

THE ULSTER-SCOTS LANGUAGE SOCIETY

In this piece, County Antrim poet and author, James Fenton, talks about 'Lint' - growing it, retting it, drying it and taking it to the lint mill. This piece appears in his collection, "Thonner An Thon", published by The Ullans Press in 2000. [The spelling of some words may not conform to the recommendations of the Spelling Standardisation Committee of the Ulster-Scots Academy Implementation Group]

[00:00:00.00] Lint (A pooer mines)

[00:00:05.15] Green lint

[00:00:07.20] We kep wer ee on it, frae the green scad o the furst braird tae the blyue bow (a sicht for oany ee) an the hard bow:

[00:00:15.29] the fairmer, luckin for a hunther tae the peck or mair an a throw o catter at a ticht time;

[00:00:21.20] an the pooers, gled o a throw at oanytim, luckin tae mak a lock mair nor the colour they maistly got.

[00:00:29.19] Naw a lock o guid tae the yin, an naen ava tae the ithers, wuz the shoart fine lint, lake wunnlestray, maistly on scappy or hung'ry grun;

[00:00:38.24] yit if saft, flush lint wuz chancy for the fairmer (frush, affen, unther the hannles), it garred the pooer wat the loof, etllin tae get weegin.

[00:00:48.07] Sae thing tal an firm o itsel wud dae baith weel.

[00:00:53.15] Ay, weegin: bennin an strechtin, weegin an pooin, cross the face o a braid flet, ye wrocht.

[00:01:00.21] An wrocht, for it wuz sore gan: ill on the bak an war on the hans an airms, even wae hoagers tae hinther the scourgin.

[00:01:09.14] Ay, but the catter wuz guid, an rail guid at yintim: at twa shillin or half-a-croon a stook (a dizzen fait beets tied wae bans o wun rashes)

[00:01:19.09] a boady micht weel mak a week's pie in yin or twa starts. An for the rail able, mine, twunty tae twunty-five stooks wuznae ooty the wie –

[00:01:30.01] coont that in yer heid (sitch coontin wuz mair nor ooty the wie for pooers' heids).

[00:01:36.15] An frae the fiel tae the dub, frae pooin tae holin: the low-bigged loads, on a ruck-shifter or flet trailer, wur coped nixt the broo o the dam,

[00:01:45.29] reamin foo noo frae a trinket cut tae the sheugh or burn an faced clean wae a boagknife or weel-shairped spade.

[00:01:54.06] Yin clodded fort, anither holed – butts up, maistly, or whiles heids or heids an thras –

[00:02:01.17] wae a' staned doon frae coops alang baith broos and weel tramped, tae the nixt trampin an mair stanin whun the lint swahled.

[00:02:11.20] Wat lint

[00:02:13.10] Mortyal man couldnae fin, nor the sorra devise, an oaglier unthertakkin nor the cloddin oot.

[00:02:21.00] Wae the reed richt saffened, the maist o the lint watter lut aff (inty an empy dam, accoordin tae the la, for it puzhined troots;

[00:02:29.12] inty the sheugh or burn, accoordin tae yer minin o it, wae oany deein troots reskyed for the pan) an the stanes aff, come the cloddin oot.

[00:02:39.03] A wexer. Weerin owl claes, spaltein an plowtin in glar and soor watter wae a hoag wud'a knocked doon bees, ye'd gether an cairry the teemin beets,

[00:02:49.19] sweemin them, whiles, tae hilsh onty the broo for the piler tae lee bak wae the graip.

[00:02:55.13] Beet efter drookit beet an, wae a big dam, oor efter enless oor, ye wrassled an wrocht, stappin a wee, whiles, an aply withoot iver leein the watter,

[00:03:05.15] tae tak pieces or whutiver, wae het tay, aiblins wae a wee jibble in it, tae gie it a jag.

[00:03:12.11] An wae a' ower, sprachle oot, draigit an daen, shachlin an plowtin tae the burn or whuriver, tae rensh aff the rugh o the lint watter, afore casin the wat claes at the dake-bak. A rail wexer.

[00:03:27.08] Dried lint

[00:03:29.16] Wae oany thank an a lock o sin, scattered lint shane dried, whather spread or half-beeted an gaited –

[00:03:37.17] gaitin nicht be mair the thing in bruckle wather, but yins had their ain wie o it – an wuz tied wae the dried-oot bans.

[00:03:45.21] Harly iver stakked, it wuz maistly dooble-stoked or bigged in havels or in sheegs (ca'd birts bae some) an thatched wae lint itsel or wae rashes; a lock tae dae wae a shane the mill could tak it.

[00:04:00.15] The lint-mill

[00:04:02.18] Three lint-mills sut (an sit empy noo) along the streetch o the big watter rinnin frae Kilmandil tae Killagan, little ower a mile, a misure o whut lint meent thonner at thontim.

[00:04:15.16] An ye mine the yin at Killagan wae a weetchil's minin. The dam, lang awa, fillin frae the lade, yin sloosh at the heid-race tae regalate the wecht o watter tae the wheel,

[00:04:25.18] the ither cross the lade itsel at the rodden brig, cogged at the richt hicht for the owerspill tae ga doon the bak-fa, wae the dam foo, or wun up wae the mill aff.

[00:04:37.11] An a weetchil's furst sicht o it a', cairryin in beets tae the bak binch: lake sheddass, shapin quait in the rummle o the rowlers an the wheesh an snore o the birlin hannles,

[00:04:48.19] in the licht stoor an waftin powce: wur they the yins ye knowed sae weel ootby?

[00:04:54.26] Bae the binches an rowlers an stocks they niver pahsed, harly lucked roon them: the taiter chappin the butts an teaslin oot the lint tae feed inty the rowlers;

[00:05:04.29] the strickers, at the ither en, getherin the hanfas o bruised staks an twustin them wae a thra inty stricks, pooin oot the dra'ins;

[00:05:14.02] the buffers, giein the stricks the furst run at the hannles, batterin aff the rug o the shows an oany tats o rug;

[00:05:21.12] the cleaners, giein the run that mettered; an graipin an grammlin amang a', lake a doag alow the table,

[00:05:28.02] the rug-shaker, getherin the rug an scattered tow in airmfas an trailin it ootby whar he shuck the shows oot on the show-hill. Ither yins: anither worl.

[00:05:41.05] An noo

[00:05:43.07] An noo? The day, an naw its lane, it's a' by; an'll niver be bak. (Daes ocht ither nor bother iver come bak?)

[00:05:52.15] The odd fiel, grew for linseed, haes naethin tae dae wae a' thon, or only tae mine ye on it, lake an owl phota ye'd come ower.

[00:06:01.02] Noo the mills, rickles maistly, stan empy an quait; a lint-dam ye'd harly iver fin, gyely a' filled in, biried,

[00:06:10.18] wae oany the odd yin, forgot in a quait, wat corner, an sae grew ower it's nae mair nor a wraith o itsel, a green scad. A' by.