

Charlie Reynolds



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I was born 65 years ago in the townland of Benwarden in North Antrim and spent my early childhood days there. I moved to Coleraine with my family in 1951 where I attended school and have spent all of my working life. I married my wife Hilary in 1969 and have two grown up children now both married with children of their own. I have always been privileged to listen to the Ullans (Ulster Scots) language since my early childhood days as both my father and mother always used it in their day to day conversation. However I was encouraged by them to forsake my native tongue for the English language as they thought Ullans was a hindrance to getting on in life. Throughout my life I have found that when I visit North Antrim I find myself immediately conversing in Ullans as if it is part of my very soul. I realize that the Education System in the past has demonised our native tongue along with of course the Irish Language. It is now time to reverse this trend before it is too late and this revival must start with those who still speak the tongue. They must be given help both from within and without the Education system to promote and teach their own language. To this end over the last twenty years or so I have endeavoured in my simple rhymes and newspaper articles to try and show my love for the tongue I learned at my mother's knee. I would encourage the Ulster Scots community to embrace their native tongue start to make use of it both in their speech and writing. In my opinion without our own language we lose our identity and cannot really call ourselves true Ulster Scots.



A Festive letter frae tha Kirk.

At Yultide Sayson its guid tae gie, as weel as tae receive,
Mine A'm nae miser an for muckle , A dinnae iver grieve,
Sae whun A got a letter, frae tha meetin-hoose sae gran,
A thocht it nicht hae baen their wye, o' gien me a han.

It wus ony axin gie a wee bit mair, for tae boost tha biggin' Fun',
An twarthy extra poun', mann sur, tae expand tha birryin' - grun,
Anither bit o' siller thae said wud paint tha manse
An aff coorse thae sent is photos, o' tha minister in France.

They toul is wae nicht dae better, if wae cut doon on worldly things
An gie anither twunty poun, tae pye for tha choir wha sing,
Tae sen them aff tae America, on some Releegious kine o' trip.
Please gie anither poun a week, if tha Communion Wine ye sip.

An then they wud lake some money for tae buy tha minister a kar,
A dinnae joost ken for why for hae niver gets roon this far.
Tha lichtin' fun' wus getting' low, an tha roof cud bae replaced
They toul is we wud better pye, in case wae wur disgraced.

Noo wae this festive letter, there wus envelopes bae tha score
An they went tae lengths tae tell is, that they had plenty more,
They said thae wud tak Gods money, bae tha week ir month, or year,
An tae gie as mich as wae cud gie, an cast aff a'l oor fear.

No whun a luked at their beggin' boul, these thochts wur in mae heid
Nae tak o' tha puir an needy, or the beggar man tae feed,
Noo what about tha oul yins, tha seek or tha doon an oot.
Nae mention o' tha sad, afflicted, or tha ither's roon about.

Bae noo A wus gettin' tired, but thae went on tae say,
If A needed ony help wae gein, why thae wud show tha way,
They had enclosed a form thae said, a kin' Covenant,
Tae get bak Tax money tae help them stem their want.

Noo A hope A am forgeen for writin' doon these lines
But tha Kirk a think haes wannered frae tha sae ca'd Bible Times,
For Tha Man boarn in a stable, in Bethlehem lang years ago,
Dinnae need tae beg an borrow tae keep things on tha go.

Whiles A think A'l tak tae God, on his ain free phone line,
Tha line it niver is busy, an' there's niver nae waitin' time,
For tha wrangs that A dane doon here he'll alwyes forgie,
Nae mention o' money, for hae daes it for free.

Charlie 'Tha Poocher' Rannals.

A Thiepval Graveyard.

A stud an' A loked ower row fornenst row
God what a sad hervest at Thiepval daes grow,
It luks lake a fiel waitin' tha reaper tae come,
Aw naw this wus tha hervest, an' these fa'len' jest some.

Noo there's cairt loads o' peace in this corner o' France,
Whaur yens brithar butchered brithar in thon aw'fa' trance,
An' amang a' tha din, tha oaths an' tha prayers,
Ulster's young heroes, wur cut doon in layers.

These young wha had come frae tha loanins' an' mills,
An mony's a yin frae aroon tha Knocklayde hills,
Tae dee in tha mud, an' tha shell fire frae Hell,
As tha wurl' wus entranced in tha deil's evil spell.

A thocht o' tha boys frae bonny Aramoy,
Men o' Dervock village an sweet Ballintoy,
Tha syns o' Stranocum wha answired tha caa
Sae mony frae Thiepval, niver come bak ava.

A thocht o' mae granfeyther an' tha sights thaut hae sa',
These thochts thaut A had made mae seem awfa' sma',
Whun A thocht o' tha time these men spent in Hell,
In God's name, aye mine them, tha brav men wha fell.

A thocht o' tha yins that wur niver tae see,
Their loved yins wha dee'd that this lan' micht be free,
An' tha hardship an' sufferin' thae had year after year,
Bringen' up a femily, withoot tha man thae loved dear.

A loked ower Thiepval sae peacefu' an' green,
An' thanked God A wus spared thes deh tae hae seen,
This corner o' France whaur tha brave fa'len lie still,
In sicht o' tha Ulster Tower on tha broo o' a hill.

As A wa'ked awa' feelen' baith humble an' proud,
A fun' maesel strayen' frae tha rest o' tha crowd,
An' there on tha edge o' aul' Thiepval Wud
A gret an' a sabbed, whaur brav men yinst stud.

An noo thaut am ba'k in this Province sae gran',
Mae thochts stray tae them that wur willin' tae stan',
An' dee for their freens their kith an' their kin,
Mae wae niver forget them, God kens its a sin.

Charlie 'Tha Poocher' Rannals.

Tae mae mither.

Sha's slowin doon an feeble noo
Weel ower hir allotted span,
Tha mair hir smile is still tha saime
A see a wee shaike in hir han.

Tha griddle it is coul noo
Nae soda bried ir slims,
But yit in spite o' a tha penn
Sha still wull sing aul hymns.

Sha daesnae always min tha things
That sha dane tha tither deh,
But yit recaa's hir childhood dehs
An' o' tha joy that brings.

Sha cannae clim tha stairs wae ease
Ir wurk frae moarn tae nicht,
God kens sha had hir fill o that
An tha weges thae wur licht.

A parlor maid in McNeills big hoose
Whun harly yit a lass,
Sha wrocht lang oors in stoory mills
Whaur tha air wus mair lake gas.

Sha'd tried hir best is aa tae keep
Weel cled an fed whun waens
An toul is fir tae aye dae richt
Fir its better far nir brains.

An whun a youth A broke hir hairt
Sha'd niver houl nae spite,
But say a prayer tae Him abane
That he micht pit mae richt.

An yit complane sha niver wud
Tha mair hir lot wus hard,
For sha wud regale tae aa
In Heaven we'll hae reward.

Sae noo in yer twilight years
Mither mae yer time on earth bae sweet,
Until that happy deh daes cum
Whun ye gether roon Hes feet.

Charlie 'Tha Poocher' Rannals.

Tam.

Tam bes deid noo, tha last o' a line,
But then ninety years is a hurried lang time,
He had leev'd a fu' life, wus niver yin tae complain,
Tha mair toil an ill-health, daled him oot muckle pain.

Tha hoose whaur he leev'd wus ayont a wee hill,
Aboot a mile an' a haf frae Duncan's lint mill,
He had wrocht there himsel', amang a' the stoor,
And had laith'd it as mich as tha rest o' tha puir.

He had slaved ither places, then gane aff tae war,
But apairt frae that trip he hadnae trevill'd far,
He had focht wae his freens in tha glar an' tha gore,
An' tha mair he dinnae sae, he wus ey' tae tha fore.

He had sa' tarble sights, in tha fair fiels o' France,
Whun brither kilt brither, in yin awfa' trance,
Lake maist ithers there, he had bain gull'd intae gane,
An toul bae yins naw there, We maun mak oor stan'.

Whun Tam returned hame, wheezelin', naw weel wae tha gas,
Deng'd few seem'd tae care if he leev'd on tha grass,
An gentlemen gran' wha had niver left hame,
Pass'd him by in the toon, wae luks o' disdain.

Noo Tam dain hes best tha mair o' hes health,
An shane fun that freens mean mair nor grate wealth,
He fun oot that, a lach, an a bit o' guid crak,
Can tak yere thochts aff tha penn in yere bak'.

Blak peats in a stak, an' hes ain prata pit,
Kept Tam thagither an his spirit weel lit,
A rabbit frae tha snare, a kale frae tha drill,
A boul o' sweet tay, deed Tam had his fill.

Tha prayers thae wur shoart, an tha getherin sma',
He wus birried in Merch, whun tha caul wun did blaw,
If Tam cud a sa' it, he wud hae smil'd tae himsel',
At tha tears an' sad faces o' tha freens he kent well.

Sae noo Tam's at his rest, in his hame in tha sky,
An' we'll maybae a' see him in tha sweet bye an bye,
Joost keep this in mine, that ye'll get a ye need,
Joost yin thing tae spoil it, ye hae guess'd, its ca'ed greed.

Charlie 'Tha Poocher' Rannals.

Up tha rodden.

A tuk a wak tha ither deh
Awa ower tha aul moss rodden,
Tae hae a luk at tha wye things ir
Whaur aft mae fit haes trodden.

Whun aye wus joost a wee bit wean
Mae Granda's han' A'd tak,
An' doon tha rodden wae wud danner
Tae his aul bink - an bak.

But maun ye widna ken it noo
It's naw lak it wus bak then,
Nae primrose dake tae greet mae een
Hae wae loast tha Jinnie Wren ?

A nivir h'ard nae pee - wheeps
Nor tha lark sing in tha sky,
Nae hare A rus alang mae wye
Nor h'ard tha vixen cry.

Nae damsel flies birlid bye mae heid
In their coats sae bricht an' blue,
Nae snipe zig - zagged oot ower tha ling
A cannae believe its true.

Anither thing that wusnae there
In this tha lan' o' peat,
Wus a tha yins wha wrocht sae hard
Tae keep their hoose in heat.

An tae think that this hes happened
In mae ain shoart time doon here,
Wae joost destroy a Nature gies
Without ony thocht ir fear.

Am gled mae Granda's een ir spared
This place sae deid o' life,
That in hes deh wus a bissy place
An fowk wur free frae strife.

A whun a luk at haes aul peat spaid
It's a priceless thing tae hae,
For it taks mae bak tae better times
Nae odds whit ither sae.

Charlie 'Tha Poocher' Rannals.

Wae God on their side.

Thae left hame in hunners wae nae thochts o fear,
An tha hale countryside cum oot for tae cheer,
These young men o' Ulster their ain kith an kin,
Wha wae God on their side thae kent thae wud win.

A when cum bak hame in wee dribs an drabs,
Tae mony sad faces an oul weemens sabs,
For mony wur slachtered wae God on their side,
Thae a dee'd brev heroes tae stap tha Deils tide.

But that wus lang sine an folk shane forget,
Nae time for remembrance, nae time for regret,
Naw even twa minits o' their silence tae spare,
For wae God on their side shure thae dinnae care.

Charlie "Tha Poocher." Rannals

LEST WE FORGET

Wheezlin.

A hae wheezled an crattled frae a tuk mae furst breth,
Mae wheelin' near scared tha aul mid wife tae death,
Mae mither wunnered what tha wheezlin wus aboot,
Whun she sa' it wus me, they say, she passed oot.

Whun a wuz baptised, tha clargy shuk lake a jug,
Fir A wheezled awa', in his big holy lug,
Noo, feyther an mither, dinnae think ocht wus funny
At tha camoshun caased, bae their wheezlin sonny.

A wheezled at schuil tae it wus time tae gae hame,
On Sunday at Kirk A jest wheezled the same,
The weans thocht a wus some soart o' joke
But a wheezled awa' tae a made maesel choke.

Maun aa thocht that coortin' wus a quare bit o' fun
But mae wheezlin' scared tha lasses, far waur nir a gun
An noo that am merrried, A terment mae guid wife
For mae wheezlin at nicht, is the bane o' hir life.

Tha docters hae tried mae wheezlin tae cure,
An toul me stye oot o' tha damp an tha stour,
A hae tuk thoosans o' bottles, o' pills A nicht add
An inhalers as weel, but mae wheezlin still bad

Sae as far as A see A mae jest wheezle wae care,
Tae they kerrie me oot an A wheezle nae mair,
Noo yin thing a'll tel' ye this wheezlin' naw funny
An it canae bae cured, aye, naw even wae money.

Charlie 'Tha Poocher' Rannals.