FRIENDS OF NORFOLK DIALECT

The Merry Mawkin

No. 2

Looking ahead with Fondness

By The Chairman
KEITH SKIPPER

Welcome to the second edition of The Merry Mawkin - with size and content to match some of our ambitions.

You will recall the first FOND newsletter earlier this year, a small and far less enterprising edition than evisaged. This "emergency bulletin" followed the untimely death of Terry Davy, a founder-member who had taken on the role of newsletter editor.

Now, as membership approaches 200 and our plans begin to take shape, we are pleased to provide a much larger platform for news and views.

There was a splendid turnout for our first FOND dew at Yaxham in March when Professor Peter Trudgill gave an uplifting presidential address. Let's hope for more enthusiastic support at our next social gathering.

Keeping a promise to stage meetings all round the county the FOND bandwagon moves out west to Middleton, near King's Lynn, on Sunday, September 17th. This meeting at the village hall starts at 2.15pm with an invitation to "do a turn" on top of the programme.

Items with a Norfolk flavour - yarns, readings, songs and reflections - will collect light-hearted comments from a panel of judges. There will be prizes for those voted the best, but emphasis has to be on enjoyment rather than competition.

Bring your party piece with you (no more than five minutes!) and help make it another happy session. Refreshments will be served. Admission is £2 for members and £3 for non-members. Pay at the door please.

FOND's first annual meeting has been fixed for Sunday, October 29th at Yaxham Village Hall starting at 2.15pm. Don't forget - written nominations for election of officers have to be submitted to the secretary at least 14 days before the meeting. Looking well ahead, FOND's festive fling for members only will be held at North Elmham Memorial Hall on Sunday, January 7th, 2001. Full details of an afternoon of rich entertainment to come later.

In the meantime, there are plenty of furrows to be ploughed before the nights pull in, and FOND officers and supporters will be busy spreading the word at several local events during late summer and early autumn. Keep an eye on the EDP for information.

John Austrin

What's in a name? Ask the boy John

John Austrin doesn't seek the spotlight. He leave that to his wife, Gal Liza, one of the regular laughter-raisers at Press Gang concerts and the EDP's new dialect correspondent. But John, recently retired after working as a boatbuilder on the Broads since leaving school, played a leading role in the formation of the Friends of Norfolk Dialect.
He suggested the name, pointing out that FOND is a perfect

■ TURN TO PAGE THREE

Fond who's who - page 2. Membership application form - back page

Norfolk: is it a

Visitors to our county are less and less likely to hear words like 'hully', 'fare' and 'dwile' from the lips of the local inhabitants, a fact bemoaned by MAURICE WOODS in this article published in the EDP in April 1987.

The Norfolk marshman in the witness box was giving his evidence as loudly and clearly as a church bell. There was only one difficulty. Lord Chief Justice Cockburn could not understand a word of it.

He beckoned the under-sheriff of the country. "Would you be good enough," he said, "to stand beside me and act as interpreter?"

That was during Victoria's reign. A letter from the under-sheriff published in this newspaper almost a century ago, records the incident.

It adds that the judge thought Suffolk speech sounded like "Norfolk set to music." The phrase has been with us ever since.

Would his Lordship need an interpreter today? I doubt it. Time and television have so diluted our language that foreigners - by which is meant anybody outside East Anglia - are no longer thrown into confusion, let alone hulled into a buffle.

The accent is less robust, the vocabulary less bizarre. Yet, as I discovered on returning to my native habitat after many years "out foreign" the rudiments of East Anglian grammar remain intact.

I knew I was home when I heard people say "that dew" instead of "it does", and "without the rain" instead of "unless it rains".

A German friend once told me that his heart leaped up when he heard the rustic speech of his province. "At owl-fight," meaning "at twilight", filled him with pleasure. I know how he felt. My heart leaped up when the man who came to empty our septic tank said the of the east wind: "That dew fare master stingy."

Miracle of miracles, I thought, "fare" is still alive. From something deep in memory rose the voice of an old man announcing the return of spring with my words: "The frost fare to forgive,"

My compatriots, I found, had not forgotten how to express themselves quaintly. There the man who tested his new car and declared with enthusiasm: "Talk about go - that hully went coming back." Memory stirred again, this time of a young farm worker who said: "My master say if I dew as I oughter dew, I shouldn't dew as I dew dew."

Echoes of the old East Anglia continue to delight my ear. Farmers tell met that their work is at a standstill because the soil is "clung". I hear damp cupboards described as "foisty" which seems nearer to the German "Feucht" than to the English "fusty",

Elderly housewives still call a cleaning-cloth a "dwile" though I no longer expect to see "dwiles, fourpence" chalked up in the

SQUIT

Farmer:
George, I see you haven't touched the pigsty roof yet.

George:
Well, marster, there's all next week nut touched either.

FOND OFFICERS

President -
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Peter Brooks,
5 Abbey Road,
Sheringham.

Send your Merry Mawkin letters to FOND secretary Tony Clarke

dying dialect?

hardware shop.

My native tongue, I conclude, is refusing to lie down, even though the rich dialect I heard all round me as a child is as dead as the Latin I learned at school.

Old stagers like me are bilingual - one language on the lips, another in the mind. My lips say that I push a barrow, my mind says that I crowd it.

My lips say that I am cleaning out a ditch, my mind knows perfectly well that I am fying out a holl.

The boil that made me walk to school because sitting on the saddle was painful - that was not a boil, according to my mind. It was a push. The school nurse said so.

What, then, has gone forever? Fellow East Anglians, when did you last hear somebody speak of the "willage" or the "Wicar"? I can name the last man I knew whose "V's" were "W's".

He was a patriarch of the Linkhorn family. He worked on the bird sanctuary at Hickling, and would refer to Jim Vincent, the head keeper, as "Wincent". I was a schoolboy then.

Many words have gone because the equipment they described has gone. Only the old remember that a morfrey was a kind of farm vehicle, that a scuppet was a shovel, that a jill had two wheels and a drug had four.

People no longer scrog beans or boil their water in a betsy. Nor do they hang their betsy on a hake. And I doubt whether countrywomen "ming" their dough. Like everybody else, they knead it.

The special arrangements made for East Anglia when Adam named the animals have fallen into abeyance. Tadpoles grow frogs nowadays, not into freshers. Neddy is a donkey, not a dickey. Fourmarts have become stoats, rannies have turned into shrews. Mice are no longer meezen, and the pishymeres plaguing our kitchen call themselves ants.

A schoolmistress named Barnaby was known to everyone in our school, including the teachers, as "Bishy."

That was because a ladybird was a bishy-barnaby. When we found one we would chant:

Bishy-bishy-barnaby, when are you going to marry me?

Nobody ever popped the question to the uncomely Miss Barnaby, poor soul.

As I write, the mune is on the dreep. You may think it is on the wane, but "on the dreep" is what the fishermen of my coastal village would have said, as they rolled down the street in their canvas smocks, spitting tobacco juice as they went.

It was on just such a night that one of them told me: "Dew yew larn yar lessons, boy, dornt yew on't never moise." Moise? He meant prosper, of course.

It was sound advice from one that vanished breed of men who valued skill above all else, skill with the ropes and nets of their trade, skill with the hands and, for those lucky enough to possess it, skill with the brain.

They valued skill so highly that I am inclined to believe those etymologists who claim that the one word ever to pass from East Anglian dialect into standard English "was clever".

It is a pity - though Lord Chief Justice Cockburn might disagree - that so many of its fellows have passed, not into English, but into oblivion.

John and Tony are our FOND image setters!

■ FROM PAGE ONE

description of how enthusiasts feel about their dialect. "I was delighted when my idea was adopted," he said.

It is no surprise that John should have spent all his working life close to water. His grandparents were fisherfolk closely connected with lifeboats, shipwrights and boatbuilders.

Born in Hoveton, he spent the war years in Gorleston. He settled in Stalham in 1946, living there ever since, and married Liza in 1958.

While he is content to leave most of the squit to his missusn he has asked for the following epitaph to be carved on his gravestone: - "Dunt think I carnt see yer!"

The logo incorporated in our newsletter title, and FOND membership cards, was specially drawn by Eastern Daily Press cartoonist Tony Hall, pictured right It features a mawkin - the Norfolk dialect word for scarecrow.

Tony Hall

The Gal Liza's first dialect letter to the EDP – see page 4

SQUIT

A boastful American tourist said to old Billy: "Gee, back home we can erect a block of skyscrapers in about two weeks."

Old Billy was ready for that.

"Blarst, bor, I wuz on my way ter work th'uther mornin' an' they'd jist started a'buildin' a row o' cottages. Time I wuz on my way hoom, they wuz sendin' the bayliffs in cors they got behind wi' the rent!"

Impatient player to partner at a Norfolk village whist drive: "What are yew a' dewin' wi' yar trumps, Ethel . . . . . keepin'em for seed?"

Tryin to mearke sum sense o' this har planet

Read all about it! The dialect letters are back in the EDP. The Gal Liza, well-known to the Press Gang Appreciation Society, has sallied forth to uphold the tradition set by Sidney Grapes and continued by Michael Brindid.

I thowt tha's bowt time I rit to yew cors I'a gettin verra consarned about yew not hevin a bit o' regglar squit to read in yar peaper. We're got all this hare wimmins' lib now so I know yew 'ont mind hevin a letter from a mawther.

Yew might not go along with evrathing I say but then, if I've only stopped an' meard yer think thas good. I'm only a totty little old mawther but I kin holler loud when sumthin git my dander up. As yew git older an wiser yew pick up a few tricks on the way, sum onyer might call 'em nasty habits, howsumever yew kin alus tell a Norfolk mawther – but yer carnt tell her much.

I've lived over sixta year in my village an' my hart if there hent been sum chearnges, sum for the betta, an' sum for the wuss.

We hev still got sum roods the searme as when my grandmother walked on 'em but wi' this hare bypass, where the railway used to run, an o'course they dun away wi' the railway bridge where a lot a' courtin cupples happened to meet. Dew yew know that there Dr Beecham he got a lot to arnser for, pity he dint stick to mearkin them there powders an' pills?

Sum shops stay the searme sellin the searme sort o' things. Dew yew know at one time we had three butchers an' three bearkers?

Nowadays they close down what we want an' open up what we're already got, but they hent got our banks yit! We're gettin quite a few teake-aways, though seem ter me we're a teake-away, hull-away, go-away lot!

Years ago there wunt many folk who had a hollday away. We used ter go to our Sale Ground an' poke about, an' watch the orkshuneer sellin rabbits, chickens, pigs an' goats, granny's ol' tin bath an' knick-knacks.

Nowadays they call it a marrket wi' lots of little stalls. Dew yew know there used to be people bike in from all over the plearce an' one man I know used to row down the river from Barton every week? Tha' was as good as any hollday.

Now holldays are about educeartin yerself, watchin how the other folk live. I hear they'll soon be plannin trips to the mune. I think we orter git this har planet sorted afor we start messin up another. What dew yew reckin?

Well far yew well tergether for now.

Yars fondly,

Gal Liza.

PS: Dorn't dew today what yew kin put orf.

UNUSUAL: Jimma, Angelina and Mary as some of you may remember them.

No mistaking Jimma

NORFOLK CHARACTERS

Peter Brooks recalls Jimma and his two reputed wives

In the days of my youth 'characters' abounded throughout Norfolk.
Weird and scruffy they may have been, as well as extremely individualistic in their behaviour, but they caused no problems - unlike the so-called 'travellers' of today - and were treated with amused tolerance and a willingness to help someone worse off than yourself.
Among the more unusual characters were Jimma and his two reputed wives, Angelina and Mary.
Jimma was born Joseph Barnes, a native of South Creake and a farm labourer noted for wearing a donkey skin coat, which he had cured and made himself. He left his job to wander the county's roads with his two ladies, although which one, if either, was his true wife, no one seems to know.
They survived by entertaining anyone who would listen to Angelina play a zither whilst Jimma and Mary would sing a refrain over and over again until out of sympathy, or sheer desperation, they would be given money to help them on their way.
When Angelina became crippled and could no longer walk, Jimma acquired an old pram which he and Mary would push with Angelina squeezed up and curled like an overgrown child. As their lives came to an end, they spent time in various workhouses in the county, and Joseph is buried in South Creake churchyard.
If you have memories of a true Norfolk Character, please write to the FOND chairman. Keith Skipper, 25 St Mary's Road, Cromer, NR27 9DJ.

A view from the Hidlands – see pages 6 & 7

Oh bonjour, my o

FOND chairman Keith Skipper writes:

VIEW FROM THE HIDLANDS

Bonjour, my ole bewties!
Pardon the linguistic liberties, but we need to remind ourselves of a dramatic cultural breakthrough earlier this year. The French stormed a Norfolk bastion - and attracted valuable local and national publicity for our dialect cause.
Dominique Ward, a delightful French mawther now living Mundesley way, collected a certificate of distinction for "torkin' proper" at the Cromer and North Norfolk Festival's special night for lovers of our vernacular. It was the biggest surprise in my 18 years of judging the contest. There had been "furriners" from outside the county making creditable attempts at speaking Norfolk, but this was the first time someone from across the water had entered.
I had no hesitation in awarding Dominique her distinction, and not just because I was bowled over by her wonderful French twang and impish smile. She had worked hard at her sounds, helped admirably by husband Mike, a true Norfolk native, and she made a precious point at an important time.
While professional actors, producers, dialect coaches and all other regular callers at Mummerzet House maintain the Norfolk accent is impossible to imitate, a French housewife proves how a good ear, ready tongue and enthusiastic tutor can render that argument a load of old squit.
Cor blarst, moi - thass a rum dew!

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Talking of squit, it remains an ideal vehicle for spreading the dialect gospel. Busy Norfolk rounds so far this year have been dominated by Press Gang Concerts full of homely humour, but even the most serious engagements can benefit from a dollop or two of old-fashioned nonsense.
This was underlined most forcibly at a rather posh function I attended, full of tasty little items on sticks and dreary long speeches on auto-pilot. Polite laughs and grudging applause did little to relieve the monotony of memorable lines like "Norfolk must be at the cutting edge of new technology and rid itself forever of that backwater image".
We were all resigned to putting our shoulder to the wheel, our nose to the grindstone and our ears to the latest super charged mobile phone, when a pebble of joy was dropped into this pond of trendybabble. The gathering lit up as the umpteenth speaker cleared his throat, straightened his bow tie, called for a modicum of attention and delivered one of Aunt Agatha's priceless

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RUM OLE NEARMES

Moost counties hev nearmes searm' as Norfolk
Whot never sound quite loike they spell.
So, because I'm a trew Norfolk dumplin'
I fare ter know some onnem well.

Now, why should Wy-mond-ham be Windham?
And Happ-is-burgh's Haisboro, yew see,
And Haut-bois .....well, thass known as Hobbies.
They reckun thass French - dunt arsk me!

There's By-laugh whot lay close ter Dereham,
Called Belaw, at least so they say,
And Gar-bold-is-ham, well, jist leave out the middle
Then Garblesham's the trew Norfolk way.

There's Colney, well, thass known as Coney,
An' Cost-ess-ey thass Cossey fer sure.
Hindol-vest-on is well known as Hilderstun,
But please dunt arsk me what for!

Hev yew got a poem what orta be in this har Merry Mawkin? Then best ye

ole bewties

s. "Thass nyce ter dew nof- an' then hev a good rest erwards!" The fact it came n a leading business figure wned for his industry and c approach in the board- m made it all the more ising and acceptable.
v, why didn't our Prime nister take such an enlight- d path towards the formida- ranks of Women's Institute nbers at their national get- ether in June? A little bit of it might have got him a long v.
nt Agatha could have told ... Yew carn't keep trubble n cummin, but yew dunt ter give it a chair ter sit

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nks for all your observa- ns during the first months of ND's existence. Widespread port for what we are trying chieve has been tempered occasional criticism over pace at which our cam- paign is moving. While impa- tience can be a virtue, especial- ly when coated in natural enthusiasm, I would urge a measure of caution and cheer- ful tolerance as proper roots are being put down.

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A favourite moment from recent cultural safaris. As we bade farewell to a full house at Longham Village Hall, I recalled the wise words of an old boy who worked with my father on the farm.
He reminded me as I left to seek my fortune on local news- papers; "There's only three kinds o'people in this wald - them who kin count and them who carn't!"
As I waited for the penny to drop, a Norfolk mawther in the front row nudged her friend, looked at me with obvious com- passion and announced in a very loud whisper; "Oh, dear..... he got that wrong, dint he?"

SKIPPER: Hunt for squit.

The old folk at Wive-ton say Wiffen,
An' the neartives of Cley will say Clay,
While Glandford's referred to as Glanfer,
Thass torkin' the trew Norfolk way.

The Norfolk fur Salt-house is Saltus,
An' Morston - just leave out the T.
While Stody is allus called Study,
That dew seem a rum'un ter me.

There's Stiffkey what locals call Stukey
An' their cockles are called Stukey Blews.
Thow, o'course, the village med headlines
When the parson wuz well in the news.

This list ent complete I assure yew,
But these few are a proof jist ter show
Thass right trew whot the rhyme say o' Norfolk
....."We allus dew diffrunt, yer know!"

w send it orf to ol' Keith Skipper at 25 St Mary's Road, Cromer, NR27 9DJ

Nomadic vocal chords of one so proud to be from Norfolk

EDP Deputy Editor Martin Kirby reflects on life without that most obvious Norfolk attribute – an accent.

"Yor not frum Norfolk are yew?"

A pound please, for every time I have been asked that. My reply, though decades old, still trips and stumbles.

"Actually, yes. The accent has long gone. I'm not sure it was ever truly there, er, but I do know where you can go for a day's troshin' for nothin'! Ha ha. Er... I live in North Norfolk just three miles from where I was born."

Norfolk is the centre of the universe. My universe. But any Norfolk lilt that may have been fostered in me by my friends and father lost its way at an early age. I cannot say it was drilled out of me. It just never settled, confused perhaps bythe Leicestershire sayings of my mother.

Instead I have been afflicted with nomadic chords that have no obvious home but which display an alarming and confusing tendency to mimic. Lancashire, Lerwick, Little Snoring - my voice has left no tone unturned in trying to embarrass me. I wander helplessly, easily led into the maze of the dialect of the person I am talking to. All will be going well and then I return on the volley, unthinking, a colloquialism I have never uttered before, made worse by an exaggerated stab at the appropriate accent.

The effect, invariably, is one of wide-eyed shock and blushes on my part and quizzical "Are you taking the mickey?" glances from anyone within earshot.

Of the many occasions when my accent - or lack of it - has been an issue, one stands tall in the memory.

I was bidding farewell to a friend, someone who had shared his dialect with thousands through the letters page of the EDP. Michael Brindid's Indian Summer had been a joy to witness and I counted myself fortunate to have known this modest man, a carpenter who in retirement turned his hand to writing Norfolk prose.

His correspondence to the newspaper led to two books and countless speaking engagements. An unlikely star who never quite believed his success or understood his appeal.

When his widow Norah asked me to speak at his funeral I declined at first, conscious that this, in its way, would be a celebration of dialect for which I was poorly equipped. But I relented. And so it was I found myself standing in a Hickling chapel brimming with soft, lyrical, enviable Norfolk character.

How I wished my county's detractors could have experienced it. Friendship, certainty and dignity all united in Sunday best and the sweetest of dialect. There could be no better example of the strength and joy of Norfolk's sound.

I tried so hard not to lapse into ill-conceived, crass imitation and (but for a few stutters) I succeeded. Thank goodness. I said my few words, mingled with tea in hand after the service and left with images filling my mind of a young Michael ice-skating on a frozen Hickling Broad.

It was truly uplifting. And hearing those local voices reinforced the hope that the imprint of our local way of life never succumbs to the mix of the modern world. We are bombarded by so much foreign sound, and yet local identity survives. Hallelujah!

But remember where this essay started and have pity on a fervent defender of the Norfolk dialect (indeed any dialect), who is devoid of the appropriate vocal qualities with which to spread the word.

Thank goodness for the Friends of Norfolk Dialect and may they grow in number and years.

Ben had a colourful excuse for every occasion. Arriving late at a friend's house he explained:

"That there fog wuz so thick there wuz holes innit where th'ole harnsers stuck that hids out."

A view by an outsider – see page 10

Talking Norfolk

A few words from FOND member Sid Kipper.

I get to go all around the country in my line of work, and talking Norfolk can get you in a proper old muddle in foreign parts.
For an instance, I done this here interview in Yorkshire, where this bloke asked me about a particular concert what I'd done. So I told him how before the concert there was a queue outside. Well, he looked at me gone out.
He say did I mean there was an armed uprising?
So I say no, what was he on about?
And he say never mind that, what was I on about talking about a queue outside?
Well, we din't get it straight until I told him what a queue was. Then he say "Oh, you mean a kew", so I say no - tha's a place in London where they grow erotic plants.
Then there's bowls. You talk about a bowls match in Devon or Dorset and any of them Shires and they think you're talking dirty.
My old Uncle George has writ a song what helps explain some of this:

When we have a do then the grass is all wet,
A thud's one divided by three.
We stand in a coup when we've something to get,
And hare's where we happen to be.
'Cos we're Norfolk Dumplings, we do different too;
Abroad's what we sail on, but what's that to you?

Anyoldhow, I shall carry on talking proper, you can rest assured.

Because like my old mother Dot always say, when the going gets rum, the rum get going. She always say that. I wonder what it mean?

Sid will be presenting his show 'East Side Story' in celebration of a new album of the same name, at King's Lynn Arts Centre on Saturday, 30th September, the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich, on Sunday 1st October, and the Pavilion Theatre, Cromer, on Monday 2nd October.

SQUIT

Billy walked into his local pub carrying a chequered flag.

"Now then," said the landlord, "I hope yew ent gorter start ennything in here!"

Lijah's Hosses

"Cup, cup . . . cup-whoa!" . . . I haard the hosses tarn
An'stop, not far away from ar back door.
Then 'Lijah come up close agen the hedge;
I'd hear him holler, "Wha's o'clock then, bor?"
An' I'd run in an' look at that ole clock;
There in the corner on a shelf that stood.
Then back I'd go, an' shout, "Thas jus' gone twelve".
An' 'Lijah, he'uld holler back, "Tha's good!"
Then he'd git out the hosses' nosebags fust,
Afore he set right down agen them trees,
Took out 'is knife, a hunk o' crusty bread,
An' cut hisself a tidy lump o' cheese.
Not long he'd set there, 'fore he up agen,
Han's t'the plough, his back a little bent;
"Cup, cup there – wheesh!" I watched the furrer shine
Behind the team, as crorst the field they went,
Wi' flutt'rin' flocks o' seagulls allus nigh,
An' cryin' peewits tumblin' in the sky.

John Kett

Now git yew on ter page 12 for "Our Garden Feet"

A view from an outsider

While I appreciate that this newsletter is primarily for the enjoyment of the Norfolk way of speaking, I felt moved to pen a few words of comparison with other local dialects and accents I have known.

Although I still admit to being an incomer to the county, I understand I am nearing my majority, having been resident for over 20 years and having had the audacity to marry a local. I have lived in many other parts of the country, my family group moving on a fairly regular basis dependent upon Father's advancement within his chosen profession.

Over the years I have come to understand and admire the nuances and tones of the Norfolk tongue, but, as a raw newcomer, I confess I found many instances of misunderstanding and even hilarity on listening to the local lingo.

The first obvious example of how Norfolk people 'dew diffrunt' in their speech that I remember finding was in the pronunciation of the vowel 'u', changing it to a longer 'oo' sound. Standing in the queue in an electrical store behind an irate customer returning a non-working item he had recently purchased, I had to stifle an outright laugh as his anger was totally dissipated by the query "Hev yew checked the foose?"

The use of specific words to indicate meanings other than their standard usage is not confined to Norfolk. In this county "Yew'll get wrong" comes to mind, but, in Sheffield, I recall an unusual use of the word 'while'. There it is used to mean 'until', as in "I don't get home while teatime". Just imagine the potential for disaster that was unleashed when the first unmanned level crossings were introduced, with their instructions to "wait while lights flash"...

There has been much made recently regarding the sounds made by so-called Norfolk locals in dramatic productions. However, the local dialect can sometimes occur when least expected, often with hilarious results, as happened in my school production of "Androcles and the Lion" in Sheffield. It was quite un-nerving to hear a centurion inform Androcles and his fellow slaves "I'm reet sorry fer thee, Christians, but tha'll 'av ter go t'lions!"

It is rightly claimed that the Norfolk accent can best be performed only by genuine locals, and incomers find it difficult to reproduce. I have managed to capture the Aberdonian "Fit like?" (How are you?) and its standard reply: "Och, nae bad, jist hingin' tergether" (I'm fine thank you), which corresponds closely with the Norfolk question-and-answer session starting "Hev yer fa' got a dickey, bor?", and I can give a reasonable imitation of the Herefordshire scold "I'll clip yor yeers fer yew", but I have never fully mastered the Norfolk tongue. I do occasionally come out with a few local colloquialisms and an attempt at making it sound as it should, but my spouse informs me I will never sound like a local. Luckily, our children do.

I was born in Leicester, and it is with the Leicester vocabulary that I have found one of the few similarities with Norfolk speech. In Leicester I can remember being described as being in a 'right pukkyakky', meaning I was flustered and in a distinct muddle. In Norfolk I discovered I would be in a 'pukkaterry'. Surely similar enough to merit a mention? However, I reserve the right to claim the most outrageous dialect word ever. I remember my father, who was wandering aimlessly around looking for something to do, being sharply told by my Herefordshire grandmother to: "Stop mondergoncing around and sit down!"

Are you a settler who loves the Norfolk dialect? Write to the Mawkin

SIGN UP TO FOND

Please send me more information about the Friends of Norfolk Dialect

Name .....

.....

Address .....

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.....

.....

Postcode .....

Tel .....

Send to
BRENDA BIZZELL,
Membership secretary,
FOND
Walnut Tree House,
Forncett St Peter
NR16 1HR

Our Garden Feet

Some bloke ha' writ (that wholly read a treat)
A rigma-role about ther Garden Feet.
My woife seay "Garge bor, dew yew wroite an' tell
As how we had a Garden Feet as well.

Our Feet, that wor a marsterpiece th' year,
Th' rain held orf, th' deay wor broight an' clear;
Th' pearple come from miles an' miles around,
My hat! an' worn't they thick upon th' ground?

Son Tarm, he runn'd th' Bowlin' fer th' Pig
(A proper bewty, tho' not werry big).
I had a goo at that, but ha'nt no luck:
Tew balls went trew, th' thard one run amuck.

Th' Wicker's woife, she give a marster ceake,
An' axed us, one an' all, ter guess th' weight.
That weighed a lot, no doubt; I paid my tanner
An' writ "a quarter stun" but never wan 'er.

Th' kiddies had a rare toime, girt and small;
Swing-boots was ther, and donkey roides an' all,
An' Punch an' Judy – that wor good – not 'arf,
We had a look – thet wholly mead us larf.

Th' flowers an' weg-e-tables wor a treart,
I wan a proise wi' six o' my red beart;
My missus took a proise tew, fer har bred –
That teake sum doin' – sum fared clung as lead.

We had a swanky tea ther fer tew bob,
Set at a tearble all among th' nobs.
My missus, she wor bashful, but I seay,
Our money, thass as good as thar's terdeay.

Th' evenin' come, th' fooks begun ter goo
(An' some on 'em wor reada, that I know).
Th' young 'uns steay'd fer dancin' on th' lawn;
I never, on account o' my old corn.

I hare as how they mead a hun'ard quid
That arternewn; a good jarb if they did!
Thass fer th' Chatch, ter git th' roof repaired;
I hoop I live ter see it – if I'm spared.

Garge

FINAL DOLLOP OF SQUIT - FOR NOW

Old Frank was leading his mare and tumbril when an American stopped his car to comment on the small size of the wagon.

" Huh" sniffed Frank, "That ent my wagon. I go back arter that. This is where I keep my bacca."