

FAIR FAA YE TAE THA LEID

**An Introduction to Ulster-Scots
Language and Literature**

2



Text 2

The Dance



**By
Charlie Gillen**

Pre



-Reading Activities

1. Whole Class Discussion

Think about getting ready to go to a dance, disco or party.

What preparations do you make?

What do you hope may happen?

2. The lines below are from an Ulster-Scots poem by Charlie Gillen called *The Dance*. They have been jumbled up. Can you put them in order? The lines should be in rhyming couplets (pairs). Work with your partner.

Whun Ah got my first weeks wedges I wus in a kine a trance

Lang ago whun I wus young an wedges wusnae big

So I polished up my beetle boots an geen mysel a steep

In case that they got scadded way dancin in the heat

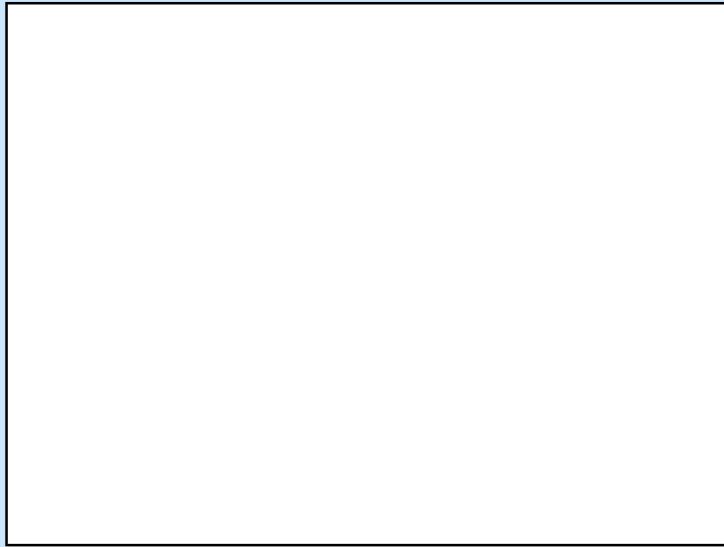
Six poun ten for fifty oors lukin efter auld Moore's pigs

If they play a wheen o' waltzes I'll birl them aff thir feet

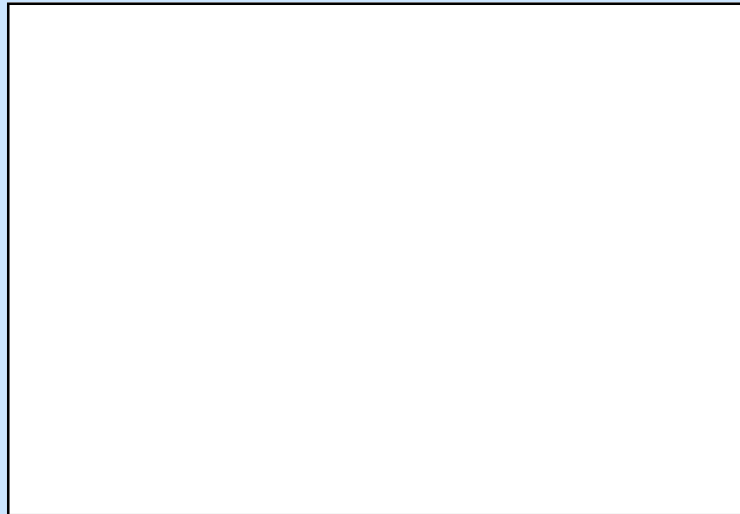
luked at my twarthy shillin an says I, I'm for a dance

So I sprayed aloo my oxters an poothered a my feet

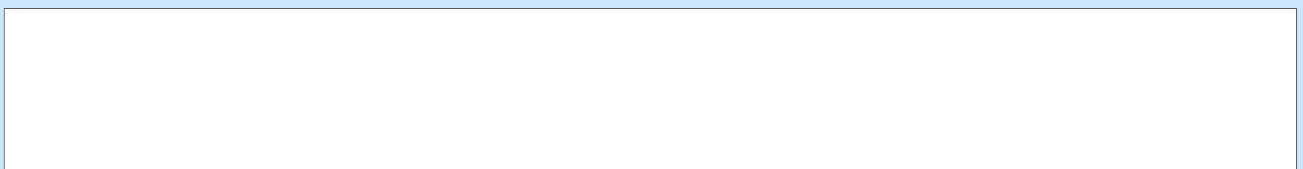
Which expressions in the poem let you know that this took place some time ago?



Pick out the words and expressions that describe Charlie's preparations.



How do we know he's looking forward to the dancing?



Now carefully read the whole poem. You may not understand every word, but try to work out what happens to Charlie and why he still shudders at the memory of it.

Beginning with the third verse, work out a verbal (spoken) summary in English of the events before and during the dance. Don't write anything down but be prepared to make your summary aloud to the class if you are asked for it.



Describing People

Words for describing people, places and things belong to a group called **adjectives**

What adjective, meaning *very big*, does he use to describe his dancing partner's feet?

Poets often use very striking comparisons to help you imagine a scene or person more clearly, to shock or to amuse you. A comparison which uses the word "like" is known as a **simile**.

In this poem the Ulster-Scots word for "like" is *lake*.

In verses 7 and 8 Charlie uses three similes to describe his partner, her friend, and her dancing. Find them and list them in the box on the next page. Try to translate them.

1.

2.

3.

What are her *oxters*? What does he say about them?

What does Charlie tell us about his partner's jaws, her chin and her legs?

Where did she hide her tobacco?

Make a sketch of the *big wumman*. Label her clothes and body parts using the poem to help you find the correct Ulster-Scots words.

Poets also use **metaphors** when describing people and events. A metaphor differs from a simile because the word *like* is **not** used in the comparison. For example,

*The road **snaked** through the countryside.*



Can you find the line where Charlie compares starting to dance with starting a car?

Near the end of the poem he says he is glad:

to be redd o' thon big midden.

What is he comparing her to here?

What word does he use instead of "that" ?

Verbs are words which express being, feeling or doing. In this poem most verbs are in the past tense because Charlie is telling us about something that happened a long time ago. How does he say the following?

I was looking well

I heard

She was stumbling

She broke a piece off

Some verbs are in the present, however, when he gives advice or describes his current feelings. How does he say the following?

makes me tremble

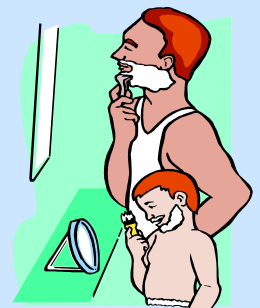
take

take it easy



Active Mode

1. Work with your partner. Describe getting up and ready for school in the morning. Try to use some of the Ulster-Scots words and phrases you have learned. Be prepared to let the whole class hear your account.



2. Work on your own. Try writing the story of what happened at the dance as if you were Charlie's partner. Use Ulster-Scots words and phrases from the poem to make it sound like her own words.



Concluding Activities



Group Discussion

Work in groups of 5 or 6 and consider the following points:

1. What makes this a humorous poem?
2. Do you find it rather cruel, or even sexist? If so, can you explain why?
3. In what ways does Charlie make fun of himself as well as of his partner and her friend?
4. How much does another person's appearance influence your attitude to him or her?

Be ready to report your conclusions to the class.

Choral Reading

Listen to a recording of Charlie Gillen reading his poem. Carefully note his accent and pronunciation.

Then, working in groups, prepare a choral reading of three to four verses of the poem, with each group working on different verses so that the whole poem may be performed in a class presentation.

For Display

1. Working on your own create a six frame cartoon illustrating Charlie's experiences. Use lines from the poem as captions for each frame. Choose the best one from your group and display it in the classroom.



2. Use WordArt to make a series of flashcards illustrating some Ulster-Scots words that you have learned from this poem. Try to include examples of **nouns**, **adjectives**, **verbs**, **adverbs**, **pronouns**. Check the meanings of these terms if you need to.

