

# Features of Scots

**A resource for the Senior Phase and Scots Language Award**

# Contents

- 03 | Forming negatives
- 05 | Forming negatives in questions
- 06 | Forming negatives after contractions
- 08 | Present participles
- 10 | Past tense of weak verbs
- 11 | Past tense of strong verbs
- 12 | Demonstrative pronouns
- 14 | Plurals
- 16 | Definite articles and possessive pronouns
- 17 | Double modals
- 18 | Northern subject rule
- 21 | Wh-labiodentalization

## Forming negatives

In Scots, negatives are formed by adding *-nae* or *-na* to auxiliary verbs. This varies between different regions. Examples are *cannae/canna*; *couldnae/cudna*; *dinnae/dinna*; *didnae/didna*; *havenae/havena/hinnae/hinna*; *michtnae/michtna*; *shudnae/shudna*; *wullnae/wullna/winnae/winna*.

An auxiliary verb is sometimes called a 'helper' verb – auxiliary comes from the Latin *auxilium*, to help.

In English, *not* would be added to, or used with, the verb to make the negative: cannot/ could not/ do not etc.

Here are some examples of this feature in texts:

“Listen tae the teacher, **dinna** say **dinna**  
Listen tae the teacher, **dinna** say hoose  
Listen tae the teacher, ye **canna** say **maunna**  
Listen tae the teacher, ye **maunna** say moose”

from *Listen Tae the Teacher*, by Nancy Nicholson

Listen to the poem and see the full text by clicking here:

<http://www.scotssangsfurschools.webs.com/listentotheteacher.htm>

“I **canna** min' it ever bein' sae hot.

*and*

An' I'd ha'e tae dee it. I **couldna** coont on him tae.

*and*

She's a fechter. She'll find her ain solution. Sae are you, Gladys. You two have spirit. Noo, I **hinna**. I like an easy life. An' my Frank was never een tae stand up tae onybody or onything. Even you, Peggy, though you **michtna** think so, you'll look for the saft route.”

from *Fooshion*, By Charles Barron.

The full playscript can be viewed in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*.

Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1348&highlight=michtna>.

“But an honest man's aboon his might –  
Guid faith, he **mauna** fa' that!”

from *A Man's A Man for A That*, by Robert Burns.

You can see the full poem and find out more about Burns by clicking here:

<https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/mans-man-0>

“Gonnae no dae that...”

from *Chewing the Fat*.

You can watch the entire sequence of sketches featuring this catchphrase by clicking here:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yoOfHfCQ0w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yoOfHfCQ0w)

## Forming negatives in questions

In questions, Scots forms negatives with *no*. In North Eastern Scots, *nae* would be used. Examples are: *Can ye no gie's a haund? Have ye no seen the film? Wull they no be there?*

In English, *not* would be used, usually contracted to, for example: *can't you; haven't you; won't you?*

Here are some examples of this feature in texts:

“Ye gowk!’ replied Wullie. ‘Can ye no see that maist o them stanes are ower wee tae catch in the tines o yer fork? Use a spade, man, an ye’ll get the job done in five meenits!’”

from *Daft Jackie*, by James McGonigal.

You can read the whole story in *Braw Brew* by Liz Niven et al

You can also view the whole story in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*.

Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

[http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=46&highlight=can ye no](http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=46&highlight=can%20ye%20no).

And on the Scots Language Centre, with audio

<http://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/view/id/4499>

“yeah but see if you’re gaun to be teachin [inaudible] as a subject at school as weel I think you’ll need to have aa this, will ye no?”

from Interview 10: Orkney woman talking about languages in Scotland.

You can hear and view the whole conversation, In *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015 by clicking here:

[http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1411&highlight=will ye no](http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1411&highlight=will%20ye%20no)

“Bonnie Charlie's noo awa

Safely o'er the friendly main;

He'rts will a'most break in twa

Should he ' come back again.

*Chorus*

Will ye no' come back again?”

from *Bonnie Charlie, or Will Ye No Come Back Again*, by Carolina Oliphant.

You can view the complete lyrics and read about the background to the song by clicking here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bonnie Charlie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bonnie_Charlie)

## Forming negatives after contractions

Scots forms negatives with *no* after contractions too. In North Eastern Scots, *nae* is used. Examples are: *She's no weel. I'm nae fussy. We're no gaun there. I'm no daein that.*

Contractions are where new words are created by missing letters or sounds from two or more words. Apostrophes are used to indicate the missing sounds. This process is also known as elision.

In English, *not* would be used: *I'm not fussy* or a different construction would be used: *She's unwell/she's ill.*

Here are some examples of this feature in texts:

“Oo say, oo say, ‘**she's no guid**, she's awfu guid”

from BBC Voices Recording: Hawick.

You can listen to and view the whole transcript of the conversation in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

[http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1430&highlight=she s no](http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1430&highlight=she%20s%20no).

“**I'm nae takin it** oot  
*and*  
**I'm nae ready**  
*and*  
**I'm nae tellin you** again”

from Conversation: Buckie - Mother and child 05, recording 2: choosing what to have for tea. You can hear the entire conversation and view the transcript in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

[http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1610&highlight=i m nae](http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1610&highlight=i%20m%20nae).

“For **we're no awa** tae bide awa,  
For **we're no awa** tae lee ye,  
for **we're no awa** tae bide awa,  
We'll aye come back an see ye.”

from “We're No Awa Tae Bide Awa,” traditional.

You can listen to the whole song, sung by The Corries, by clicking here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLdUNqYclpM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLdUNqYclpM)

“The Order caws for the poll for this referendum tae be held on a day that **the’r nae** ither poll tae be held throu ony act o the Scots Pairlament.”\*

from “The Embra Greement 2012”

You can read the full document by clicking here:

<http://media.scotslanguage.com/library/document/The%20Embra%20Greement%202012.pdf>

\* Davuit Horsbroch, faa owerset the scribe, explains:

*The’r* - the marra o this in Inglis is *there are/there is*. Scots *the’r* is reckont tae spring fae Norse *det er*. We see it in Shetland byleid as *der/de’r* or *dir*. The ither ane that oxters wi this is *the war* (Inglis *there was/there were*, an Norn ('Norwegian') as *det var*). In Shetland it becomes *dey wir*. Sae the Soothron for ...*on a day that the’r nae ither poll...* wad be ...*on a day that there is no other poll...*

*The’r* – the equivalent of this in English is *there are/there is*. The Scots *the’r* is thought to come from the Norse *det er*. This occurs in the Shetland dialect as *der/de’r* or *dir*. The other similar example is *the war* (In English *there was/there were*, and Norwegian as *det var*. In Shetland it becomes *dey wir*. So the English for ...*on a day that the’r nae ither poll..* would be ...*on a day that there is no other poll...*

## Present participles

In Scots, present participles are formed by adding *-in*. In verbs that end in *-le*, the ending is *-lin*. Orcadian Scots usually adds *-an*. Examples are: *bletherin*, *greetin*, *hingin*, *lowpin*, *speirin*, *fleggin*; *cairyin*, *cooryin*; *guddlin*, *tummlin*.

Present participles are forms of verbs. They name the action of the verb (when they are gerunds). They also act as adjectives or adverbs.

In English the present participle tends to end in 'ing'. There is no need for an apostrophe at the end of the word in Scots. 'Apologetic' apostrophes used to be added to Scots present participles, in the mistaken belief that they were English words missing a 'g'

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

"Yet like the **pechin** pulsation o a muckle trapped bird,  
*and*  
Wi **agonisin** will, claws upon the slidderie ice  
*and*  
It wis despair I felt wis **flyin**  
*and*  
Nae **bletherin** or dirdum amang  
The clatter o wheels o **whurlan** trolleys,"

from *A Keek Intae the Hospital Kitchen Aifter the Appointment wi the O.T.*, by  
Maureen Sangster

You can view the whole poem in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow:  
University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=608&highlight=bletherin>.

"That's like when ye're **speirin**, "Hoo're ye **daein**?" I mean we're nae **wantin** tae ken  
hoo ye're **daein**."

from BBC Voices Recording: Inverurie

You can listen to the whole conversation and read the transcript in *The Scottish  
Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015,  
by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1427&highlight=speirin>.



"Sittin on yer mammy's knee,  
Greetin for a wee bawbee  
and  
Noo he's tumblin doon the stair  
and  
Oor wee Jeaninie wis lookin affa thin,  
A rickle o banes covered ower wi skin.  
Noo she's gettin a wee double chin  
Sookin Couter's Candy..."

from "Coulter's Candy, by Robert Coultart

## Past tense of weak verbs

The past tense of weak verbs is formed in Scots by adding *-it* or *-t*. In verbs that end in *-le*, the ending is *-elt*. Examples are: *cleekit*, *gruppit*, *hingit*, *keepit*, *lowpit*, *roastit*, *scrievit*, *skelpit*; *blethert*, *gaithert*, *kent*, *scunnert*, *shairpent*, *telt*; *fankelt*, *tummelt*.

Weak past tenses are formed for verbs which do not change their stem for forming the past participle. Strong past tenses are formed for verbs which change a vowel.

In English, the past tense of weak verbs tends to end in *-ed*.

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

“Bit a twa-three days aifter, fin it hid been oot an in, oot an in, an aye thinner lookin, it got a tooshtie o mait an syne we wis **cleekit** – it wis jist e hoose cat syne.”

from *Craiters*: ‘13 – E Cheer,’ by Alexander Fenton.

You can view the full text of this short story in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=537&highlight=cleekit>.

“His antlers **telt** a lang story, a hero's story, of territory defended and hinds protected.”

from *A Bonnie Fechter* by Sheila Templeton.

You can read the entire poem and find out more about the poet by clicking here:

<http://www.freewebs.com/makarpoet/sheilatempleton.htm>

“*Tam* **skelpit** on thro’ dub and mire,  
and  
They reel’d, they set, they cross’d, they **cleekit**,  
Till ilka carlin swat and **reekit**,  
And coost her duddies to the wark,  
And **linket** at it in her sark!”

from “*Tam O Shanter*,” by Robert Burns.

You can read the entire poem and hear or watch various famous Scots reciting or performing it, as well as finding out more about the poems itself by clicking here:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/works/tam\\_o\\_shanter/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/works/tam_o_shanter/)

## Past tense of strong verbs

Scots strong verbs change their vowels to form the past tense. Examples of this are: *buy* > *bocht*; *drive* > *drave* or *dreeve* (NE); *fecht* > *focht*; *greet* > *grat*; *may* > *micht*; *think* > *thocht*.

There are verbs which do this in English too: *run* > *ran*.

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

“No,’ the boy says, the fermer says, ‘I **bocht** it for a hundred and fifty pound.’  
And I says, ‘I’ll **buy** it aff ye.”

from Conversation 05: Fife couple on shared memories.

You can listen to the entire conversation and read the transcript in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=348&highlight=bocht>.

“Tony felt like he cuid dae we a hug an a **greet** juist then bit aw he hud instead wis this hail torrent o information tae tak in.

and

He saw the busslin toon ablow him whaur a few Week back he hud been pairtyin bit whaur now fowks wir cairryin on their normal lives an naethin much hud changed it aw in thir day, an **grat - grat** a hail fist fou o tears.”

from Millenium Bug Cairry-oot, by Chris Ferguson

You can view the entire short story, which NB concerns a diagnosis of HIV due to unsafe gay sex, in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=714&highlight=grat>.

“Awbody chairged wi a penal faut hes the richt tae be **thocht** innocent til pruverd guilty conformand til law in a public trial whaur he hes haen aw the warranties necessar for his defence.”

from “Universal Declaration o Human Richts”, airticle 11.

You can view the entire document, download it as a PDF, and read a bit about the Scots language by clicking here:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=sco>

## Demonstrative pronouns

Scots uses three different demonstrative pronouns, depending on how far away the thing being 'pointed at' is. So, *this yin here; that yin there; thon or yon yin ower there* and *thir yins here; thae yins there; thon or yon ower there*. In each case, the thing is further away from the speaker.

In English only *this/these* and *that/those* are commonly used. *Yonder* used to be used more commonly in English, in the way that *thon/yon* are used in Scots now.

Here are examples of this feature being used in texts:

"THERE wis a time lang syne when the Sultan o a desert country taen it intae his heid tae build up his country's transport system an bring it mair intae line wi **thon** o some o his neibours.

*and*

The Sultan cried aw his advisers thegither an got thaim telt that he wantit his country tae hae a modern transportation system an aw, foondit on **thon** prototype "cuddy" system.

*and*

"Naw!" said the first yin, "**Thae** kind o feet micht be aw richt for in the touns or e'en in landwart airts

*and*

A doot **thae** kind o feet micht sink intae the sand an the cuddy micht end up cowpin ower

*and*

**Thon** wis juist yin o the mony chynges the comatee cam oot wi."

from *Aboot Cuddies an Camels*, by Robert Fernie 2015.

You can view the entire tale in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=752&highlight=thon>.

"**Yon** cascade wis loupin wi troot a' day  
Thir a' awa, nae mair tae shift.

*and*

Ah'll hae a pint Jock, wae **yon** dram

*and*

Anywhar near **yon** dry stane wa'

*and*

Aff went a pooskie Jock frae **yon** neddie field

**Yon** gadgie wis nashin rubbin his jeer,

*and*

A'd rither hae a yarrie oan a butter piece

Than pick oot yer bool **yon** wee lead baa's."

from *A Blether an Wee Bevvie*, by Peter Mitchell McCulloch

You can view the entire poem in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=770&highlight=yon>.

“By **yon** bonnie banks and by **yon** bonnie braes,  
Where the sun shines bright on Loch Lomond,”

from “Loch Lomond”, traditional.

You can listen to the entire song, sung by Runrig, and view the lyrics by clicking here:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbb9aRSQpsY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbb9aRSQpsY)

## Plurals

Some Scots nouns have distinctive, irregular plurals. Examples are: *coo* > *kye*; *ee* > *een*; *shae* > *shuin* or *sheen*.

Most Scots nouns have plurals formed by adding an 's', as in English.

There are fewer examples of irregular nouns in English, but they do exist: *ox*>*oxen*.

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

“Ehm, but ye ca – ye can get **kye** as well, that tae me that’s mair milkin cause the house **coos** were aye **kye**.  
*and*  
**Kye**, would one o oor folk hae said **kye**?  
**Kye**, ehm aye a bittie back I ce- I certainly u- didnae use masel but aye that’s right  
*and*  
right enough, **kye**. They they spoke about **kye**”

from BBC Voices Recording: Inverurie.

You can listen to the entire conversation and view the transcript in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1427&highlight=kye>.

“Isie wis fully as clean as Minnie, her peenie wis aye like the driven snaa an her **sheen** shone like sharn on a weat lea rig.

*and*

Yestreen, he'd pued Minnie's sledge tae the smiddy ahin Prince, the horse, sae the smith could fit the muckle shelt wi iron **sheen**...

*and*

The aunts hid bin busy aa evenin, washin Minnie's faither, an dressin him in hgis Sabbath suit, even doon tae blaikenin his **sheen** afore they pit them ontae his feet.

*and*

Bit maistly, fowk kent that the milk hid arrived ootbye, fin Derkie or Daisy strukk their iron **sheen** against the cassies a twa three times

*and*

'Lordsake fit a wecht, ye maun hae steens in yer **sheen**”

from *Minnie* by Sheena Blackhall.

You can view the entire novella in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1496&highlight=sheen>

You can hear Sheena blackhall reading her work by clicking here:

<http://www.scotslanguage.com/pages/view/id/14>

In the same kinna wey there wis certain words ye juist daurna say an maist particular on a Sunday. **Shae** or **shuin** wis ne'er heard an got replaced wi "dinnae mentions" or "dinnaes" for short.

from Scots Tung Wittins 167, by Robert Fairnie

You can view the entire article in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1818&highlight=shae>.

“Young Robie was the brawest lad,  
The flower and pride of a the glen;  
And he had **owsen**, sheep and **kye**”

from “Bonnie Jean,” by Robert Burns.

You can read the entire song and hear it as well as reading background information, by clicking here: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/works/bonie\\_jean/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/works/bonie_jean/)

## Definite articles and possessive pronouns

Scots uses the definite article and possessive pronouns in distinctive ways. For example: *I'm comin doon wi the cauld; She's gaun tae the scuil; I'm awa tae ma bed; That's for yer Christmas.*

The definite article is *the* (*da* in Shetland, *e* in Caithness). Personal pronouns are words used as substitutes for the pronouns *I* (*A Ah*), *you* (*ye, du, thou*), *he, she, it* (*hit*), *we* or *they* (*dey, dir*), which are themselves used as substitutes for nouns.

English tends to use the indefinite article: *a cold*; or miss the article altogether: *going to school*. Similarly, the possessive pronoun is usually not present in English: *I am going to bed*.

Here are examples of this feature being used in texts:

“We use that, we talk about ‘the rugby’ an ‘the golf, we get ‘the cauld,’ oo gaun along ‘the street’, oo’ve got ‘the crescent’, we use ‘the’ a lot, as oo get alder, oo get the pains.”

from BBC Voices Recording: Hawick.

You can listen to the entire conversation and read the transcript in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

[http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1430&highlight=the cauld](http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1430&highlight=the%20cauld).

“Ah knew ah'd bettur say somethin' 'cos she wiz still up, an' if ah'd crept up till ma bed, she'd hiv thought somethin' wiz up  
and

Ah went back upstairs, an' lay on ma bed.

and

Look, I'll have to rush - I've got to go to my work this morning.”

from *Beginning* by Dave Howson.

You can view the entire short story in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

[http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=831&highlight=ma bed](http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=831&highlight=ma%20bed).

“Bairns that breks the law shuidna be treatit cruel like. Thay shuidna be gien the jyle along wi adults an shuid can get tae see thair faimly.”

from “The Cutty Version o the Unitit Nations Convention on the Richts o the Bairn”, airticle 37 the full document can be read by clicking here:

<http://media.scotslanguage.com/library/document/Richts%20o%20the%20Bairn.pdf>



## Double modals

In some areas of Scotland, Scots uses double modals. For example: *I used tae cud dae that; Ye'll no can see her the day; We micht can get a bus.*

A modal verb is an auxiliary verb used to show likelihood, permissibility, obligation and so on: *can, cuid, maun, may, micht, shall, shuid, wad, will, yaised tae*, in Scots.

Standard English uses one modal verb only: *I used to be able to; You cannot see her.* Most dialects of Scots follow the English example.

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

“Ye'll no can eat then the wey ye git tae eat the noo. Juist you think yersel braw lucky wi whit ye've hid.”

from *Picters in Yer Heid*, by Robert Fairnie.

You can view the complete memoir in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*.

Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking

here: [http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=115&highlight=ye ll no can](http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=115&highlight=ye%20ll%20no%20can).

“I'll no can follae you”

from “Lanarkshire,” by Matthew Fitt

You can read the complete poem, which is translated from Estonian, and read about both poets and the poem by clicking here:

<https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/lanarkshire>

“Ay, it's a frichtsome craitur, the Hairy Etin. Whiles at nicht, whan the wind blaws, ye'll hear the soond o him chappin ... Jings! Whit's that? ...”

from *The Adventurs o Tintin; The Derk Isle*, by Hergé.

You can read more about this text, its background and see a panel from the graphic novel by clicking here: <http://tintin Scots.com/about/>

This feature travelled to Appalachia. Here is a song by Joel Jacks featuring the expression **Might Could**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sY3cB5FjMXE>

## Northern subject rule

Some Scots speakers follow the Northern subject rule. For example: *My feet's gey sair; Thae bairns is awfie quiet.*

This rule states that where the subject is a noun or a personal pronoun not next to the verb, the third person singular verb is used, regardless of person.

In English this usage is seen as bad grammar (although it is often used in speech).

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

“Cuddly **futrats is** exclusive tae the Toy Shop Ballater”

from *Ballater Toy Shop sketch*, Scotland the What

You can view this sketch by clicking here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ot\\_1K4c0Zw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ot_1K4c0Zw)

“for presently England is brocht in the bowellis of our cuntry, and them **that hes brocht them in** intendis to wraik quhom they pleis,”

from Letter fae Sir Weelum Kirkcaldy o Grange

You can read the whole letter, the background to it and a commentary by clicking here:

<http://media.scotslanguage.com/library/document/Kirkcaldy%20o%20Grange%20%201570.pdf>

“For as lang as hunner o us is in life, in nae wey will we thole the Soothron tae ower gang us.”

from “The Scribe fae Arbroath”

You can read the entire document by clicking here:

[http://www.scotslanguage.com/Bannockburn\\_1314/The\\_Declaration\\_of\\_Arbroath?flush=true](http://www.scotslanguage.com/Bannockburn_1314/The_Declaration_of_Arbroath?flush=true)

## Fricative sounds

Some Scots words make use of the fricative sounds [x] and [hw]. For example *broch*, *loch*, *dicht*, *fecht*; *wheech*, *whummlie*.

Linguists call this *ch* 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. The *wh* sound is *bilabial*, rather than *velar*, because it is made using both lips.

English does not have the same *ch* sound, with *loch* pronounced *lock*. The *wh* is largely pronounced the same way as *w*, making *Wales* and *whales* homonyms: words which sound the same.

Here are examples of this feature being used in texts:

“ta sit  
on da briggistane, **broch** at wir backs;  
let faa da fear, recount da bravery.”

from *Fedaland*, by Christine De Luca

You can view the entire poem and a glossary from Reefed in, in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=332&highlight=broch>

“You say light. We say **licht**  
You say night. We say **nicht**.  
You say bright. We say **bricht**.  
You say sight. We say **sicht**.  
You say right. We say **richt**.  
You say fight. We say **fecht**.  
It's a brow **bricht** meenlicht **nicht**, the **nicht**.”

from *Scotspik* by Wendy de Rusett.

You can view the entire drama activity script in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=583&highlight=dicht>.

“She's that casual about it, she can jist walk past a shelf and **wheech** sumpn intae her pocket afore anybdy notices, never gets caught”

from *All That Glitters* by Anne Donovan.

You can view the entire short story in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=359&highlight=wheech>

You can watch an interview with the author about her work and access lots of educational resources about the text by clicking here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zhxyr82>

"Whit's that?

and

No a tongue I dinna ken whit ye'd ca it but they were"

from BBC Voices Recording: Dunbar.

You can listen to the entire conversation and read the transcription in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1431&highlight=whit>.

"Just a wee deoch an doris, just a wee drop, that's all.

Just a wee deoch an doris afore ye gang awa.

There's a wee wifie waitin' in a wee but an ben.

If you can say, "It's a braw bricht moonlicht nicht",

Then yer a'richt, ye ken."

from *A Wee Deoch and Doris*, by Gerald Grafton and Harry Lauder

You can watch and listen to the entire song, sung by Harry Lauder by clicking here:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRjyLbSDJz8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRjyLbSDJz8)

## Wh-labiodentalization

North Eastern Scots uses an initial *f*- rather than *wh*- in many words. For example: *foo, far, fan; fit like?* The *f* tends to be used in all words beginning with *wh* in other Scots dialects, or indeed in English: *fusky, fuskers, fite (whisky, whiskers, white)*.

Linguists call the process that led to this distinction *Wh-labiodentalization*. It is where the *wh* and *f* sounds have merged. *F*- is the *voiceless labiodental fricative* sound; *fricative* because it is produced by constricting air flow through a narrow channel where the sound is made, *labiodental* because it is made using lips and teeth and *voiceless* because you don't use your voicebox to make the sound.

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

“In Glesga toun, it's **Whit** and **Wha**  
And **Whaur** that they say there.  
and  
For it's **Fit, Fa, Fan** and **Far** they say”

from *The Wizard o the North*, by Sheena Blackhall

You can read the entire poem by clicking here:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/kist/search/display.php?sbl112.dat>

“If ye went intae the toon it was a rare occasion, **fit** we  
cried the toon then.

and

Eh **fit** else now, **fit** else dae ye wear?

and

Aye, **Far's** my ma?

and

It was like a- an off-white but y-you could actually feel the  
oil **fan fan** you were knittin wi it”

from *BBC Voices Recording: Aberdeen*.

You can hear the entire conversation and read the transcript in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

<http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1448&highlight=fan>.

“‘Oh dearie me,’ says Geordie, ‘Man, aat’s afa, **fit** a  
shock...’

and

‘Weel, that’s **fit** A heard onywye...’”

from *The Rumour*, by Andy Stewart

You can watch and listen to Andy Stewart reciting his poem by clicking here:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=bA9DGEEa9Lk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bA9DGEEa9Lk)

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