



Yarns

Celebrating contemporary
writing in
Ulster-Scots & Scots



Ulster-Scots
Community
Network

www.ulster-scots.com



Yarns

published by the

Ulster-Scots Community Network (2023)



Foreword

It's hard to believe that this edition of Yarns is the third one in the series, especially as we had originally thought we might only deliver one of them. What we found though with the first one, was that there was a demand for an outlet for those who were writing in Ulster-Scots and Scots, particularly those writing for the first time.

We've known about the linguistic traditions that have existed for hundreds of years, but new and contemporary work was a less developed field – or more likely there were few outlets for it. We hope that Yarns is providing that outlet.

One of the priorities for the project was that it shines a light on to Ulster-Scots as a living part of Ulster's cultural heritage and that the writing in Scots shows the continued linkages across the North Channel that are part of that constant factor in history talked about by Trevelyan, and we really hope that we're doing that.

We're obviously delighted that we continue to get submissions from writers who've been involved before as well as new writers who are publishing their work with us for the first time and indeed some who are publishing their work for the first time ever. That's very important to us if we are to continue to develop this journal in the way we want to. So, to the contributors, thank you. We also want to thank those who take the time to assess the entries and help us to bring the collection together.

For this edition we also have another thank you to give. A few months back we were put in touch with May Davidson, from Donaghadee who writes some verse for her family and friends and also for her local church. May is not a native of the Ards peninsula, nor a native Ulster-Scots speaker. That said, however, she had written a poem that highlighted how arriving from Belfast to her new life 'doon tha Airds' she encountered a strange way o taakin amongst fowk aboot thon pairs'. We spoke with May and she's given us permission to use the poem here and we hope that it'll gie hope to blaw-ins across the country. Enjoy.



May Davidson

LIVE AND LEARN

When I was a young girl, I suppose I was quite bright.
Don't think I'm being pompous, I've certificates alright!
My vocabulary was really rather good,
The English dictionary to me, was like life's food.

Then I met a young man who came from Donaghadee,
He asked my father for my hand as he wished to marry me.
Now I came from the city, but he could not live there,
Which he said was quite a pity but he'd miss the country air.

So we went to live down by the sea and I was quite content,
Though I always heard peculiar words no matter where I went!
One day I heard two local folk having a conversation,
Could this be some kind of joke? Or were they from another nation?

One said, "The heifer's in the sheugh up abin the brig, an she's up
Tae hur een in a clabber o'muck, an the soo's aboot tae pig!
An yin o' us'll haddae plooe tae git the prittas in,
But ah think we'll hae oor tae jus noo,
Fur mah stummicks ful o' win!"

Then when my husband's family came.
They'd ask me, "hoo's the weans"
And they'd tell me that they had "jus left hame and they'd been liftin' stanes!"
An' they'd haddae git the hay all hame by the hin' en' o' July"
Fur they thocht there's be a thunnerplump, fur it didnae luk too dry!"

Now that was many years ago when I was just a lass,
And when I see MY family now, remarks they always pass!
Fur ah say sheugh an' dinnae, an thunnerplump an' wean,
An they cannae unnerstan me, so they ask me tae explain!

Well, I've thought about this tale a lot, and I've come to one conclusion!
Certificates I may have got, but now I've no delusions.
There are books on science, books on maths, books on war and strife,
But I've mastered a whole new language, just observing local life!



Preface

Frank Ferguson (Ulster University)

Freens, another year brings wi it anither wunnerful edition o Yarns. We hae the wale of mony scribevers the year. Forbye it's gran to see new makars comin forrits. Ulster Scotch scribevin yince nicht hae been caaed a watergaw fur there wasna eneah light tae gie ye tha full bow. But jakers, noo there's a quare gran licht in tha lift wi a wheen o licht left aver.

Mony wudnae thocht that three editions o Yarns cud be prentit but they hae failed tae skelly tha growin confidence of makars in the guid Scotch tunge. Its gye impressive tae see new wark comin through aa tha time. Even mair exciting is tha range o voices an subject matter. Whiles some bes writin within a very obvious Ullans tradition ithers ir daein their ain thing. New grund is apening up and theirs a quare wheen of innovative scribevin ganging oan. Not that this is some dreedfu clishmaclaver an throughither clamjamfry ither but rether what luiks like a grand time fur Ulster-Scotch scribevin. New boadies ir appearin and they're taking tha leid in many wunnerful directions.

Of note also is that many o tha boadies who hae been presentin their wark across three seasons o this buik hae now ventured intae print wi their oan collections. Gye hairtsome it is tae see this happen. Ithers are involved in runnin warkshops and giein taaks tae yins looking tae scribeve themsels. Here tae we see young yins comin through and ithers still houlin their ain.

A gran weel done tae tha Ulster-Scots Community Network fur aa tha hard work in developing, judging and publishing this collection. We luik forrits tae mony mair.

We also luik at this time oan tha growing interest in Ulster-Scots scribevin and the opportunities this presents for individuals and communities tae tak pride in the leid and tae share this oot within the province and ayont these pairts. A wurd that aften appears in tha discussion o leid is "awakenin". These important volumes of Yarns represent an awakening of the power of language to stimulate creative writing. They demonstrate the possibilities o tha Hamely Tongue tae fin a personal voice tae articulate aa that tha heid an hairt crave tae say. This awakens connection atween tha past and present, atween generations, an offers the power o poetry tae recover and rejuvenate thochts and feelings we thocht gane foriver. But Ulster-Scotch is nae juist a recovery point fur tha past or yin person's or community's heirskip. By placing this leid in tha hauns of bards and scribevers it gars it burst oot intae tha warl as lets it tummler free intae new heids and expectations. Naeboady kens whar this may gang. Like tha core of aa guid scribevin its rinnin oot there somewhere intae tha wurl wrappin on dueres and joukin inta hairts and heids askin tae be heard.



Contributors

Robert 'Rab' Adams

Born Robert Adams, year 1958. Born an Ulster-Scot and although it wisnae fashionable in ma society, an wis aye bein eroded bae society the language an me hae survived thus far. A asked mae ma when a wis aboot ten year auld, why a wis only gien yin christian name, when a lot o mae siblings hid twa ir mair. She said son, wae the name a gien ye, sure yul be called a load o names, Rab, Bob, Bert, Rob, Robin, Bert, Bertie, Bobby, auch, sure the list goes on.

So nooadays am kenned as Rab tae maist folk, an that suits me fine.

Onewye, a hae bin screevin in English an Ulster-Scots fir a brave while, maistly as a hobby, but haein, joined the talented folk in the Sheddass Ulster-Scots screevin group, a hae bin mair focused, especially under the facilitatin o Anne McMaster, an am grateful tae the lot o them, an hope tae dae ma bit tae extend the language baith spaken an screevin.

Brian Alexander

Juist a body frae deepest daurkest Dufferin, hauden doon a job in the big smoke. Wifie, twa weans an a dug tae keep me in line. Aftimes can be foond readin aboot the fowk that went afore. Still a learner wi the aul screevin, but shuir the Big Yin luvus a tryer. Haud forrit!

David Atkinson

He's a wee bit o' a new fangled haun at an owl tung, frae tha big toon, nivir haed a wurd o' Ulster Scotch tae a wean o' munths beck. Thin he liftit tha pen an staired scribevin an foon he haed tha leid in him efter aw. He foon himsel brangin tha leid intae tha day tha day, an nae scribevin aboot tims lang gaen, but aboot here an' at this meenit – aboot politicks an music and ghaists and stair gazin and aequaility an lectric drams and luv.

Angus Bolton

Angus hails from the townland of Balligan near Greyabbey/Greba. Whilst he's always had a fascination with languages, cultures and history, he's only recently become aware of the significant role Ulster-Scots has had in his family's history. He has always enjoyed writing poetry and now particularly enjoys writing in this language with its rich poetic tradition.



Robert Campbell

Robert Campbell is the author of *Lock Doon Poyams* (Poetry), *Tales Frae the Life oo James Finlay Bruce & Peep Frae Your Mind* (Poetry), along with children's books 'Sled Down' and 'Captain Timmy and the Bobbing Barrel' both of which are set in Northern Ireland. www.robertcampbell.me

'A Dander Through Narnia' - a spoken word, poetry and art performance, in honour of CS Lewis and the *Chronicles of Narnia*, debuts during Leid Week 2023

William Dickey

William Dickey was born and raised in the Braid. He would like to clarify that it was the valley and not the river, as many have been disappointed to discover that he is not the County Antrim equivalent of Patrick Duffy in the popular 1970s television series *Man from Atlantis*.

Ewen Glass

Ballymoney born and bred, Ewen's work as a writer includes feature films that have been distributed across the world, and TV projects for the likes of BBC, Channel 4 and RTÉ. He has developed a number of Ulster-Scots scripts as well as a cycle of poetry, and in 2022 he presented *Ballymoney: Back to the Toon*, a BBC NI documentary exploring how he can gift this culture to his son living in England.

Angela Graham

Angela Graham is a film-maker and writer from Belfast with Ulster-Scots roots in Antrim and Tyrone. She won first Prize for Poetry in the inaugural Linen Hall Ulster-Scots Writing Competition in 2021. The winning poem is in her collection of poetry 'Sanctuary: There Must Be Somewhere', Seren Books 2022. Ulster-Scots also features in a story in her collection 'A City Burning', Seren Books 2020, which was long-listed for the Edge Hill Prize. Her work has appeared in both earlier editions of 'Yarns'. A programme in NVTV's documentary series, 'A Mighty Mallet' 2023 profiles her Ulster-Scots writing and it is also in NI Screen's archive of Ulster-Scots poetry and literature. Website: angelagraham.org @angelagraham8



Ann Hamill

A married mum of 2 children (1 in Heaven) – grandmother to 2 grand-daughters. Retired music teacher of piano and singing (for almost 40 years).

I love literacy and am a bit of a 'grammar geek'. I also love public speaking and still continue to do so, even as a person with a Senior Smart Pass. I have always enjoyed writing poetry and prose.

Why do I love Ulster Scots? As a Scottish descendant from the Thompson clan (with 2 beautiful tartans) and loving the warmth of the hamely tongue, my favourite book is the "Fower Gospels". I read this so often but, even if on my own, I read it aloud – I tried reading it to a group from church one night and they thought I was speaking a foreign language. I have no previous publications but look forward to perhaps writing more poems in future.

William Hershaw

William Hershaw is a well-kent Scots language makar and playwright. He is the editor of The Scots Language Society journal *Lallans*. His publications include *The Sair Road* (a poetic account of the 1984 Miners' Strike in Fife, published by Grace Note) and *McSuibne Agley*, a Scots Language version of the Irish Sweeney tale.

Meagan Jennett

Meagan is an author and poet. A graduate of the University of Glasgow's MLitt programme, she is currently a DFA candidate at the same institution, where she is writing and thinking on the multi-layered ties between her native Virginia Blue Ridge and Scotland. You Know Her, Meagan's debut novel, was published in 2023 by MCDxFSG.

Angeline King

Angeline King recently finished a PhD in creative writing at Ulster University, where she was writer in residence. Angeline mainly writes novels, but also loves poetry, history and languages.



Rab Lennox

Rab Lennox (aka "Big Rab") first took his hand to writing in Ulster Scots with the issue of Yarns 2. Deciding to act on the inspiration provided by Anne McMaster, Roy Ferguson, and Stuart Patterson he penned his first rhyme dedicated to "Haggis frae a can". This opened the floodgates to even more writing, and Rab continues to churn em out for whoever will gie them a skally.

Rab however may be better known for his work in the media, where back in 2012 he started "The Big Rab Show" on Fuse FM Ballymoney. This weekly radio show, focuses on the Piping Scene in all its forms. He then went on to launch "The Big Rab Show Podcast" in 2017 which catapulted the show to an international audience. With thousands of weekly listeners, both shows have gathered quite a large following of dedicated piping fans.

Rab has been co-presenting BBC Radio Ulster's "Kintra " programme on a weekly basis since 2018. With it's focus on all things Ulster-Scots within the community, Rab still finds a way to raise the profile of the piping scene at every opportunity - much to the team's amusement.

A notable achievement was in 2022, when "The Big Rab Show" was nominated for a Scots Trad Music award, for "Music in the Media". This was a significant recognition of the Show's efforts in promoting the Piping scene on an international level.

Its hoped that this is just the first of many more rhymes and stories, and hoping to draw a smile to whoever wants to read them.

AG Lyttle

A County Down man, AG Lyttle (Tony) was born in Bangor and brought up in the countryside just outside Newtownards where he attended Regent House grammar school. After graduating from Queens he moved with his English wife, Anita, to live in Surrey where they raised dogs, cats, fruit trees and three lovely children, the latter giving them their finest crop – of ten grandchildren and one great-grandchild, to date. After retiring from a career in Management Services, Tony has written a number of books, short stories, and poems. The historical thriller, "Dillon's Rising", set in Dublin amidst the mayhem of the Easter Rising was the first to be published followed by "The Storyteller," a biography of his great-grandfather - Ulster-Scots author, newspaper proprietor and stage entertainer, WG Lyttle. It was through reading the works of WG that Tony first developed a love of the hamely tongue and was inspired to start using Ulster-Scots, too, in his writing of both verse and prose.



Helen Lyttle

Helen Lyttle has only recently started writing poetry, in the Sheddass on the Page writing group.

Aileen McCahon

Aileen McCahon is from a small rural town in County Londonderry where she lives with her menagerie of animals. She has recently rediscovered her native Ulster Scots tongue and has been using it to write about all manner of things in the form of poetry prose and monologues. Sometimes these pieces have a serious theme but are often a lot of ool foolery depending on which of her personalities have come out to play.

Anne McMaster

Póames – Anne's debut poetry collection of Ulster Scots poetry - was published by the Ulster Scots Agency and Ulster Scots Community Network in 2022. Anne spent a happy 2023 with Sheddass On Tha Page – nurturing new writing in Ulster-Scots. She won first prize for her Ulster-Scots poetry at the 2023 Frances Browne Literary Festival and is currently finishing two new collections of Ulster-Scots poems as well as Dancin' Aff Tha Tongue (Ulster-Scots short stories) which will be published in early 2024

Alan Millar

Alan Millar, from the Laggan area of east Donegal. Based in Ballymoney, Co Antrim, Journalist. Writer and poet in Ulster-Scots and English. In 2021 was winner of Hugh MacDiarmid Tassie for Scots poetry and the inaugural Linenhall Library Ulster-Scots short story competition. Writes an Ulster-Scots newspaper column for the Ballymoney Chronicle called Leid Loanen. First collection of poetry 'Echas frae tha Big Swilly Swally' published May this year. Top placed Ulster-Scots poem in the 2023 inaugural Thomas Carnduff Society Shipyard Poet Competition. Nominated for Scots Writer of the Year, in the 2023 Scots Language Awards.

Robb Morrow

I'm Robb Morrow, 24, from Poyntzpass; nestled between Counties Armagh and Down. I'm a hiker, a musician, a runner, and a Geography teacher. Thanks to my grandmother, I've been interested in Irish history all my life; and in Ireland's poetry and song. I have a passion for our heritage, and being an Ulster-Scot is an integral part of my Irishness.

Eleanor Ness

Ellie Ness lives in Ayrshire where she can be found walking her dog through woods or along the coast when not writing.



Liz O'Connor

I was born and bred in Belfast, but I now live up the country. I have always enjoyed making things and I am delighted now to be making things with words.

Morna Sullivan

Morna Sullivan has always had a love of stories and has been reading and writing stories and poems since she could read and write. She is a member of the Coney Island Writers Group and a SCBWI member regularly attending the Belfast chapter meetings. She has recently taken over as SCBWI Regional Advisor (Ireland) leading a team of volunteers supporting children's writers and illustrators across Ireland.

She has had a number of poems and short stories published and has won creative writing competitions at local and national level, including runner up in the prose section of the Linenhall Library's 2022 Ulster Scots writing competition.

Audrey Watson

A keen amateur genealogist, food writer and reader of anything in print, Audrey was born and raised in Co Fermanagh and surrounded by Ulster-Scots traditions, music and language from an early age. She strayed away from it during her school years, but now that her two children are grown up and she has time to spare, she's back to immersing herself in her heritage and culture. She feels very privileged to have the opportunity to delve into Ulster-Scots poetry and prose writing and to learn from the masters.

George T. Watt

George T Watt is a reglar contreibutor tae Lallans an haes been published in mony Anthologies an ayeweys in Scots. Hooiniver, wi distance connections tae N. Ireland, he's fell pleased tae be included again in Yarns.

Glen Wilson

Glen Wilson is a multi-award winning Poet from Portadown. He won the Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing (2017), the Jonathan Swift Creative Writing Award (2018), the Trim Poetry competition (2019), and Slipstream Open Poetry competition (2021). He has had poems commissioned by the Irish Football Association and appeared on the Poetry Jukebox. He was runner up in the 2022 Ulster Scots writing Competition and won Third prize in the Ulster Scots category of the 2023 Frances Browne Multilingual Poetry competition. His collection An Experience on the Tongue is available now.

Twitter @glenhswilson

<https://www.doirepress.com/bookstore/poetry/>



Rab Adams

A GHOST STORY (an a wee swally)

Wey wur seventeen, eighteen or thar aboots, an drivin, but drivin crap kers, spanner ner aff thaim.

Yin, micht a called thaim tin boxes, cepten yey cud keep things in tin boxes, but thar wur thet mony holes in oor kers, thet they barely kept onythin in, thar includes the pessengers specially the driver.

Gear stick wis an auld screw driver, effective if onyboody wis daft eneuch tae wint tae steal it, cas ye cud stick it in yir poaket whun ye were leein er. Tyres wur flipped tae show the gid side, in case ye wur stapped by the polus, specially oan a wet nicht, as they wunny get thar knees wet tae check.

A mind yin nicht tha dure openin an Gemmel fallin oot. A wus drivin, an tha reest wud a lot me cairry oon, onlie a hanny the hairt tae go oon withoot im, so wey stapped an lukked fir im. Wey fuun im in the bak o a hedge piccin thorns oot o eis erse. Weel we laughed tae wey nearly weet irsels.

But we wur oon a mission, an that mission wis ghost huntin. Wey did thar eftin in thon days, specially oon moonlicht nights.

Wae ner seen naethin, an wae layed in graveyerds al oor the place, specially County Antrim. The ood nicht a weethun ferther if the auld ker wis goin weel, an geein ye a false sense o confidence, afore blowin up. But maist o the time it goot us hame, even if lame a weethn. If thar wis a lanesome, dairk earie graveyard, specially wae a ghost story attached tae it, wey hunted it doon. Wae wud lie thar quait lik, tae oor erses wur weet, an wey cunny houl cerryoon atween oorsels oony langer. In thon days weet dinny phase is. It wis the hairt o the troubles, but beyin young an kintrie folk, wey maistle tried tae avoid a thon serious political stuff tae.

Yin nicht twa o the boys tak some o the creatir (poteen) wae them. Noo if ghost huntin yersel, bae warned, thars a mistook. Oony wae thar nicht they wur lyin oor in a different bit o the graveyard cas they wur jukkin a drink. Weel they ner scarred the life oot o the loot o us. They come rinnin past iz speeclees an pointin bak the road they wur rinnin frae. Wae a timmerously loked bak tae whur they wur pointin tae see a whit an bleck horse tossin its heed oor the hedge an snoortin. Weel ifin we had laughed afore, thar wis mer than Minnie wet ersel thon nigxt.

Funny thing tho, thon pair o boodys loost interest in ghost huntin efter that. Gees mae a giggle yet, it daes.



Brian Alexander

Pilgrimage tae Passchendaele

As A scribe this A sit an swadge in the medieval bastide o Mirepoix in the nor'east o the Ariege, Occitanie, France. A hae a gless o pastis aside me an A've been watchin fowk. A luve watchin fowk - the stories that A shape in ma heid about complete strangers is niver langoursome. A wad scribe them doon, but wi'oot a pictur tae refer tae they wadnae mak gumption, an A'm no about tae gae takkin sleekit picturs o strangers gangin about thair business - ma unconess ainly gangs sae far...

But that's nae why A'm screivin nou. A wis in Tarascon-sur-Ariege yestreen, explorin wi the weans, an we stumpled upon the war memorial. Warld War Yin an Warld War Twa, wi anither yin for the brave sauls o the Resistance in whit wis then Vichy France, an it minded me o the seicont trip that A'm takkin this simmer. Faimily history hae become an interest o mine, age mebbe, but a few years syne A foond a direct ancestor, hithertil un kent tae me that hae focht in Warld War Yin. A'd aye haed a ordinar interest in that war, but ere A foond oot about Private James Clarke, it wis mair o a oweraw remembrance o lifes haivelessly lost, an as a ex Merchant Mariner, thaim whase ainly yird is the faem.

An sae, A jined a wheen o fowk that in 2019 wis supposed tae gang on a guidit tour o WW1 sites. Covid knockit that on the heid till nou, an whit's e'en better is that ma son is nou auld eneuch whaur A think he'd get somethin oot o it, sae he's comin an aw. The vaige is tailored tae thaim that hae a body tae mind - survivor or itherweys, an it'll come as nae stumse that this vaige minds the 36th Ulster Division, the Royal Irish Rifles, an in parteeclar for me, the 14th Battalion o the Rifles - the Young Citizen Volunteers.

The names juist roll aff the tongue. Ypres, Menin, Somme, Langemarck, Passchendaele. A think it's sauf tae say that James Clarke kent nane o these in 1914 whan he signed up for the war that wad be ower by Yuil. A will mak nae attempt here tae scribe a history o that 'Great' War, as mair eddicatit fowk than me hae awready done that. A'll insteid tell ye a bit about my James.

He wis born in Knockbreckan, Drumbo Pairish in 1884, the third son o a Presbyterian ferm labourer, an yin o seivin weans. This wis the tounlaund o his mither's birth, but by 1901, the faimily haed flitted tae the tounlaund o his faither's birth, bein' Granshaw, in Comber Pairish. He wis saxteen, labourin, an his schuilin aw daen. By 1911 James wis a ferm servand in Lisnabreeny, in Knockbreda Pairish, an on Ulster Day in 1912 he makkit his wey tae Ballygowan Orange Haw, an put his name tae the Ulster Solemn League an Covenant...



Bein insense't in oor innermaist vice that Hame Rule wad be malafoustert tae the material weel-bein o Ulster as weel as of the hale o Irlan, owerthrownin o oor ceevil an releegious freedom, destructive o oor ceetizenship, an mischancy tae the unity o the Empire, we, whase names be unnerwritten, men o Ulster, leal subjects o His Gracious Heichness Keeng George V, humble lippent on the Almichty that oor faithers in days o flocht an assize confeedenly trustit, dae hereby hecht oorsels in solemn Covenant, ootthrou this oor time o threitent calamity, tae staund by ane anither in fendin for oorsels an oor weans, oor cherished poseetion o equal citeezenship in the Unitit Keegdom an in usin aw means that nicht be foond necessar tae owercome the praisent conspeeracy tae set up a Hame Rule Pairlamemt in Irlan. An in the malchance o sic a Pairlamemt bein gart upon us, we forder solemnly an mutually hecht oorsels tae refuse tae awn its author. In shuir confeedence that the Almichty will weir the richt, we hereto scribe oor names. A An forder, we lanerly depone that we hae not awready aheebitit this Covenant.

Pouerfu stuff. Is it juist me, or does it hit hame a bit mair starkly whan it's in oor ain tongue? Awmaist like you can hear it as you read it...

Back tae James. Whan war broke out, he, like sae mony ithers frae Ulster, volunteered tae fecht for thair Keeng, thair Kintra an thair cultur - in nae parteeclar order... James wis posted tae the newlins creatit 19th Battalion o the Royal Irish Rifles. The 19th wis a reserve battalion, an sae he spent the first twa years o the war at hame - till July 1916. Thon date evokes sic sadness, a collective mindin o loss that hae been haundit doon throu the generations. By nou, James wis waddit tae Margaret, an wi a wifie wha wis wi chield, he wis at lang an last cawed upon tae gang tae war. James haed been transferred intae the 14th Battalion o the Royal Irish Rifles.

Whit gangs throu a man's heid whan he's sent tae war? The war haed been bealin for near twa years whan the time haed come for James tae play his part. He'd haed time tae think. Twa years o news frae the front. Neebours gettin telegrams. Hou mony Dead Man's Penny's whaur thare in ilka community? An woundit sodgers comin hame? Throu this, James maun hae learnt whit he haed signed up for. Whit went throu his heid whan word finally came? Did he rue e'en jinin up? Wis he feart? Coud he e'en admeet tae aither o thon? The 1914 air o et wis lang gane, but onyweys, aff he went tae dae his duty.

The haurdships tholed by the 14th Battalion are well screived. The losses, the successes an the cameraderie amangst brithers in arms. He focht wi the 14th at the Battle o Messines, an tholed horrors that can ainly be the stuff o nichtmares, but it wis the glaur, bluid an futility o Passchendaele that hae haed the sairest dunt on James an his kin to come. The 3rd Battle o Ypres wis focht atween July an November 1917, an endure't about



100 days. 5 miles were won by the Allies for the loss of more than 250,000 men. Including James. At Langemarck, on 16th August 1917, James was reported missing, an presumed dead.

I have taken the liberty of adding a few excerpts of the war diary of the 14th Royal Irish Rifles from that morning. It was recorded in English, and I've left it that way.

4am - Heavy bombardment on our line, one direct hit on our dugout killed six and wounded many. Dugout full of wounded, can only bandage a few of them as we have no more dressings. Their sufferings are terrible.

4.45am - Zero has gone and the trench is a little clearer, but full of wounded and dying. We are penned up in this little square hole expecting to be blown sky high at any minute.

5.30am - Runners could not possibly live through the machinegun fire. The strain on our nerves is terrible as we know they are having a bad time and we cannot assist.

6am - Message received from 13th Royal Irish Rifles on our right that they are held up at Somme by machinegun fire and could we assist.

6.10am - News received that the whole advance is held up by strong points in the front, and the troops are falling back. Major Vivian gave orders to collect all men and try and take their machineguns and although under heavy machinegun fire captures the strong point and 5 prisoners. He immediately put the strong point in a state of defence.

8am - Cannot keep record of time as everything is in confusion.

General Report from 8am. (excerpts)

During the day the Boche never ceased his bombardment on our line - we had to shift our headquarters as we could not live in it. News come in that we were having heavy casualties and wanted reinforcing, but reinforcements could not be found.

Officers. Other Ranks.

Killed. 5. 41.

Wounded. 4. 216.

Missing. 1. 65.



Soberin stuff. We will never know when or how James died, but we do know that his body was never found, and so he has no known grave. The possibilities are endlessly horrifying, from drowning in the glaur, to being hit by a shell, bullet, or the Almighty knows what else. For by, he never met his only son, a daughter, who was only six months old when he died.

As I suppose the true wae of this tale is that James was alone. This story is repeated over, and over, and over again. He was one of millions. The undesiredness of that number just stands. Millions. For what? Damn it if I know. But they answered the call, for Keeng, Kintra, culture, and their political attitudes. For their brothers, their pals, their neighbours, and they paid for it in their blood, and the blood of the unborn that never lived. We don't know where James's body lies. His name though is on the Tyne Cot Memorial, and this summer I'm taking my son there to tell him the tale of his fore-father.

Lest we forget.



David Atkinson

Tha Giss Got Fat

Whin we were weans thair was nae trick or traitin,
we went roon tha dures rimein, fur money, nae less,
fur fireworks ye cudnae buy, nae lake
in ma faither's day whin they used tha money fur
sky roakets, an Rummin kendils an Ketrin whales,

but a dinnae ken whut we were getherin fur,
seein as beck in tha 70s we wurnae tae be traistit
wi explosives, aw we haed wur sperklers
an Bengal matches, an indure firework sets
wi a snake, an a staim train, an a licht hoose,

an yinst in a wile a fan makkit oot o broon paper,
ye lit on fire an hoped that naebody sneezed.
Thair wus epples on strings, an epples in bockets
o watter ye hauf droondit yersel in, an epples coatit
wi kerrmel that was mair lake concrete,

an wud hae takin tha taithe oot o yer heid
if ye dinnae watch yersel, an if yer taithe
survived thon thair wer big begs o nuts,
but as weanes we wurnae wile fond o nuts;
an oor mither pit us in costumes



she makkit herself oot o bin begs an toilet rowl,
an fause faces mad wi plestic as shairp as wutches clas,
an lestic that wud cut tha lugs aff ye
an sent us oot wi turnip linterns, nae pumpkins mind,
that blistered hauns an bustit hauf tha spoons in tha hoose

an we lit our sperklers an Bengal matches,
an minded oorsels nae tae set our claes ableeze,
an danced aroon tha bonfire,
an it was tha yin time o year whin iveryboady
haed a bonfire an naeboady got tae fashed.

We wurnae afeart o ghaists an ghouls,
in tha 70s we wurnae afeart o muckle at aw,
we haenae a lot but we haed a baw,
but beck then life was lake that,
Halla eve cam an tha giss got fat.



Angus Bolton

Ae apologie fur ae fish

Somewhur aloo nichtsum waves
 Ye chairt yer coors
 Mait an Mate
 Treuch tha current
 An divin gloam o moonlicht
 Doon tae the kelp and wrack
 Whur yer prey
 Bides tha licht til guard agin ye
 Hit taaks ye tae the harbour
 Wave tong dullik agin tha pier
 Bot ye dinnae hear
 In tha reid dawn ye'll taak tha bait glimmerin
 In tha mirk o tha watter
 Ye'll pu an fecht an writhe
 Yit lik tha teed
 Sla an effortless up ye'll cum
 Hit'll steal yer breath
 Crush ye an drag ye wi tha baik
 Til ae seveekin ens hit aa
 Ye hae ma apologie
 Oan thair watterlik weirdriff raa
 O teem an teed wi fergetherid
 Tha leesht wi their gait
 Ye haen ta dignitie o tha fecht

Somewhere under the night's waves
 You chart your course
 Meal and mate
 Through the current
 And the diving glowing moonlight
 Down to the kelp and seaweed
 Where your prey
 Awaits the light to protect against you
 It takes you to the harbour
 Waves slap dully against the pier
 Bot you don't hear
 In the red dawn ye'll take the glimmering heat



In the darkness of the water
 You'll pull and fight and writhe
 But like the tide
 Slow and effortless up ye'll cum
 It will steal your breath
 Crush you and drag you by the mouth
 Until a sharp blow ends it all
 You have my apology
 That on the watery fateful road
 Of time and tide we met
 At least this way
 You had the dignity of the fight.

Clearin tha scroag on a winter morning

Bleezin purple an still wis tha morns lift
 Soon leps harelik awa ower tha frost
 Crackin gurnin wi ilka step
 Wi hae taen sickles shairp
 Fur til redd tha scoag
 Til redd tha min
 Wunter keeks
 Oor gait
 Quate

Blazing purple and silent was the morning sky
 Sound bounces harelike away over the frost
 Cracking complaining with each step
 We had taken sharp sickles
 To clear the brush
 To clear the mind
 Winter looks on
 Our way
 Quietly



Robert Campbell

Brae

Tha Brusten Brae
 Thon grandient hay,
 Befaire scuil start
 Hairt stap'in lark
 Tha sleekit wainx
 He'd sneaked awa.
 Roun tha corner
 Aif fur tha brae
 Fly doon tha slop
 Ye hape an pray
 Fae gaen tae fast
 Ye shaken an sway
 Ais ian ye gae.
 Skite doon tha brae
 Six yeir o age
 Ere maybe seven?
 A cannae mind.
 Bait either way,
 Brakes dinnae houl
 Nay strenth tae guat
 Sae toes tae grun
 Thon naw scuil yins
 Abate tha speid,
 Scar flat tha taes
 Ye cannae hide,
 Nir spin aa yarn
 "Oh A dinnae ken,
 Aif flatten taes."
 Thein truth tis tould.
 Afeart an crabbit,
 Tha order gaen
 Nay mere till brae
 Tae shake an sway.



Sheugh

Tha sheugh, tha sheugh, tha narra sheugh,
 Tha narra sheugh, tae hop an lep,
 Wi little lep till ither side,
 Ye hop an lep this narra sheugh

Tha sheaugh, tha sheugh, the narra sheugh,
 Tha narra sheugh, tis narra sea.
 Wi little lep, till ither side,
 Ye sail athort thon narra sea

Tha sheugh, tha sheugh, tha narra sheugh,
 Tha narra sheugh, thut joins till thee,
 Wi little lep, till ither side,
 Lord aif tha isles ian narra sea

Tha sheugh, tha sheugh, tha narra sheugh,
 Tha narra sheugh, tha roadd gaes ian,
 Wi little lep, till ither side,
 Tha ferry boats roll cross tha sheugh.

Tha sheugh, tha sheugh, tha narra sheugh,
 Tha narra sheugh, tha licht daes shine,
 Wi little lep, till ither side,
 Flash thra tha gloom i'r tha sheugh.



Cannae

Ye cannae, Ye willnae,
 Fae thon tis yer thocht
 Clout ian frae wi oot,
 An ye hae wi nae doot
 Noo ye cannae dae ocht.
 Nir ye cannae get oot,
 Wen dapest an strangest
 Thon thocht ian yer heid
 Fae ye gulped doon thon lee
 An ye swallaed thon guff.
 Noo thon tis yer muse.
 An thon tis yer thocht
 An this tis tha raison
 Thut ye cannae dae ocht

Piece

Yer piece ait tis a magic thing,
 Mystery oof tha gret unseen
 Hadlins aif whut lies wi'in.
 Some folks haenae much atal
 Ither yins tha greet an gurn,
 Fae arenae gi'n an willnae dae.
 Mither li'in seeck ian bed
 Piece ait ais the grandest thing
 Whiles ait tis the ainly thing
 Nae china plate nor silver spoon
 Bot scan eneuch tae lift tha gloom
 Ian sorra tis tha piece box gi'n



William Dickey

ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT

(O THE LISNAKIRK INDEPENDENT NON-SUBSCRIBING RE-REFORMED SECESSIONIST PRESBYTERIAN LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY, 2022)

The activities o the Society got aff tae a rousin start in January, when we hosted the Lisnakirk Amateur Dramatic Society's production o *Shrek: The Musical*. We wish yince again tae congratulate them on the performance, and are lukkin foart tae their resumption o activities as soon as the case taen agin them by Mr. Rab McMaister is soared. Mr McMaister is a blow-in frae Dundee since nineteen an ninety-wan, who maist o us conceded had juist aboot nailed the accent required by the lead role efter the high bar set in the world o cinema by Mike Myers. We unnerstan he continues tae make slow but steady progress efter his rampant eczema triggered by bein clarried in a thick coatin o Swarfega frae the waist up on stage for seven successive nights at the insistence o the director, Mr Shaw McClintock. Mr McMaister's close family circle hae expressed thanks tae local wellwishers fer aa the generous donations o the local discount supermairket's equivalent o E45 lotion. This wusnae the first time that Mr McClintock has generated controversy through his search fer reality oan stage; in 2018 members o the audience who had the guid saits in the front twa rows had tae dodge fallin slates during a performance o *Mary Poppins*.

Mairch saw an interestin though no entirely non-contentious lecture by Professor Donna Naul frae the Faculty o Nominative Determinism an Toonlaans at Beagle's Gowl University, formerly the University o Beagle's Gowl. Maist o oor guid churchgoing community had lang been content in the unnerstanin that the name o Lisnakirk had Scots origins, reflectin a long an illustrious tradition o reformed Sabbath worship, an wur expectin an evenin o elaboration on this point. In fact the learned professor informed us that the original Irish name was Lios na Gsearc, or Fort of the Hen, reflectin the fact that our community was desperate althegither for participatin in the regular sacrifice of chickens tae an unknown pagan deity until the practice wus finally stamped oot roon nineteen an thirty-seven. Despite oul Mrs Rebekah McGantry stickin her han up tae say right enough she minded her mither aye haein wile boather tryin tae wash rid japs oota her guid dress, there was general and increasingly agitated incredulity amang the audience. We were sorry tae hear that Professor Naul suddenly minded that she had anither appointment and was therefore unable to stay for the tay an traybakes efter, as monie o the audience wanted tae vigorously continue the debate.



In May we had *An Audience wi* Mr. Neason Gleeson whose links wi us are a source o some pride. Monie years ago he wus a pupil briefly at Lisnakirk Primary while his faither was residin here oan a Witness Protection Programme. Noo a star o stage and screen, he spoke tae us in some detail about his role in *Nyam*, a musical rinnin at the Lyric in Belfast based on the anthropomorphic cats used in a series o oul T.E. Stockwell tay advertisements. Monie o the audience wur nearly moved tae tears as he reprised his role as *Oul Dutasteride, the Cat Haein Boather wi his Prostate* and sang his signature piece "*Midnight- and Again at Twa a.m. and Up at Fower-thirty as Weel*". Some o oor members had planned tae engage his support ower tay and traybakes efter in oor campaign tae keep Lisnakirk Primary School frae closin and tae make enquiries aboot his alleged hair transplant, but he suddenly minded that he had anither appointment and wus therefore unable tae stay.

Oor annual joint meetin wi the Lisnakirk Cinematic Society tuk place In July, a drive in movie event in Mr. Simpson Balmer's big yaird on a sunny evenin appropriately enough reminiscent o the Italian summers evoked by Federico Fellini. Few of us afore this event knew about his brief career in County Antrim, when he directed three films centred roon the lives and loves in an Italian restaurant in a small County Antrim village during the 1960s. Maist o us were lukin foart tae seein the trilogy, *La Culchie Vita*, in its entirety but despite subtitles it failed tae houll the attention o younger audience members. Not only did their use o illegal Citizen Band wirelesses interfere wi the high quality sound system, but efter eight an a half hours they started daein doughnuts at the baak o the yaird. The ensuing altercation wi the local constabulary resulted in the seizure o said CB wirelesses as weel as a Tesla wi a tank containin fifty litres o rid diesel installed in the boot, an the event ending prematurely. Monie o us are still longin tae know whether Maddalena did go baak hame tae Rome, nivver mine the tay an traybakes goin tae waste. We unnerstan that H.M. Revenue an Customs plan tae issue a summons regardin the Tesla, as soon as they work oot whut exactly the owner was tryin tae achieve.

The committee recognised in advance that the event scheduled fer September wud likely generate controversy. Sure enough, the show featuring the renowned drag artist frae Dublin, Lána Bus, was picketed ootside by Mr McPherson Logan an his supporters. The protest was maistly peaceful but an intervention by the local constabulary meant that the community centre had tae shut afore the tay an traybakes. Mr Logan wus however permitted tae present a written statement tae oor committee statin that we had nae use tae be bringin performers up frae the Free State when his nephew did a spectacular Geri Haliwell tribute ect which wud be far mair tae the taste o local citizens.



As is traditional, we attended the opening night o Lisnakirk Grammar's annual stage show in November. Many members were lukin foart to *Rupert Bear: The Musical* and had brocht their granweans wi them only tae discover weel intae the performance that they had completely misjudged the target demographic. Maist controversy arose frae Act Twa Scene Yin when Rupert Bear, Bill Badger an Algy Pug are incarcerated in the state penitentiary atin salt pork an molasses while their pal Anna Mae Bullock stages a jail break. The accompanying musical number, *Nutwood City Limits*, had a weethin too much volume since the efter school Electronics Club had footered wi the amplifiers. We unnerstan that fower claims fer burst eardrums an three fer whiplash are pendin frae the occupiers o the guid saits in the front twa rows. Monie of the audience were lukkin foart tae advisin the heid maister, Mr Atcheson McIlroy, ower tay an traybakes efter that he neednae be expectin ony voluntary contributions this year but he suddenly minded he had anither appointment an was therefore unable tae stay.

We wud like tae remind aa members tae square up their membership fees in advance fer 2023. The decision has been made to accept payment via PayPal only, as the tendency by some tae settle usin oul paper fivers hoked oota the bak poakets o boiler suits continues unabated despite the passage o time. This has been highlighted as a major infection control issue by baith oor Health an Safety subcommittee an the bank who also wi ivery successive year finds it mair an mair difficult tae identify the serial nummers.

It juist remains tae mention oor Carol Service, kindly facilitated this year by Mr Simpson Balmer who is not only again offerin his big yaird but also his oul Toyota pickup as a makeshift stage fer the performers. *Hosanna on the HiAce* will taak place on 23 December.



Ewen Glass

Waash

A chile wull tak ony extreime.

This rain is tha’.

Fing’rs ticht tae gless, A watch hooses forenent,

Owrflowin’, waash’d gray in tha raa,

Tae me Da curses.

Rare eneuch, tha’, tae gie me turn

Tae follae tha soon

- ithers noo A’m apen -

Tae a prectised fether laid tae gormless graipin,

Watter pourin’ throu tha study roof.

“Get yer Ma”

A curse yit.

“Get yer Ma!”

Hiein ower flooer carpet, A fin her in tha kitchen, alane,

“Ma,” A say, tha mair she canae luk at me.

Hir ain ees are wett.

“Ma” A say, “it’s rainin’ in tha study.”



Angela Graham

THA GOOLDEN WHUN

Ulstèr fowk ir like tha whun,

thoarny wi’oot an goold wi’in;

prood tae be thrawn, naw taen in

bi chancers’ flum;

tha fit yince plantit, nat fer muivin

whutiver come.

But wha wi whun wud be acquent

shud aye be minefu tae tak tent

nat tae be deggert ower an rent

bi stab an birsie;

an ‘stainch’ is ‘dour’ less it be blent

wi safnin mercie.

Thoarny tha whin – an tha wile rose
that in tha yin Ulstèr hedgera growes.

Tha whun’s a wal – an yit tha rose

is mairch an boondrie;

houls tha line in lichtsome claes

gainst al an soondrie

Hard tae be saft though we intend it.

‘Gin bein gomed we’r well defendit.

Still, whun an rose, baith bricht, baith scentit,

cud stan fur this:

Alloo oor goold an dinnae stint it

– less jag, mair kiss.



Ann Hamill

OUR NORN IRON WEATHER

We aal hae bin sweetin' this last wheen o' weeks
 An folk they hae taken tae shoartenin their breek!
 Their oxters wur soakin frae moarnin til nicht
 Til the cool o' the evenin, whan the moons hae bin bricht.

They aal hae bin crabbit - they're niver content
 Yin day it's wairm -the next day rain's sent
 But the Yin up abin cud be sendin' far worse
 An shair there's nae sliders - easie on the purse.

Whan the gurnin haes quiet, we'll each yin be glad
 Tae see that mair sunshine fer aal's tae be had
 The farmers aal smirk as they gether the hay
 An the beece can be fed at the end o the day.

Whether the weather be guid or whether the weather be bad
 Be glad o guid health an dinnae be sad!
 The Yin wha sends sunshine or rain, or far mair
 Is the Yin, we aal know wull aye be there.



William Hershaw

Metaphors

The stars are a collogue o tinkers
 roun the camp fire o the muin.

The geese are a clachan o caravans
 whase wheels mak a shouglin soun.

Thir antrin lichts are goblins,
 out guising in Heivin's toun.

Benarty hill is a hare in its form,
 hunkeran laich in the groun.

The sun is a sonsie ferm lassie
 winkan her ee at the loun.

The blackie's a flute mang the grosiers
 wha waukens the mappamoun.

The sea is a breinge o wud cuddies,
 ettlin no tae droun.

The birks are a line o kirk elders -
 wheesht, mak a mout and they'll froun.

The mist is the wool o ghaists' semmits -
 the daw wears their wab awaa suin.

The airth is a nut broun maiden
 buskit in bonnie blae gown.



Buirdsang and the Bard

"I'll sing for air," said the laverock hersel,
syne rose up a blae lum like an aizle.

"I'll sing for weet," said the scaur sae crouse,
"the faa o the faem when the siller swaws souch."

"I'll sing for airth," said the corncrake, gey blate,
"in buttercups derved, a bass note I'll craik."

"I'll sing for fire," chirtit reid-Rab aglaw,
his breist like a smoudering peat in the snaw.

"I'll sing for naething but Daith," craiked the craw,
"the ash and grave-stour that smours aa."

"I'll sing nae langer," wheesht the wyce swan,
"In the white flame o paice I am lown."

"I've sung at your hearth in the caunnle-lit haa,
Thanks for ma supper - and nou I'm awaa."

Meagan Jennett

Rinnin Notions

there's nae stap signs in glesga.
whutch be a problem if, lake me,
ye lake tae hut thaim whan ye finish yer rin
fer thar be naethin mair sutisfyin than that.

huttin a stap sign whan yer dun
tha soon of yer han on tha mettle
yer fingers tinglin wi tha slap
thar be naethin mair sutisfyin than that.

wha does that sign think it is?
a sign oarderin ye aboot, tallin me ta stap
wal ah say nae, an rin twa mair steps
gie it a whack fer good misure.

thar be naethin mair sutisfyin than that

Lairnin ta Taak Ulster-Scots

a'm a wean agane
onlie this time ah'm awair o lairnin hoo ta taak
ma tongue is shy
tha grun unner ma feet is nae shair
thair's tal walls aa aroon me
a feel pooerfu smaa



Angeline King

Bluebells o Sallagh

I had bin bidin the hale o my days tae see
the bluebells o Sallagh, whan my eyes
met a rig photographable in Insta-
grammable style – scene serene,
brae and sea; but I was on the wrang
loanen, oot bae a mile.

I dannered on, inched close,
roots fisslin unnerfut,
but the wee lad huffed and the lass,
heidy as a hyacinth-scribed,
was blind wi rage that brittle
bluebells wur on my mind.

A when o days on, I foun the loanen,
whaur bluebell wardens watch for feet
– or eyes, and I follaed
a forested traik tae a theatre o lime-
rock, jazzy-pink aneath
sunset skies.

Throu a cottage windae I climbed,
tae a field whaur a see-saw o timmer
swavered prairie-perfect,
on an vide ancestral pile.
I was little on a vast fleur deforested,
knowin the roots wur alive.

Two days too late was I fur bluebells,
two days too late fur saicrets
o hyacinthoides non-scripta.
I teuk tent o the glory about me;
srieved whuspers o trees departed.
Memento mori.



Rab Lennox

Ulster-Scot frae Magherafelt

Am an Ulster-Scot frae Magherafelt
An I think ma story has ner been telt.
Plenty o blether frae yins on the telly
Co. Antrim, Down, but no a skelly
In oor direction, in driech Mid Ulster
We dinae hae all thon blast and bluster.

We're a quiet folk, but mighty proud
Loads o history, but no so loud
We keep er cannie, nae fuss, nae prachle
We're a political footba, none will tackle

I just found out, I'm Bilingual
Speakin English and Ulster-Scots,
maks ma heed Tingle

But I guess am just a blether, and shouldnae really froun
Hearn about all them folk frae Antrim, an county Down
I've writ this verse, had me say, and noo I've bent yer lug
I shud haud ma whest, pay neh mind, brush it aff wie a shrug

I'm an Ulster-Scot frae Magherafelt
Thanks for listenin, ma stories telt.

A G Lytle

LASTIN MEMORIAL

February wuz coul in 1857. A stairtit aff in guid time, fur Wee Wes an me didnae want tae miss ony o tha shenanigans. We'd bin up thon hill thegither twarthy times already jist till see whut aa tha warkmen were up tae.

'Whut fur ir they digging doon thru tha roak?' A said tae Wee Wes t'ither day, an sez he, 'Weel, i' they're gaun tae big it guy an heich, A suppose they'd hae tae mak guid strang fittins.'

Wes is tha clever yin, richt eneuch; got tha buik lairnin. Gin we're not watchin tha wark gang on or playin' a game o shinney wi tha lads, mair affen than no he'll hae his neb in sum scievin or ither. He had theday whun A caa'd roon fur him. His Da was hammerin awa at a shae on tha last an Wes had pushed sum mair shoon aside an wuz sittin on tha bench wi sum pamphlet.

'Guid morning til ye, sur,' A nodded tae his da. 'What's that yer reading theday, Wes?'

'Och, it's caa'd *Little Dorrit*. Ye ken Charles Dickens a've tellt ye aboot? This is his latest story. A'm on tha fifteenth instalment – onlie fower mair tae go.'

'A cudnae mak heid nor tail o aa them wurd's,' sez I, lukin ower his shooter. 'A dinnae ken whut ye see in them, avaw.'

'It's a guid yairn,' sez he, 'aa abbot a wee lassie wha growed up in tha Debtors' Prison.' He laid tha pamphlet doon an jumpit aff tha bench.

A jist grinned at him an toul him A'm shair he's richt.

Wes an me wus at tha National Schuilhoose ower on West Street thegither. Tha baith o us stied til we wus ten an then A wuz aff tae help ma Da at hame wi tha weavin fur tha pas three-yeir; Wee Wes works in his da's cobblers. Da sez A'm guid wi ma hans an A'll mak a gran weaver yin day, if tha mills they're biggin dinnae pit us oot o work aathegither. Wes isnae muckle use wi an awl nor hammer but he's quare an guid at putin doon nummers an coontin an stuff.

'Are yiz aff up tha hill agane, boys?' sez Wes's da, pickin up a rasp.

'Ay, an we dursent be late,' sez Wes, follaein me oot tha dure, 'there'll be hunners up there theday, Da, hunners.'

Wes an me kent aa tha shoartcuts tae clim thon brae; sum o them were guy stye, but. We maistly kept tae tha rabbit traiks atween tha ferns an whuns an raced each ither tae

see wha cud reach tha tap furst.

'A aamaist had ye, Alex,' sez Wes, cumin up ahint me an brethin fas.

Tha twa o us stud wi oor hans on oor knees, pechin like wee dug's til we ketched oor breth.

Lukin aa aboot there were a quare when o fowk aareddy stood aroon waitin fur tha stairt of tha ceremony. Wes an me clammered up on tap o a big boulder sae we'd git a brave sicht o it aa.

'A see tha mileesha ir oot in force.' Wes pointed ower tae whaur tha ban' o tha North Doon Rifles were settin up.

'Ay,' sez I, 'Ma Da sed he heard they'd be playin. Ma sez she cudnae say wha aa tha fuss is about.'

'Dis she no ken they're biggin a tooter tae be a lastin memorial fur Lord Londonderry?'

'Och, she kens weel eneuch; she thinks he disnae deserve it, but.'

'My Da sez he wuz aye a guid landlord tae us.'

'He was tae us, anaa, but naw tae sum. He evicted Ma's brither frae his ferm whun he cudnae pye aa his rent whun tha pratie crops failed. An no jist him, dizzens o ither's, forbye.'

'Is that why yer Uncle Sam is dain construction wark, noo?'

'It is, ay. An Ma's none tae plased he's warkin up here biggin this "Lord Londonderry Memorial" thing, but he sez he haes til wark, that beggars cannae pick and chuse.'

While we'd bin bletherin on, mair and mair fowk were reechin tha tap o tha hill. Oor wee roak wus noo thrang wi ither lads wha'd clammered up aside us and we were struggling tae kep oor place facin whaur twathree construction warkers were stood leanin on their shovels.

A thocht A cud hear tha soon o baagpipes. Then a boddie in tha crowd caa'd oot, 'It's tha Piper frae Mount Stewart. They're cumin!'

Iveriebodie shuffled aboot an stretchit their necks fur til see past tha yins in front. They were aa efter ketchin a furst glimpse o tha procession cumming up tha loanin frae the Cummer Road. From oor roak we shin saw tha piper as tha music growed looder. Ahint him cam a hale when o weel-dressed fowk marchin up tae whaur tha crood were waitin.

'It luks like half tha toon hae cum til see tha fun,' sez Wee Wes.

'Ay, ye'd think sae,' sez I. 'A'm glad we got up here or we wudnae see a thing. Wha ir aa these fowk arivin, onyway, aa got up in their fancy dress?'

'A think tha man in tha frock maun be a Bishop,' sez Wes, 'but A cannae say wha t'ithers ir.'

Weel, whan they stairtit speechifyin there wus yin man they caa'd the Maister o Ceremonies wha introduced maist o t'ithers. There wus tha new Lord Londonderry – tha



fowerth Marquis – an tha Marchioness. An the yin in a frock wuz the Bishop o Down.

‘A toul ye he wuz a Bishop,’ sez Wes.

‘Houl yer wheesht,’ sez I, ‘A’m tryin tae gie ear til tha man.’

He wus thankin Wullie Duncan, the Mountstewart Piper an aa t’ithers fer turnin oot. Then the ban’ struck up an played twarthee tunes. A recognised the North Doon Quickstep but A didnae ken them aa.

Finally it wus time fer tha main daeins – tha layin o tha foondashun stane.

‘Whut’s thon big jar fer, A wunner,’ sez Wes, as a warkman handed it tae tha Maister o Ceremonies

Sez I, ‘A dinnae ken. Aiblins he’ll tell us.’

An he did.

He sed it wusnae a jar awaw, it wus a time capsule.

‘Whut’s yin o them?’ sez I.

‘Listen, he’s tellin us,’ Wes whispered back.

Apparently it wus tae be pit intae the fittins unner the big stane, tae be discovered efter a wheen o yeirs by oor great-great-great-grandwains.

He toul us, it contains a dedication til Lord Londonderry and a list o names o aa the fowk wha contributed tae the biggin o the tooer. There’s an ordnance survey map o Coonty Doon, a copy o aa the newspapers ye can buy hereabouts and yin o iverie coin o the realm – aa leven o them, he sed.

‘Leven!’ sez I. ‘We havnae leven different coins, surely.’

‘Weel, let’s coont them up,’ sez Wes.

‘Richt,’ sez I. ‘There’s the penny, the ha’penny and the fardin’...’

‘Mind the half-fardin, tae.’

‘Oh ay; sae that’s fower.’

‘Tha thruppenny bit, an tha tanner.’

‘Tha bob, an the florin.’

‘Tha –’

‘Houl on. Hoo mony’s that?’

‘Eh... twa, fower; fower mair.’

‘Sae echt, in aa. Plus tha half-croon.’

‘An tha croon. That’s ten. Hae we forgotten yin?’

‘Five shillin, twa an six, twa shillin, a shillin, sixpence, thruppence, a penny –’

‘Fower pence!’ shouted Wes. ‘We forgot tha goat. Sae the man’s richt efter aa.’



There ir leven.’

While we’d bin coontin money in oor heids, tha men haed pit the big stane in place an sealit up the jar – fer it lukit jist like a jar tae me – sealit it up fer sum future generashun til fin. We aa cheered and clapped ower ocht and the ban’ struck up agane and then people begoud tae mak their way back doon tha hill. Me and Wes jumpit doon frae oor roak an joined them.

Efter a while Wee Wes sez tae me, sez he, ‘A lakit thon Time Capsule thing.’

‘Tha big jar,’ sez I.

‘Ay, the big jar. It’ll mak a brave fin yin day wi aa that history in it.’

‘History?’ sez I.

‘It’ll be history by then. Aa tha stuff in tha newspapers, ancient history it’ll be. A think it’s important ta pit things doon in newspapers. Sae fowk can min aa that’s gang on.’

‘Sure ye can see aa that’s gang on aroon ye.’

‘Ye cannae be iveriewhaur at yince, but. That’s whut the papers do – tell us what we missed. It’s a shame Newton disnae hae its ain newspaper.’

He wus quait fer a bit as we waakt on back tae toon, then jist like thon, he staps an sez, ‘Alex, whun A’m growed A’m gang tae stairt Newton’s furst newspaper.’

‘Whut you?’ ‘Tha Newtownards News,’ editor: Wee Wes.’ A lauched ower ocht.

‘You see if A dinnae. An no jist Newtownards, the hale o north Doon. A think A’ll caa it Tha Herald, editor: Wesley Greenhill Lyttle.’

‘That’s a bit o a moothfu,’ sez I.

‘It’s better than Wee Wes.’

‘Ay, weel aiblins ye cud jist use yer initials.’

‘W. G. Lyttle. Ay, A lake that.’

‘Naw, A meant W. W.’ A lauched an clippit him on the lug an ran awa, wi him chasin me aa the way back tae his da’s cobblers on Regent Street.

Weel, a quare when o yeirs hae gang by since Wee Wes an me raced each ither doon thon hill. Tha Lord Londonderry Memorial – or Scraba Tooer, as it’s aye caa’d noo – is biggit an hae bin gazin doon at us fer fu’ three an twunty yeir.

Ma Da passed awa a while back an A’m werkin his loom noo an managing tae git by, bravely.

Newton got its furst newspaper, The Independent, in 1871 but it didnae last an wus replaced twa yeir later by The Chronicle that’s wi us yit. But A’m sittin here, noo, lookin at the guy furst issue o a bran new weekly, dated Saturday, July 17, 1880. It’s caa’d the *North Down Herald* (did he no say he wud dae it, Wee Wes, ma oul freen, an here A am, lukin at the leevin proof) ‘Editor and Proprietor,’ it sez, ‘W.G. Lyttle’ – his ain lastin memorial.



Helen Lyttle

Summer twa thousand an twenty three

Mizzlin
 Spittin
 Stair rods
 Thunnerplumps
 Anither dreich an drakie day.
Light rain, says the weather bodie on the television
 But it's licht as a clatter o stanes
 Drapt by the Heid Yin from above
 Drappin, drappin, droonin oot the sun.
 Other lands are rid-het, bleezin or floodin.
 The television says the Heid Yin is mad
 That we didnae look aifter the planet.
 The rin is lappin oor feet noo
 As the last butterfly on airth flees past.
 We tell oursels this is naethin mair
 Than a wet oul summer
 But we say a wee prayer jist in case.

A shedda wi a sowl

In May the the plum tree blossomt
 An confettied the gress wi pink.
 Sittin under its branches
 There was barely ony sky tae keek.
 All that's left o the tree noo
 Is this wee chip o wood from the fellin.
 But the leaves still ganch in the rin
 The trunk is warm at me back
 An' I'm a wean full o wonder
 As it stretches its big arms oot.
 O'er time, o'er distance, o'er a world o changes
 It's still houlds me nearhan.

Aileen McCahon

Rid Button

A mine the day weel
 Whan A furst got tae choose
 Me very furst pair
 O big lassies shoes

Thair thee al wur
 Set oot in the shap
 A wus that way by mesel
 A thought A wud drap

Shiny rid paten
 Way a point at the toe
 An a wee bit o room
 Fur me feet tae grow

There wus a wee button
 Sewed on the side
 A wus that happy
 That a very near cried

A thocht A wus Dorothy
 Frae The Wizard O Oz
 A wee bit o A Rebel
 Wayout A Cause

But then came the statement
 That made me grumpy
 Whan me Methers announced
 Them just fur a Sunday.



Anne McMaster

Tha Gift

It is an Aprile moarnin in this quait wee toon.
 Ah'm in ma local café, houlin' a coffee near til me –
 yin ah hope wull cairry some wairmth intae tha day.
 These empie days lie o'tha en o'tha saison.
 Springtim is no' yit here
 so a hae lairned tae houl on fur bettèr days.
 Tha gray empiness o'tha braid-raxin' sky,
 tha streetchin' o'tha wun,
 an' tha moarnin's pale anticipation
 aa mine me thot spring wull tak its ain sweet time.
 Ma coul banes tell me there wull be snaa.

Behin' me, a hear an oul man taakin' saftly.
 His sin an' grandsin hae cum frae America
 tae kaylie oul haunts wi' him an' hear tell his yairns o' lang ago
 afore tha cancer ens its wurk an he bis gane.
 Yit his taak bis bricht. It cairrys light an' joy
 as he sups his tay an' taaks o'whaur they've bin.
 His oul twa-chammer'd schuil.
 Tha femlie hame - noo nae mair nor tummled stane.
 A danner doon til tha meetin-hoose forbye tha wattèr
 an' oor fiels, yinst naitly kep, noo warked bye aither men.
 Freens an' nighbors, noo, naethin mair nor sheddass on tha tongue.

Yit sumthin' apen an' bricht rins throu his iverie wurd -
 a sang hel in his voice. A light ayont ony saison.
 Agie ear til whut he says - an then a unnèrstan.
 These stories bis his gift - fur him tae gie wi' love -
 fur tha younger men tae luk eftèr an tae cairry hame.
 Tha yairns o' his life wull leeve on. An sae wull he.

A wee shaft o' colour breks oot frae behin tha clouds.
 A en ma coffee. Pye his bill.
 Danner oot intae tha Aprile day.

At Sea

Grief, he allooed, isnae linear.
 It's no a journey nixt a destination.
 It bis bigger too nor ye cud iver ken.
 Think on yon loss aroon ye lik til an mightie ocean
 o' deep an' mirkie wattèr,
 an' in there swims a gret big baste o'tha sea.
 Strang waves brek ower ye,
 takin' ye whaur they wull.
 Yer feet ir swept frae unnèr ye.
 It's aa ye can dae tae houl up yer head
 whaniver tha horizon o'yer hairt bis gane.
 Ye ir lifted. Ye ir cairried.
 Fur a blessed minit ye ir hel
 in quait an in peace
 as tha mightie tide growes still.
 Bot ye ir no alane.
 Even as ye ir shiftin' throu tha ocean o'yer days,
 strugglin' throu sorra, grief an' loss,
 thon gret big, shedda'd baste
 wi'a wile, holla an' empie wail,
 breks tha waves fornenst ye.
 Thon's wheniver ye unnerstan, an' onlie then,
 That it he's bin sweemin' aside ye aa this while.
 An wull fer aa tha days tae come.



Hairst Light

This goolden sin
 this saft breeze
 stole frae anither saison
 that rins this earlie air ower ma skin
 in fresh, strang sinlight
 weel-aff wi' promise, this day at the bak en o' tha yeir
 falin' throu leaves
 that burn wi' tha memrie o' simmer.
 This precious light
 this shedda play
 wull shane fade an' faa
 bot in this minit
 sitch beauty is mine an' mine alane tae see.
 A wull capture it. Mine it weel.
 Stanin' in tha wairm hairst light wi' love.



Alan Millar

Sammy Thomson's Lyle Hill trifles or thare's mair tae tha 1790s than tha United Irishmen

FAITHER o tha Ulster-Scots poetic tradition, Carngranny bard an schule maister, Samuel Thomson, 1766 – 1816, wha aiblins loved God's creation, mair nor he loved himsell, wuz aye yin tae gae rammlin aroon tha fit o Lyle Hill, nearhan Templepatrick; slippin awa frae his hame at Crambo Cave, as affen as he could get. Frae his pastoral an Ulster-Scots leid posey, we ken weel, that in tha coorse o his life, he experienced monie byordinar glisks o nature. Ah hae jaloused, this lang syne, ower an abeen his poetic 'trifles', as he ca'd them, thare's monies tha wee shard o tha aule pot o him buriet yit in oor yird conscience an if ye pit yer heid tae it, wha kens what micht hoke up. Sam didnae aften scribe directly aboot tha frichtsomen turrible times he leaved in. Even afore tha military dragoonin an failed revolution, tha Magistrate-Rectors ruled tha toonlans wi an iron nieve; tha Hairts o Steel gangs focht rents an tithes wi houghin an burnin. His poems gie wee glisks o a lan whar maist folk had little or naethin an them lucky enuch tae hae a haet ingle tae gaether roon, wur afear o destitution thursells. Naebody wanted tae bae pit oot intae caule an hunnger, lik tha strollin beggars, gaberlunzies, itinerant souters, tailors an tha lik, that straivaged tha kuntrae twixt toons an villages, fairs and markets, sleepin unner busses, strauchlin tae earn a bawbee. It wuz a kuntrae o haets an caules foun in unexpectit places.

Wairmest bield in tha kuntrae

Yin wintery mornin in February, afore schule, oot Sam set, athort a lan titched wi a wee smoorin o frost. His stravaigin tuk him up nearhan his cousin Andra's shellin fiel, whar, a wheen months afore, tha coarn had been threshed, men had bate sheaves wi sooples on abitta aule canvas sail claith; tha oats, stra an sail aa kerried awa, efter! Sam, deep in his heid thinkin o posey, Tam Gray aiblins, or apened up tae tha hibernatin riches in tha dreich lan aboot him, dannered absently ontae tha awns; tha aule chaff, guid fur naethin, layin thare syne tha hairst. Stid thare lakin aboot him, he felt, mair nor gleeked, tha lang dark shapes scuddin low aboot his feet. He lukt doon tae see twathree younglin rats oozin frae tha groon, sleekit dark creturs excretin thursells frae tha yird, then loup-loupin aff tae ilka airt, ower tha frostit gress, headin fur tha nearest dyke or sheugh. Sam stooped, laid his louf on tha thick layer o awns. Twuz haet tae tha touch, musted an foosty, near scaldin.

"Wairmest bield in tha kuntrae," he thocht, dannerin on.



Caulest bield in tha kuntrae

En o February, tha towmond or twa afore, aiblins a towmond or twa efter, Sam went oot a waak wi guid freen, Jeck Williamson, efter thair dai's darg. They raiked far, up ower bae Boghill, throu Umgall an Ballynalough, in an oot o hollas whar tha sun still hadnae raxed awa tha frost; nor wouldnae. Maistly, they wur on thair ain, bit niver far frae tha smell o peat smoke hengin on tha douce air. Oddtimes they stapped ootbye a fairmstead or wabsters hame tae gie an get tha bours an hae a blether. Finally, efter passin nearhan thair ain wee thatched kirk, they speeled Lyle Hill, fur thair ettlin wuz aye tae bae thare fur sunset. Nae better place. Tae this dai, tha kuntrae sweeps awa frae tha tap, clear tae Loch Neagh. On this particular, evenin, Sam wuz transfixed straicht awa, fur thair wuz a byordinar sun hengin jist abeen tha far Sperrin hills. Phoebus sat lik a ripened fruit, sae plump he lukt almaist fit tae bust his fiery rid joogins doon ower tha braeside hooses an fairms; skailin on doon athort tha braid valley an intae tha loch. Bit really, it wuz Sam wha wuz fit tae bust; fild wi sic blythe sonsie, he could dae naethin bit bide, as tha saft drappin pomegranate, tiggid tha horizon an slid on ahint, dimmin doon tha shired blue sky. Och, hoo his hairt heezed tae tha haivens. He thanked his Makar ainst mair, fur bein hanselled wi a sensibility that appreciated sic sublime wunner. Prayed, aiblins, tha yin o tha Parnassus nine nicht drap by an kythe him intae a *pipin Colin* fit tae describe it.

Efter, in deepenin dailygan, tha pair follaed doon alang weel kent pads bak hame, scuddin lik shaddas twixt wee plantins o trees, santerin awa saftly. Suddenly, withoot warnin, Jeck gied a swither an pult up shoort, causin Sam, jist ahint, tae dunt intae him. Fornenst them, doon in a wee holla, somethin didnae luk richt; unner a wee shaw o hazel, a queer asklent shape bided, naw natural lukin. Thair hairts, gied a blatter as they jaloused, tha nearerhan they got, that it wuz a gnarled bouk o a woman, froze solid, pow dusted wi a scruiif o frost stoor. Boys, tha skreich baith men gied at sic an eldritch frichtsomenicht. Her nae mair nor twenty, prapped up on yin elba, lik yin liggid on a chaise lounge; een an mooth apen, face thraved in torment worse nor a gothic gargoyle on a cathedral riggin. Maun hae died tha previous nicht, they jaloused, tried yin last heeze o hersell bit couldnae. Turrible, that she had bided alane aa dai in her frosted tartles, a waeful statue, whar neither sun nor boady raxed her. Nae name for her nor naethin, naw half a mile frae Crambo Cave.

"Caulest bield in tha kuntrae," said Jeck. Baith men steely noo. Nae wunner they griened fur reform.

Robb Morrow

Kirk & Ceilidhe

Auld Thomson scrieded mair lines nor wove,
An' I'd, wae him, stravaig,
Tae hear the sound o' his swate words,
Fine cleithed in philabeg

Braid field o' corn, frae sheugh tae burn,
My rant, in simmer, drees,
My bauldest try at Orr's laments,
Syne he mix't amang the Yankies

Gin ony-yin should luik on ye,
An' no cry ye gye fair,
I'd ax ye read guid Sterritt's words,
Wha'd gar ye lang for mair

'A fearsome weird maun M^{ac}Gregor dree',
Wat Scott aye minds us weel,
But in rain an' hail, mind yer ain black-mail,
An' think on Qugh Porter's speel

Tho' here I sit, an' luik awa',
O'er dailygaun-lit loanin',
The hoovin' heart o' Antrim greets,
For Fenton, ere the gloamin'

Cam hairvest-time in kirk an' ceilidhe
Wae Joe M^cCall, and Tam M^cClellan,
At skrake o' dawn, fu' clairt wae sod,
Mak true the lies they're tellin'



Eleanor Ness

Cause

Unfettered by cloud
a bricht blue sky
is my mind o'
the Antrim shore
ganging tae the
Giant's Causeway

Ower the watter, Scotland
a wave or a shake o' the fist awa'

Aff the schuil trip coach
hurlin' tae clamber o'er basalt cliffs –
columns, forty thoosand o' them
crafted millions o' years syne
strata formations – upright, dour –
dreamin' o' Finn steppin' o'er the sea

But, an' I should whisper here,
cawpie loon that I wis –

I wis let down 'cause
in my mind the columns should be gigantic
muckle, perilously thirlin'
wi' crashin' waves
batterin' us back
unclimbable for simple mortals

yet, here we were charg'in up tae the tap
like we were the giants

Liz O'Connor

The Ither Mitt.

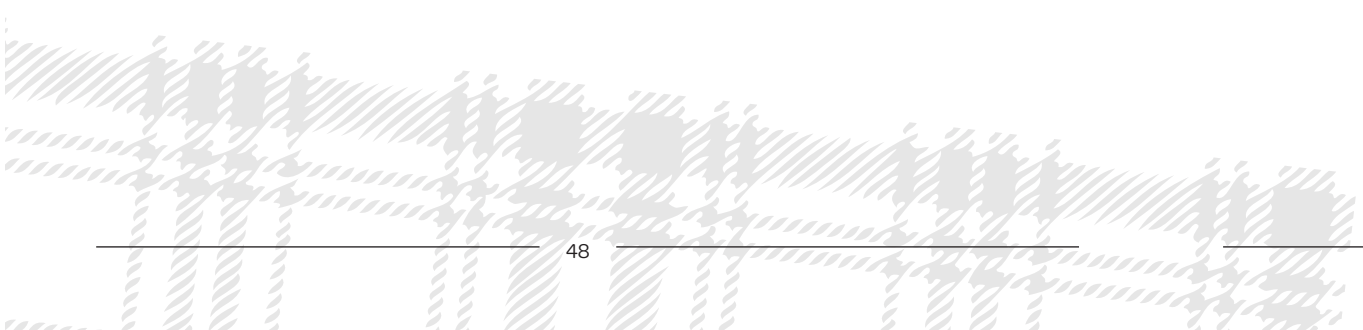
The season o' th' loast mitt ha started.
Coul fingers, sogging fingers, glary fingers.

Th' year it started wi a wee silver mitt,
Jist wan, lying there be itsel in the glar.
There'll be mare, I'm sure.

Now, some o' them drap easy on the ferns.
Some are cast aside, whiles we hannle ocht else.
Some slip fra the poacket, not minded,
..... till the next coul day.

Then ye'll hear them gulder,
"Whaur's me mitt - me ither mitt?"

Then there's the greetin
- for the fond mitt,
- the drapped mitt,
- the loast mitt.





Morna Sullivan

Bak Then

Bak then we fun oor spoart in simple things.
 A skippin raip an a doll
 Playin tig or kickin a baa
 Twarthie toys wer divid amang us al.
 They kep oor wee sowls bizzie
 We wer stairvin wi hung'r, coul an tired
 Faither prayd iverie day tae be hired
 Lake truff tha ducks we danderd tha road.
 Tha raas coul unner oor blue feet
 Sellin matches tae onie fowk we'd meet.
 Ketchin tiddlers an trout in tha burn
 Footbaa, fechtin an lettin aff steam
 A better future oor favourite draim.
 Bak then we fun oor spoart in simple things.



Glen Wilson

A ghaist train in Portrush

A cauld law baur lawers endlang thees,
 a stiff airm that held legs frae kickin
 as tha lichts gae oot at tha thrashel.

Time muives slaw for sitch a quick hurl,
 tha wain ruttled, a skelet
 wi globie een birls

in matin rite, flesh preeks,
 cantles corner an bring mair horror;
 a craitur whase heid faws aff

again
 an again
 an again.

Ablachs in rags, herts in draig,
 a waddin dress bevers,
 reduced tae steek trates,

futurs flash in smeuk an mirrors,
 actions gae dreich, than tha mecanic seich,
 tha seich o something niver feenisht.

Comin oot nae ane cared,
 a waitin line, tha want tae knaw
 for thaimselfs an nae be telt

hou it be inside an misregaird
 onywey the warst monsters
 as whid.

A callant stuid in the queue, scowfin
 yellaeman tha bouk o his heid,
 his mither leuks at her phone

an I try tae say something
 but stey on, thinkin
 whit is real? whit is dream?

I ken,
 ane needs rerin,
 ane needs reset.



The day o the back-fill

A cheersome sort,
in maugre o his perfaision,
I niver knew his name
tho he knew mine
But this be a veelage,
vicks be lang-kent,
a scaiterin o clans
in a smaw shaw tae trace.

I watcht him ance,
he stertit wi juist an eetch,
lairge but licht in his haunds,
till the ootline be duin,
a tidy pairt tae lig the flesh
an the conterdictions o ilk o us
aneath the yird, hielichtit
bi marlie or stane.

Nae economy coud make
his irraiglar wirk feenisht,
a speicalist in awbody's weird,
unless ye weesh tae burn
an in that case thare are thae
taht hae tae licht the bale-fires.
A body haes tae be neat,
for grief rins in pickit lines.

He hysts a grandchild liftwart,
smiles infective, creasin,
it is nae aw endin.
Aiblins bi whit he daes
he wirks that fear oot,
sod bi sod, fit bi fit,
clearin grund
tae seed the futur.

The fettlin afore firin

Admired whan veesitors cawed,
rattlet bi the biler's sang,
Oor Sadie ayeweys said '*I made that wan*'
whan roond at a strangers.

We sat thegither at tha factory
in Watson street, she prentit
ayebidin names on tha laggin
to tell o the true vailyie, its history,

while I grund oot the raw irraiglarities,
I skived and saunded imperfections
made by the seams of tha muilds,
cast tha material in pure diction.

We aw wirk sic coorse colls
to smuithe auld stanes, bizzin concerts
o industry, making dist an dirt
intae perfit white, ithers pentit

leemitit whimsies, baith big and smaw,
gildit Bells Prince Henry decanters,
wallie hairps, George Best tankers
an Mother Macrees' fousome shawls.

Thir dabbities, sweelt
for tha world, oor craft
will mairch ivery mantel
wi the pieces o us.



Audrey Watson

The Tay Meetin

Dee ye mine when ye were a ween and ye had te go to everythin yer ma and da went te. Nay such thing as sittin at hame on yer ane watchin thon movin picture box in the corner o' the good room.

There was church o' a Sunnay, happen twice in wan day, an Sunnay Skool on tap o that wi yer dinner fired sumwher in b'tween.

Oor the ceilidh wi yir granny, gettin' a sup o red tay that had bin dancin on the range for an hoor afore ye got it an' a wedge o soda wi' a slap o butther an inch deep. A mine ye'd a feel asleep on granny's big sofa wi yer da's coat fer a blanket. At hame time ye were carried te the auld morris travler and laid oot in the bake sate fer there was none o them fancy satebelts in thon times.

The lodge dance wis the werst! A mine sittin on a haard bench wi me feet danglin, dolled up in me Sunnay best, all stiff and starchy an itchin. A'd sit watchin the aul folk birlin roon the fiewer wi the wemen all dolled up te the nines, hair stif with thon spray stuff an the men red faced wi the sweat drippin doon ther ja's. Then ther wos a' the young lassies scannin the room fer a good luckin fella oor at lest wan that'd be a geed caitch.

The wan thing a look'd ferward te ivery year was the Tay Meetin. Ye had the minster tellin some woeful yarns..... the church weeman scrakin out a tune.....the weans fray the nearby skool doin pootry that'd mak ye yawn yer heed aff.....an if ye were reel lucky ye'd a had some wan who was aktyally rite an geed at playin some new instriment that ye culd thole. Now ther wos wan powerful thing aboot this nicht.....ye knew feen weel ye wuld get a quare feed o buns baked by the singin weeman fer tho they nicht nat howl a tune but they culd fairly bake. Ther'd a bin nay limit te them buns, plate after plate wuld be brocht oot o' a wee kitchen no the size te birl a cat in. A knew a culd ha as many as a culd stuff in me gab w'out me ma tellin me a'd be sick if a ate any mare, fer she wis wan o them screetchin weeman busy servin the tay. A mine a riten big woman wi a pile o weens sittin ithier side o' her. She was wearin a tweedy skirt an the track o' the wellies still on her legs. Now her weens musta liked the idea o fancy buns but they mustna lak'd the taste o them fer they'd pick wan, tak a bite and sit the rest o it on ther ma's broad knee afore reachin fer the nixt wan. By the en' o' the supp'r she had a rite few lines o' buns doon that big knee o hers and man I loved te watch her gobblin them up, wan be wan til ye culd see the tweed agin. She fairly kep the tay poorin weeman busy washin doon them wheen o' buns. I can still see thon knee in me mine's aye filled wi half ate buns. But a also mine fer weel the way ye felt on the way hame, hittin ivery bump o' the road and a' them wee buns threathnin to fine ther way back up agin....fer a fer al yer ma's always rite isn she!



George T Watt

Spuegies

This hauf acre is thair hale wurd,
The Plantation thair sanctuary
whaur the kye hae thair winter feed
gaes thaim aa thay need.

Here wain this island realm,
They're born an bred, luv an deity
Thay need an speir fur nocht else.

Div thay ken ithier spinkies bide,
In ae birkie wide across the Soun?

Div thay ken the wurd is roun
An game tae millions o thair kind?

An we wi aa wir sophisticated kennin
An aa wir schemen an wir learning

Are we wiser, or mair blyth?

Thay care nocht fur aa wir thochts

We delude wirsels we jalouse

O things that dinnae make oor wurd better

Big bangs or life on Mars,

Hoo mony midges mak a swallaes denner?



THE ULSTER-SCOTS LANGUAGE SOCIETY

formed to promote the Ulster-Scots language in literature and native speech. Applications from prospective members who are interested in supporting our work are welcome.

You will receive our journal, Ullans, and discounts on a selection of our other publications.

Please contact us at ulsterscotslanguage@gmail.com and mark your inquiry for the attention of our Membership Secretary.

Current annual subscription rates are as follows: corporate membership £12.00, family membership £12.00, individual membership £8.00 and individual membership unwaged £5.00.

**ULLANS 16 IS AVAILABLE
ON AMAZON OR FROM THE
DISCOVER ULSTER-SCOTS CENTRE.**

The Scots Language Society/ Scots Leid Associe

Aims tae promote the Scots Leid in aa its forms an dialects frae Aiberdeen tae Ainster, Embro tae Elgin, Berwick tae Bilfawst, Derry tae Duncansbayheid in airticles, prose an poesie.

We hae been on the go noo fur fifty year syne, an oor Lallans magazine wull suin be publishing its 103rd eidition! Foo many magazines last that lang, an Lallans is aa in Scots and aa new screivins. We micht be the auldest magazine oot thare, but we're the ane wi the yungest hert. Lallans is published twice ae year.

Scotsoun is the CD label o the Scots Leid Associe. Oor catalogue includes ilka important screiver in Scots sinsyne the middle ages tae the present day. Wark by sic dignitaries as Gavin Douglas, Henryson, Ferguson, throu tae Marion Angus, MacDiarmid an on tae the present day wi fowk like Stuart Paterson an Sheila Templeton are aa featured. We hae pipe music, fiddle music an fowk music an are aye chyavin awa wi new recordins.

We also hae wir Wabsteid, alang wi a preisence on Facebuik, Twitter, YouTube, and thay will be eesed tae promote yung Scots creatives like Len Pennie, Ely Percy and Colin Burnett. An thare is oor online Newsletter Eiks an Ens an wir annual collogue. So thare is muckle tae enjoy.

So, gin ye are a screiver, ae reader or ae listener in Scots, jyne oor Associe an jyne in.

Memmership is anely £20.00/annum fur the UK an ye can jyne online at www.lallans.co.uk

Or Email us on Lallans@hotmail.co.uk

Or screive

SLS
C/o 61 Clifftown Road,
Arbroath
Scotland
DD11 5BA

