

A detailed Scots text: When Phil met Angy

Isle o Sanday, Orkney, 2002

Listen to the first part of Phil and Angy's conversation using the audio file on the website.



Now read this transcript of the first part of their conversation:

Phil Goodlad: Angy!

Angy Muir: Ah'm affil gled tae meet the Prime Minister o Shaetland! [laughs]

PG:[laughs] Plaesed tae meet thee!

AM: Come in, come in.

PG: Bonny day.

AM: Oh mercy, yes, gettan a bit better. The dog's welcoman ye teu, ye see. Mercy yes.

PG: Oh, right. That's a warm welcome in Sanday.

AM: And the gibby, and the gibby.

PG: What does du caa them?

AM: Eh?

PG: What does du caa the peedie dug?

AM: O that's Brandy.

PG: And the cat?

AM: We haed a dog, ye see, that we caad Whisky and hid died. This is ... this ane's Brandy. Oh yes.

And the gibby, o he's smutty, Mester Gilbert.

PG: Du caas thee dug Brandy. Is that any indication o whut thee favourite drink is?

AM: Oh, no no, it's mostly whisky I drink. De best o whisky.

PG: Weel, Angie, I just haed tae come and see thee eftir the last time we spak on the wireless.

AM: O yes, yes.

PG: I tink a lot of folk maybe couldna understand whit we were both sayan, but...

AM: No, no no ... bit och ...

PG: I'm sure they got the jist that thu wis goin aboot the banks.

AM: They must hiv obviously ... the message wis received and understood! [laughs]

PG: There's no any more wid come ashore?

AM: O thir, no, na. It stoppit coman, it's stoppit noo.

PG: But thu still taks a wander noo and again?

AM: O mercy, I hiv tae for Ah'm bothered wae yin arthritis in me leg and Ah'm bothered wi cramp and - ach - and I hae yin hernia as weel. I pit up bleud sometimes wae hid, buey.

PG: Aye, aye?

AM: Oh yes yes. And I hiv tae tak all yin – och, I tak Rennies but they're no so good as the Zantac, the doctor's tablets. But I dunno want tae tak more than I can help. But o Ah'm pittan up bleud wae it. And they'll still no gie me a home help! Ah'm no carin! [laughs]

PG: A good walk around the banks helps thee?

AM: Well it helps. And when I wur cuttan gress ye see wae the lawn mower I got oot and got a bit o walkit and exercise. But sittan and lukkan at fower waas in the hoose is no good for nobody thaet.

PG: Weel, Angy, thu's seeventy-five. And thu's been the mainstey o Sanday I doot for a number o years noo. Everybody kens thee ... and thu kens everybody. It's a fairly freendly island?

AM: O mercy it's a freendly island. Ye'll no get better. O mercy, aye.

PG: At seeventy-five thu'll have seen some changes?

AM: O mighty thur been enormous o changes. Whether it's fur the better or fur the waur I dunno ken, bit thur very few Sanday folk that's left o the original Sanday wans. It's wans that's moved in, and if they haedna been wans thit's moved in the island wid been dead.

PG: We'll hae a good spik about the changes that thu's seen in Sanday' later on when we're haen a yorn here. But let's go back tae thee school days.

AM: O weel, the teacher at the skule, o mighty!

PG: Thu wis the only ane o your family?

AM: Yes, the only wan in the family, o yes yes.

PG: And thee midder and faider, what did they do?

AM: Ah, weel, it wis fermeen, yes yes.

PG: Whit wis their neems?

AM: Fermeen. Ah weel it wis John Muir and mither wis Minnie. Sheu wis Minnie.

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/a/angyandphil.asp>

PG: Thu wis browt up at Taft?

AM: O mercy I wrought at Tafts here, yes yes. That's hid. I wur born here and, weel, I wid hope tae die here, teu.

Questions for discussion, and possible answers. Assessment standards referenced on this page are from the *Understanding and Communicating* Unit at Level 5:

1) What are the main topics of conversation in the text?

(Understanding and Communicating **1.2** identifying the main ideas and supporting details from the text, **1.3** applying knowledge and understanding of Scots to explain the meaning and effect of the text)

- Introductions, and the names of Angy's pets etc.
- Some references to a previous meeting/conversation.
- Beachcombing.
- Angy's health and activities.
- The character of the island of Sanday.
- Angy's school, parents and birthplace.

2) Who is the intended audience for the text?

(Understanding and Communicating **1.1** identifying and explaining the purpose of, and audience for, the text, **1.3** applying knowledge and understanding of Scots to explain the meaning and effect of the text)

- BBC Listeners
- Speakers of Orcadian/Shetland/Scots Language
- Residents of Sanday, or the rest of Orkney
- Residents of Shetland

3) What is the intended purpose of the text?

(Understanding and Communicating **1.1** identifying and explaining the purpose of, and audience for, the text, **1.3** applying knowledge and understanding of Scots to explain the meaning and effect of the text)

- To entertain
- To inform
- Biographical purpose – to tell listeners about Angy's life
- To celebrate language, and to show links between the Orkney and Shetland varieties of Scots

Shaping factors and contemporary features of the Scots Language in the text

The material that follows involves studying linguistic terminology and examples.

A suggested approach is to divide the learners into groups and ask them to discuss one or two topics per group, think carefully about the material, and then explain what they have read to the others - either in a carousel activity with other groups, or to the group as a whole.

Where possible, reference to prior learning in Modern Languages (and particularly to German or to any of the Nordic Languages) will be very useful for this section.

There is scope within the following section to develop learners' ability to *Analyse Factors that have helped to shape the contemporary Scots Language*, namely the assessment standards:

- 1.1 identifying a range of factors that have helped to shape the contemporary Scots language
- 1.2 explaining these factors in detail
- 1.3 reaching a reasoned conclusion about the impact of each factor on the contemporary Scots language

This unit of work will also develop learners' ability to *analyse features of the contemporary Scots language*, namely the assessment standards:

- 2.1 identifying contemporary Scots words
- 2.2 identifying words from other languages which are similar to these
- 2.3 explaining the relationship between Scots and the other languages which these similarities suggest
- 2.4 describing linguistic features of the Scots language
- 2.5 identifying examples of these linguistic features to support the description

There are also suggested activities at the end of this section which can be used to generate material for the outcome *Create and produce detailed communication in Scots for a specific purpose and audience* from the *Scots Language: Understanding and Communicating Unit*.

1) Pronouns in Scots Pronouns are the short words that are used instead of nouns, to avoid repeating names throughout a conversation. Angy Muir and Phil Goodlad use the pronouns *Thu*, *Du* and *Thee* when referring to one another. These are friendly, familiar pronouns, used in the Northern Isles between people who know each other well. They give the conversation a relaxed and informal feel. The use of different pronouns for people we are friendly with is common to Scots and German, and some other languages. In German, people use the pronoun *Sie* with people they don't know well, and the pronoun *Du* when talking to people with whom they are comfortable and familiar. (Note that Scots *Thu* and German *Du* are very similar in sound; this is because Scots and German

both belong to the Germanic family of languages, and these pronouns have the same origin.) In some parts of the North of England, forms of pronouns similar to these Scots pronouns are still used. In Yorkshire, for instance, you can still hear *Thoo* and *Thaa*.

The third person neuter pronoun (*it* in modern English) is *hid* in Orkney; this is a very old form of the word, and is the same as Anglo Saxon/Old English.

2) The Soonds o Scots Angy Muir uses two short interjections – *ach* and *och*. Interjections are non-grammatical words which convey emotions. In the case of *ach* or *och*, Angy uses the interjections to express impatience, indifference, or mild unhappiness, as in ‘Ah’m bothered wi cramp and - ach - and I hae yin hernia as weel’. These interjections use a sound – the ‘ch’ sound – which is commonly used in Scots and German, in words like *dreich*, *loch* or the German *Buch*.

Linguists call this sound a ‘voiceless velar fricative’. It’s *voiceless* because you don’t use your larynx (or voicebox) to make it; it’s *velar* because it’s made using the part of the mouth known as the soft palate, or ‘velum’; and it’s *fricative* because the sound is made by friction from air passing through that part of the mouth. Can you mak this soond?

3) Register o Language ‘Register’ is a term used by linguists to describe a kind of language being used, or the kind of language that is appropriate for a particular situation. Throughout most of this interview, the register used is relaxed, informal Northern Isles Scots. But do you notice where Angy plays around with the register of the language he is using, in order to create humour?

When Phil Goodlad arrives, Angy states ironically and with mock formality ‘Ah’m affil gled tae meet the Prime Minister o Shaetland!’ Then, slightly later, when they discuss whether listeners were able to understand their previous conversation, Angy adopts a formal, military register as he jokes ‘the message wis received and understood!’

4) Scots Verbs - Some of the verbs (action or ‘doing’ words) in the text are particularly interesting. When Phil states ‘Thu caas thee dug Brandy’, the ‘..s’ ending on the verb ‘caas’ is correct in Scots grammar - it ‘agrees’ with the singular subject ‘Thu’. (In English, the phrase would be ‘You call your dog Brandy’.) Scots verbs in the past tense end in ‘..it’, rather than ‘..ed’. So in the extract we hear ‘stoppit’ and ‘walkit’. In Scots, verbs can be changed into a negative form by adding ‘..na’ to the end, such as ‘haedna’. At the end of the extract, Angy uses the verb ‘wrought’ for ‘worked’. This is a common word in Orkney, and is the same as the Anglo Saxon past participle of the verb ‘to work’, used as long ago as the thirteenth century. The word also survives (with a different pronunciation) in modern English phrases like ‘wrought iron’. At one point, Phil says to Angy ‘Thu kens everybody’. The verb *tae ken* (to know) is the same in Scots and German (*kennen*), and in Scots and Norwegian (*kjenner*). A German phrase like *Kennst du ihn?* Is remarkably similar to a Scots equivalent *Does thu ken him?* Why do you think this should be? At the end of the extract, when Angy talks about his parents’ occupation, he calls it *fermeen*. Did you notice how the present participles through the extract end with ‘...an’ – *welcoman*, *pittan*, *cuttan*? So why does *fermeen* have this different, ‘...een’ ending? The answer is that *fermeen* in this context is not a verb, but a verbal noun – it is the name of

the activity. Present participles and verbal nouns in English all end in 'ing'. In Orcadian Scots, there is a distinction between, for example, *fishan* and *fisheen*. You might say *Ah'm been oot fishan the day* (present participle), or you might say *He gaed tae the fisheen for three year eftir he left the school* (verbal noun).

5) The Great Vowel Shift Angy talks about his *hoose* in the extract. Throughout mainland Scotland and the Northern Isles, words like *hoose*, *doon*, *toon* and *moose* are pronounced in this way. In Norwegian and the other Nordic Languages, many of these words are pronounced in exactly the same way, just with a slightly different spelling - *hus*, *mus* etc. For reasons that linguists don't fully understand, in the late Middle Ages speakers in southern parts of the British isles began to use a diphthong (a merging of one vowel into another) such as the sound in *house* or *mouse*, instead of the older, short vowel sound that has been retained in Scots. This change is known as The Great Vowel Shift.

6) Some Historical and Sociolinguistic points People who study language are interested in hearing language being used by what they call non-mobile, older, rural, male speakers. Linguists believe that these speakers are less likely to change the way they speak because of outside influences, and that their language is likely to be closer to language that was used in the past. Angy Muir was in his seventies when this interview was recorded, but Phil Goodland was in his twenties. Angy Muir had lived in Sanday all of his life. Phil Goodlad comes from Yell, but has lived in and travelled to many different places. Why, in your view, might non-mobile, older, rural male speakers use more Scots language? Do you think that younger people are likely to continue to speak Scots, and to use Scots vocabulary and grammar in the future?

7) Scots in the Media This text was broadcast in Orkney only. When he is broadcasting on BBC Scotland, Phil Goodlad speaks with a distinct Shetland accent, and will occasionally use a Shetland word, or feature of grammar. Do we hear or read much Scots in the media? In which contexts are we likely to encounter Scots in the media? How does the presence of Scots in the media compare to that of other UK minority languages? Are you aware of any instances of Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Manx or Cornish being used in the broadcast media? Could you create your own media text using Scots language - either a radio interview like this one, or a shorter text like a blog post or a status update? Scots Language Radio is a monthly magazine podcast put together by members of the Scots Language Centre. If you are interested in hearing another example of Scots in modern media, or using one of the Scots Language Radio podcasts as a model for producing a text of your own, you can download episodes of Scots Language Radio here:

<http://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/view/id/4474>

Application of Learning

Now listen to the second section of the interview using the audio file on the website.



Now read this transcript of the second part of the conversation:

Phil Goodlad: Whit about schooleen?

Angy Muir: Weel at the schooleen we haed ... weel I haed three different teachers furtiver. But o mercy in that days, the discipline! Phew! Sheu'd tak the pointer and she'd give ye a crack on the heid and hid wid cheust raise a lump on yer heid cheust like a young hen's aigg.

PG: Whar wis your teacher?

AM: Ooo the teacher wid been Miss Brownlee in that days, o aye. Whit a whack on the heid wid thu get and it wid raise a lump on yer heid cheust like a young hen's aigg. If you wid caa't an 'aroo's aigg'.

PG: Angy, if thu wis getting a whack owre the heid thu maybe deserved it!

AM: Weel I ... I dunno ken, we got that whitivver ... but nooadays ye see they dinna look up ... we lukkit up tae wur teacher an aal in that days ... but noo they dunno, they'll tak a cricket bat tae thur teacher noo.

PG: What sort o devilment did you get up tae?

AM: Och I dunno ken, we were all weekid, ivvrybody wis weekid and dued a bit ... bit no no that wis hid the teacher wid do that, ye see, give ye a crack wae the pointer like that.

PG: Thu wis tellin me about a story o somebody that got the better o a teacher and thur pointer wi a peedie help of a ston.

AM: Ah, well ye see that wis a story that me faither tellt me. That's a story afore, ye see. Eh, this boy wis haen an affil wark ... the teacher teuk the pointer and gave him a crack like that and he aye got it on his boddum and mercy but the boy - poor boy - could hairdly sit doon. So he gaed by some aald man whitiver wis ploosan, an he says 'Beuy ah'll tell ye whit ye want te deu', he says, 'Come tae me.'

So he gaed tae him.

'Tak doon thee trousers'.

An he teuk doon his troosers and he pat a stone in the backside o his troosers an he gaed tae the school lete again an the teacher wis ready wi her pointer and the end o't gaed whistlan tae the ither end o the schule! [laughs] Sae that breuk that pointer!

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/a/angyandphil.asp>

PG: The pointer broke in two?

AM: O yes. But nooadays ye see thur cheust no ... no, no the teacher canna touch them, ye see. Thur hands is teid ... like the police, thur hands is teid. They canno use their baton. Shortly yeu'll be sean it on the Roads Antique Show [Antiques Road Show].

PG: That though must be a good thing, though, because tae a certain extent I doot the strap owre the hand wis brawly sore?

AM: Mercy it wis sore. Yes yes. But that's whit they deud i that days. But still we luikid up tae wur teacher. But it did a world o good.

PG: How mony o you wis at the schule in dy day?

AM: Och it would hae been ... on the board it said aboot thirty but sometimes we didna always hae that, ye see.

PG: And the schooling in Sanday wis obviously quite different to what it is the day?

AM: O mercy yes! Fur they wur the Sooth End and they wur Burness and they wur the North End and Central. They hid aell that, ye see.

PG: So that wis fower schules i the isle?

AM: Yes and they wid learn ye joiner wark and bits o things like that at the wan school there but ... here we wid learn nothing like that. O no.

PG: Noo there's only the wan school.

AM: Wan school noo.

PG: Does thu think that's a good thing?

AM: Weel ... ah weel it taks them aa taegethir. Before hid wis ... the wans fae Burness widna spaek tae the North End and the North End widna spaek tae them and the same wi the Sooth End it wis a bad ... it wisno a good thing at aell than. But noo ivvrybody knows wan anither it's faer ... I think it's faer better.

Using the wordle website, learners can design a wordle of their own incorporating the Scots vocabulary from the second section: <http://www.wordle.net/>

Learners can work closely with the written and audio text of the second section to find, illustrate and discuss their own examples of some of the linguistic features of Scots detailed in the materials above.

They may choose to think about some of the headings from the previous section when analysing the text, i.e. pronouns, sounds, verbs and verbal nouns, and the Great Vowel Shift.

Learners may also wish to check in the dictionary for any other new vocabulary – *aroo*, *furtiver*, *devilment*, *brawly*, *beuy* - from the second section.

Successful completion of the above tasks could result in the production of oral or written work that fulfils some or all of the assessment standards for the *History and Development* unit of the Scots Language Award at SCQF level 5.

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