang  
On the stane ootside Bob Coffee's door

Ind noo me thoughts often wander  
Tae thet place where aah wis born  
The freends ind companions in childhood  
In sum still be theor, the morn  
Auld Common he teld whe the stories  
Iv lands mebe near, mebe far  
How whe cud be rich if whe gat theor  
But nivor forgit whe ye are

Mony iv us since then hev prospered  
But still in wor hearts aah feel sure  
Wor mem'rys still fly, to those days lang gin bye  
And the stane ootside Bob Coffee's door

## A Bad Tempered Man

Wullie Storie wis bad tempered, ney doot about thet, the most bad tempered man in the Village. He wis yin iv the local roadmen keepin the roads ind the roadsied drains tidy. Dy'e mind them? Wullie's "patch" wis ootside the village, about fower tae ten miles off. So Wullie used he's push bike tae gan tae work. Aff he'd gan ivery momin we he's spade ind he's besum tied ower his back, as ye did in the owld days. Ye cud heor him muttering tae he'sel is he wis gannin oot the village, aalready in a bad fettle. Yince yin barri sumii efternein us laddies seun him comin hyhem peddlin doon the village. Might be gud for a snigger wuh thout. Wuh wam't dissapointed. He jumped off the bike and thro eet agin the waal opposite hes terraced hoose. Ind is he tried tae git thro the open front door, (open on a lovely summer night) he gat stuck as hes spade gat caught I the doorframe, eet wasn't possible tae git thro, the spade wis wider than the doorframe. But this didn't deter Wullie. He ran back halfway ower the road ind lettin oot in aalful "goller" he ran pell-mell it the front door, but same again, he stopped deed itha doorway. Still he wadn't be beat ind ran right back ower the road. This time he tuck off it sic I rate he's buits whar feor sparkin on the road ind he yelled "Yuh bugger aahl be thro". But he failed again, in landeed on he's hint end in the middle iv the road, cursin in sweerin. Hes wife cam tae the door ind sed "Wullie wat are ye dein'? Cum on in man ind git your dinner". I lang sufferin woman, ind aal this cos he wadn't give in tae takin the spade aaf hes back. A bad tempered man indeed, but mind we had a grand night. Wuh aal laughed wor sels tae sleep.

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## The Other Side Of The Wall

When Hadrian saa Northumberland  
The moorland ind the sea  
The netties ind the pit heaps  
He sed noo thats for me

Now Hadrian was a clever man  
Of that there is no doot  
To the big centurian he said  
Noo tyke a luk about

Whive marched up all the way here  
From rite doon in the sooth  
Did ye enjoy a bit of eet  
Howay man tell the trooth

Why gan back tee Rome man  
Wiv got it made up heor  
We stotty cake ind fine young maids  
Ind a smashing pint o beor

So Hadrian sed will build a waal  
Rite across the land  
From the mooth O Tyne yonder  
To the Solways golden sand

A muckle wall shud dye the trick  
Built we stanes thats lyin about  
Then we'll ahl enjoy this place  
Ind keep the other buggers oot.

Noo histiry tells us that the Picts  
The Scotties and the Celts  
Wor aaful men we ginger beards  
Ind swords stuck thro tha belts

They say thi Romans built the waal  
Tae keep thise wild men back  
Thats not true wiv fund oot since  
That nivor was the crack

No, Hadrian really like the Scots  
Ind he alwis teld the trooth  
Who he really didn't want  
Wis yon buggers from the sooth

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## Northumberland - A Little Bit Of A Big Coonty

The Rowlin' Hills ind Leafy Dales  
In awe ahh sometimes stand  
Ind gaze upon this beauty  
Ahh must be in Northumberland

Noo deek up North the mighty hills  
Oot alang Cheviot way  
Peaceful noo, but in the past  
Mony a bloody day.

Tae the South East majestic Simonside  
For the bords ind creatures freedom still  
Merlin. grouse, ind pipits  
Ind hear the larkies, sic a thrill

Tae retorn yince mair is elwis nice  
See auld freends, ind hear their mearth  
Cos ahh knaa me way about  
Aroond this coonty iv me bearth

Aye ind waalk again thro' bent ind heather  
Tae roam the fields ind speel the rocks  
Careful, there might be an ether  
Ind see yon clipped white sheep in flocks

Then ahh decide tae heed forther West  
Across tae bloody Redesdale  
Where Reivers fought nigh 400 years  
Ivery able bodied male

Then up the brae ind ower the fell  
Tae the beautiful North Tyne  
The Witter glydin' thro' the trees  
Tranquility is mine

Wild flooers fernen the riverside  
The folks sae friendly ind kind  
Moles ind voles ind otters  
A better place is hard tae find

But howld on, rain, snaa meltin on heed iv Tyne  
Whiles pits hor sair in spate  
Best tae keep weel back off hor  
Or ye cud seal yor fate

She's runnin' weel, the fish are up  
The Taret born is full a'neath the sod  
Enjoy yor fishin' but mak quite sure  
Y've gat i licence fer yor rod

So forther doon the Tyne whe gan  
Elwis luckin oot for more  
Butterflys, orchids ind sweet wild tyme  
Ind mushrooms galore

Ahh sed jist i little of the coonty  
Ahh div'nt knaa how much ye kin stand  
But if ye feel like i little bit mair  
Ahl progress througoot Northumberland

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## The Dullbart

Jimmy Mavin wis a dullbart (dunce) it school, not ownly did henivor larn onything, he wouldn't even try. Hes attendance record wis aaful. The schoolboard man wis nivor away from hes parents hoose, a tighed cottage it the Home Farm, aboot a couple i miles away. Even his mother caaled him a dullbart, ind his faather wis convinced he wid ownly grow up tae be a donnial (idiot). No, skool wis not for Jimmy. In the winter months he wid folly the hunt, poach salmon ind rabbits whe his ferret. He had a mongrel dog which sum folk wis convinced wis crossed whe i jackal. The two miles between hame ind skool hed for Jimmy ower mony distrashuns. A wud containin rabbits ind i born jist the right size fur guddlin troot. Its nae wonder most days Jimmy nivor gat tae skool. Mind he wis i gud hand it wrestlin Cumberland-Westmorland style which again wis much preferable tae lessons in skool..Indso.the,'dullbart' grew up ind efter survivin on the little pay he aarned, dyin loose work here ind there, he eventually got a job luckin efter sum horses for a rather eccentric old

Colonel sumbit on the Scotch side. Naebody hurd tell iv him for the best part iv ten years till he gat a heerods job it a little oot bye place deep in the Cheviot hills. He probably got the job cos naebody else wid bide yonder noo a days, it wis that far oot. Late on, yin stormy bitterly cad November night whe the snaa driftin aroon the hill end, there cum a loud knockin on Jimmy's door. Jimmy opened eet tae find a hill walker j ist aboot foondered whe the cad. Jimmy gat him in ind quickly gat him a cuppa tea whereupon the hiker towld im iv hes two mates shelterin in i peat-hagg ind he didn't think they cud survive the night as they wor poorly equipped for such aaful conditions'. The little cottage didn't have a telephone. Jimmy wud hev tae try tae find them, their ownly chance wud be for Jimmy tae git them back tae his cottage *tonight*. He filled a flask iv tea, packed sum cheese, bread ind biscuits in hes haversack. Then efter receiving very confused direcshunns as tae their whreeabouts from his near knackered guest Jimmy set oot whe his faithful ind very intelligent collie, Meg. The time wis 11.30 p.m. Jimmy's torch waasn't very effective in the sworlin snaa but he hoped the stricken travellers might catch sight of eet. Efter waat seemed a lifetime Jimmy hord Meg bark aboot 20 yards tiv hes right ind sure enough there wis the two men huddled together in the peat-hagg. It wis 12.30 a.m. Nex day aal fower men were treated in Hospital for exposure and hyperthermia. A hill rescue spokesman said afterwards that only sumbody with Jimmy's experience, strength ind ability to understand and cope with such difficult conditions could have carried out this rescue. Otherwise they more than likely wud hev perished.

The "dullbart" ind hes dog hed saved their lives..

## The Auld Chep

The auld chep sat be the fire  
Not long ago he'd hev been in the byre  
But things hev changed eets different noo  
Noo he disi'nt sit ind milk the coo

The days hev gan when milk wis free  
Ind Wulli next door hed hes pidjin cree  
But i cooncil hoose he waas pleased tae get  
The auld farms gone, but he musint fret

The byre's gone aye noo eets a hoose  
The cree cam doon , eet hed nae mair use  
Nae eirth netty jist i fine flushing loo  
Eets i kitchen noo where he milked the coo

He ind Edna lived there fowrty years  
Maistly happy, tho' sometimes tears  
The children grew up in happy days  
Then had tae leave, gan their different ways

The coal in the fire wis makin faces  
Sum that war happy, sometimes grimaces  
While Edna's face kept reappaearin'  
He knew is own life wis disappearin

Memories good, memories bad  
But happiness they alwis had  
Nae regrets, nae holidays in Spain  
If he hed a choice, he'd dae the same again

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## Vulpes, Vulpes

Yin morn ahm eaten me boily  
While sittin on me cracket  
Ahint the bradish yonder  
When there kicked up an aaful racket

Ah dropped me boily, brok the pot  
Wat is ah'l the noise aboot?  
Ah might git me "hides" fer this  
When ah hord anither shoot

Me Fither lossin aal control  
Last night there'd been i feosk aroond  
He's tuen aal wor pullits  
He's cum ind gan wi oot i soond

Aal git the beggar fither says  
If ah hev tae teuk the gun  
If ah div'nt git him forst time  
Ah sweer aal mek the buggar run

Noo Fither tramlid doon the corn  
A man sair vexed ah've nivor seen  
Blethorin whords aad nivor hord  
Tho' ah think i Vicar he couldn't hev been

Noo Fither failed tae get hes quarry  
Ind he gat hame covered in glar  
Ind Mither sed, noo Billy  
Are ye not teakyn this ower far

Yor clarts up tae yor oxters  
Will ah ivor git yor troosers clean  
Ye've been doon in the "well eye"  
Ind in yon bog ye must hev been

So ah pipes up, Fither bide yersel  
The hunt is hear on Saturday  
They'll be ower the hill, ind doon the born  
Ah'l bet he disn't git away

On Saturday the Hunt arrived  
A stirrup cup, a bit iv crack  
Then doon the bom, the nabbed him  
But whe nivor gat wor pullits back

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## Christmas Carol - L

Noo adays when whu celebrate Christmas  
Ind a hope wat ahm sayin is reet  
Wuh whiles forgit wat eets aal about  
Ind the glory iv thet wonderful neet

Cos Jesus wis born i saviour  
Not a hero, jist i baby forlorn  
But he grew up tae be i King  
Thets the reason why he wis born

So divn't forgit why he wis born  
Ind divn't forgit why he died  
He died tae save ye ind me sum day  
In thets why his mother she cried

Christmas is barri ind happy fer aal  
Gud fayre, ind presents roond the tree  
But nivor forgit the true meenin iv Christmas  
Jesus wor saviour, died for ye ind fer me

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## Christmas Carol - 2

When the shepherds fund oot that happy morn  
That Christ the King this day wis bom  
They couped their creels, ind laughed aloud  
Frost in the air, snaa on the ground  
Ind in the sky a beautiful soond

Last neet they hed seen i star  
A yin they'd nivor seen afore  
An Angel teld them, "this is a sign"  
So weel gan tae Bethlehem ind maybee jist find oot  
Try tae find wot this is aal about

A stable they fund, beside an Inn  
Ind inside a manger, ind a baby within  
Whe kin this be they asked aroond?  
In the manger ye will find  
Christ, the Messiah, saviour iv mankind

Noo when they left they met some Kings  
Whe whar carrian many gifts ind things  
They had travelled far thro clarts and glaur  
Because they too hed seen the star  
Thet told them anither King was bom, afar

The gits they brout, so we are told  
Whor myrr ind frankinsense, ind gold  
Sae many gifts his mother sed  
They seemed tae knaa wat wud befaal  
Ind yin day the King wud need them aal

As the three Kings left the stable something came taw mind  
Beware the messenger ye mite meet, he could be unkind  
Whe's this new King bom today, hev ye gat i clue?  
The wise men passed withoot i word  
They didn't want baby Jesus tae die et the sword

But wicked King Herod gat his way  
Ind hundreds of innocents died the next day  
So Joseph ind Mary took Jesus to Nazareth

And Christ Jesus grew up there, a wonderful thing  
And lived lang enough tae be hailed as i King

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## The Preservation of Man

The horse ind mule live thorty years  
Ind nothin knaa iv wine or beors  
The goat ind sheep it 20 die  
With nivor a taste iv scotch or rye  
The coo drinks waata be the ton  
Ind at 18 is maistly dun  
The dog it 16 cashes in  
Withoot the aid of rum or gin  
The cat in milk ind waata soaks  
Then 12 tae 17 years, eet croaks  
The modest sober bone dry hen  
Lays eggs for us, then dies it 10  
Ahl animals are strictly dry  
They sinless live ind swiftly die  
But sinful, ginful, rum soaked men  
Survive for three score years ind ten  
Ind sum iv us, the mighty few  
Stay pickled till whor "92"

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4<sup>th</sup> - Coquetdale Fine Northumbrian 1998

## Ah Wannabee Forst...

When ah was four years auld, ah won a race.  
Ah wis forst. .

Me little mate Ian ind me ran three legged at the shows.  
We whar forst.

Later on ah tried the slow bike race ind won.  
Ah wis forst.

Ah yonce ran a four mile race - i wis only twelve years auld.  
Ah wis forst.

Efter that ah tuke up boxing, noo that wis rather harder.  
However, ah wis second!

So ah lornt ye divint alwis win, ye cud be second, thord or last.  
But divint worry, try again, next time ye might be forst.

So all these years ahve tried tae win, but nivor cried when ahive lost.  
Cos ah knaa ivery time ah win, somebody else hes lost.

But when ah die ind gan tae heaven, (cos ah knaa ahm gannin theor),  
Ah hope auld Peter says tae me, 'Terry ye whar forst.'

(c) Terry Common

## Cubbord Under the Stair

Maybe this shoudn't be caaled this. Eet starts ofi as the cubby hole or the Bowdy hole. When aah wis a laddie aah wis brought up in a little hoose with a Bowdy hole. A Bowdy hole belanged tae Mother, she kept important things (the few ye cud get in them days) cleanin stuffs, a few candles. A bottle of Turps or meths. My God a luxury. Some old papers (for the nettie). But most important of all the "gibby stick". Noo the gibby stick wis multifunctional. The mention of eet cud be frightening but sometimes it wis used, ofton on the back of legs if ye hed duen something wrang wither at school or at hame. Ind if Fatha cum hame drunk he gat eet tae. But this is gittin away from the Cubbord Under the Stair. We moved tae a bigger hoose, nae Bowdy Hole or even a Cubby Hole. But eet hed a muckle Cubbord under the Stair. "The Cubbord" contained aal the things afore mentioned but mair, ye see, eet wis also Fatha's store. Alwis i pair iv steps, half full tins iv paint, maistly broon. Wors hed two deck chairs, God whe must hev been rich! Sum used paint brushes stuck in jars iv waata, sumtimes turps or even i drop iv petrol. A can iv paraffin. Everybody hed paraffin in those days, cos sum iv us still hed paraffin lamps. Oh aye, the Cubbord under the Stairs" was a rite fire trap. Whe probably kept a box iv matches there as weel. Swaan Vestas more than likely. Yuh see the "cubbord" wis oot iv boonds for me, too much stuff lyin aboot so therefore it became a great attraction. There wis nae electric lights so the only way ye cud see inta-eet wis durin the day we the hoose back door open. So yin night aah thought aal wake up ind creep doon the stair, 6 years aad yuh knaa! So aah crept doon the stair, silently, then alang the passage tae the cubbord door, tomed the snib ind aah wis in. God eet wis dark. Nivor mind thout I if aah canna see them, they canna see me. Then aah thout whe are "they". Aah started tae git feared. Noo wuh hed i black cat caaled Blacky thet lived oot the back but whe wud try tae git inta the hoose when she cud. Ind thisday she hed ind settled in the Cubbord under the Stair. Iv course when aah enterd she flew oot past is. Wat a gliff aah got. Aah set off tae the bottom iv the stairs, damn near "couped me creels" on the way, tripped on the stair ind let oot a "golla" which woke Mother ind Fatha up. Aah sed aah hed i nasty dream ind wis luckin tae get i glass iv witter. The believed is. But mind eet wis a lang time afore aah ventured into the Cubbord under the Stairs again.

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## The Reivers Of Coquetdale (Harbottle Castile)

See it yon castle yonder  
How many memories dis eet hold?  
Iv Reivers ind the Reivin  
Ind the blud that ran sae cold.

The stones they gat tae build eet  
Sledged doon aaf Harbottle Hill  
Riven doon the slopes be Scotsmen  
That is, the yins they didn't kill.

Eet stud theor tae protect us  
Thro' the bluddy border waars  
How many died while bulden eet  
Naebody iver knaas

Under siege sae mony times  
But still eet stud eets grund  
For aye, fower hundrid years  
Till peace wis finally fund.

Yis iverything must change  
Ind the reivin days whar gone  
Peace cam tae the valleys  
But life continuid on.

So the castle hed anither use  
Eet contained sum dammed gud stone  
Built a few mair hooses in Harbottle!  
They early stripped hor taw the bone.

Noo fortinitly a bit remains  
Tho noo not varry much on show  
But mind on, how eet protected us  
Frae yon reivers lang\_ ago.

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1<sup>st</sup> Rothbury opal Festival 2001

## Me Marra's Muckle Marra

Me marra had in allotment  
Muckle barri eet was tae  
Floo'ers here ind veggies there  
Ind elwis sumnthin new tae see.

When he tuck hor fower years ago  
Wat i red-up eet wis in  
Auld posts, ind i gud few tree stumps  
Ind mony sheets iv rusted tin.

Aal winter ind spring he worked it hor  
Whiles weel into the night  
Be summer he hed conquered eet  
Aye be the back-end she wis right.

Next spring he started plantin'  
Be now the soil wis gie weel loose  
Lovely plants he hed, but nivor tae show  
Everything that Matty grew, wis elwis for "the hoose".

Next year he hed a marra (spelt "marrow")  
Thats a gudun Matt aah sed, ye must leave him to grow  
Feed him up thro the summer  
Then in Aagist, git him in the show.

Noo Matty didn't care for "marrows"  
So he left him in tae grow  
He fed eet like aah sed he shud  
In entered eet in the local show.

The morning iv the show came roond  
Tae the allotment, Matt il win the cup!  
Barra waitin just "langside", we brok the marra off  
But the grins seun disappeared, whe couldn't lift the bugger up.

So Jack ind Billy ind auld Ned came ower  
Tae gie whe i hand tae lift it  
Efter much swearin, fartin ind gruntin  
Whe fund whe still couldn't shift eet.

So Matt efter thinkin, sed a block ind tackle  
Noo that'll lifl the muckle marra  
But when whe lowered the beastie in  
Eet brok the bloody barra.

Noo Harry next doors got i trailer  
Thet he pulls ahint he's car  
He'll take et tae the show for us  
He knaa's eets not that far.

Whe knaa the block ind tackle works  
So whe'l use eet once again  
Ind they got the marra tae the show  
As eet bagan tae rain.

Noo the show shed hed i narra door  
The couldn't git the marra in nae matter how they tried  
The committee sed divn't won'y hinny  
Whe'l jist judge eet here, outside.

Of course Matty's marra win nae bother  
Eet wis the biggest yin by far  
Whe chopped eet up ind shared eet oot  
Whe couldn't geet eet hame agin cos' Harry left hes car

Noo Matty shows there ivery year  
He even tuecks he's brand new barra  
But theres nivor been an entry since  
Cud beat Me Marra's Muckle Marra.

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## Have Ye Ivor Been Feart? For my Wife

Ah wis fower years when ah forst walked our the castle mesel, and agin the wud ye cud get an echo; ah shooted, eet replied ind ah wis feart.

*Hev ye ivor been feart?*

Ah wis about eight ind up the garden about the darkenin' yin arly May nite when yin o' yon muckle fiyin' beetles come by, immediately folleed be a snipe whe hees wings fare whirrin; ah wis feart.

*Hev ye ivor been feart?*

Noo it twelve ah larnt tae swim in the Coquet yin summas day.

Git into the deep bit, they sed, ye'll lark easier there!

So ah did, ah varni drooned, ind ah larnt, but wis ah feart.

*Hev ye ivor been feart'?*

It 16 ah tried the boxin ( the laddie frae the sticks),

these toonies couldn't frighten me - or so ah thout.

Me eye wis cut, me nose wis brok, blud ahll ower the place.

Yis, ah larnt tae fight, but yuh bugga for a short time ah wis feart.

*Hev ye ivor been feart?*

Noo life wis gitten rather dull, humpin trees aroond a forest. They want men in the fire brigade,

yar young enough ind tuff enough - gan on man give eet a try.

Ah tried, got in and ah wis feart.

They sent me tae a trainin school 4 months of utter hell. You're useless, they told us ahl, git eet better else yor oot, ye'll kill yersel or somebody else if ye divint tighten up.

Ah wis feart.

*Hev ye ivor been feant?*

It 27 ah gat merried ind gannin tae the church ah wis feart.

But efter years of eet ah've fund eets no sae bad.

Think hard and long about eet but ah kin recomend eet.

If ye play right eet'll work for ye.

She's seen us through me hard times, stud by us in me bad times, loved us in me sad times...

Ind noo ahm nivor feart! '

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## The Gannins

Ony Northumbrian ill tell ye the three main things tae avoid in life. A heed gannin, a side gannin ind a back gannin. Perhaps aah shud say nearly ah'l these gannin's are usually associated with drink, "alcohol".

Lets start with the back gannin, eet usually occurs maist frequently. Noo the back gannin can happen while standin still lookin perfectly sober but may be helped along whe tiredness or perhaps a hearty laugh. Basicly eet is an involuntary backward movement which increases in pace until the body hits an unmovable object ind faals doon. Aah yince knew a man whe wis enjoyin hesel dancing in a tent it a dance efter the local show, he tuek a back gannin in disappeared completely thro the side iv the marquee. Aah div'nt knaa how far he travelled afore he fell ower but he was unhurt. Strangely, whe gannins folk usually end up unhurt. Alcohol?

Now the side gannin. 90% iv side gannin's occur when the person is in motion but not managing tae keep in a strite line. Sometimes ye think ye are gan tae walk intae something. Whe a step tae yin side, ye can build up an excessive pace, the end result be'in similar tae a back gannin, except ye land on yor side, left or right dependin which way ye set off. Now this actually happened tae me. Aah felt the side gannin comin on but aah knew aah wis fenent the garden gate, so if aah gan ah'l bump into the gate. "Nae bother". Aye aah tuek the side gannin right enough but there wis nae gate, handn't been fer the last 20 years. Me owen hoose tae! Aah landed it the front door, but at least strite into the hoose. Dangerous things side gannin's. Alcohol?

Finally, the heed gannin. This yin is potentially the maist dangerous. The feet start tae gan faster than the brain can menage. Then the heed gits thrust for'ard so the leadin part iv the body is the face ind heed, the feet canna gan fast enough tae keep up whe eet. When encounterin' the immovable object in this situation the heed or face taks the brunt of eet. This can sometimes be painful! Ye can ownly hope that the immovable object in this situation contains a soft spot. A freend iv mine tuek a heed gannin yin night efter a dart match, ind ran into a low waal. Eet wis jist the wrang, (or right) height for him. He's hands couldn't reach the grund in front iv him nor his feet it the back, so he wis stuck on top iv the waal like a poke iv tatties. A few cad hours yin February night afore he finally rowled off. A bit mair speed ind he wud iv been ower the waal ind intiva rose bed. Thet cud hev been sair! But no, he cam tae nae harm. Alcohol?  
But try tae steer clear iv the gannin's, they can be dangerous.

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