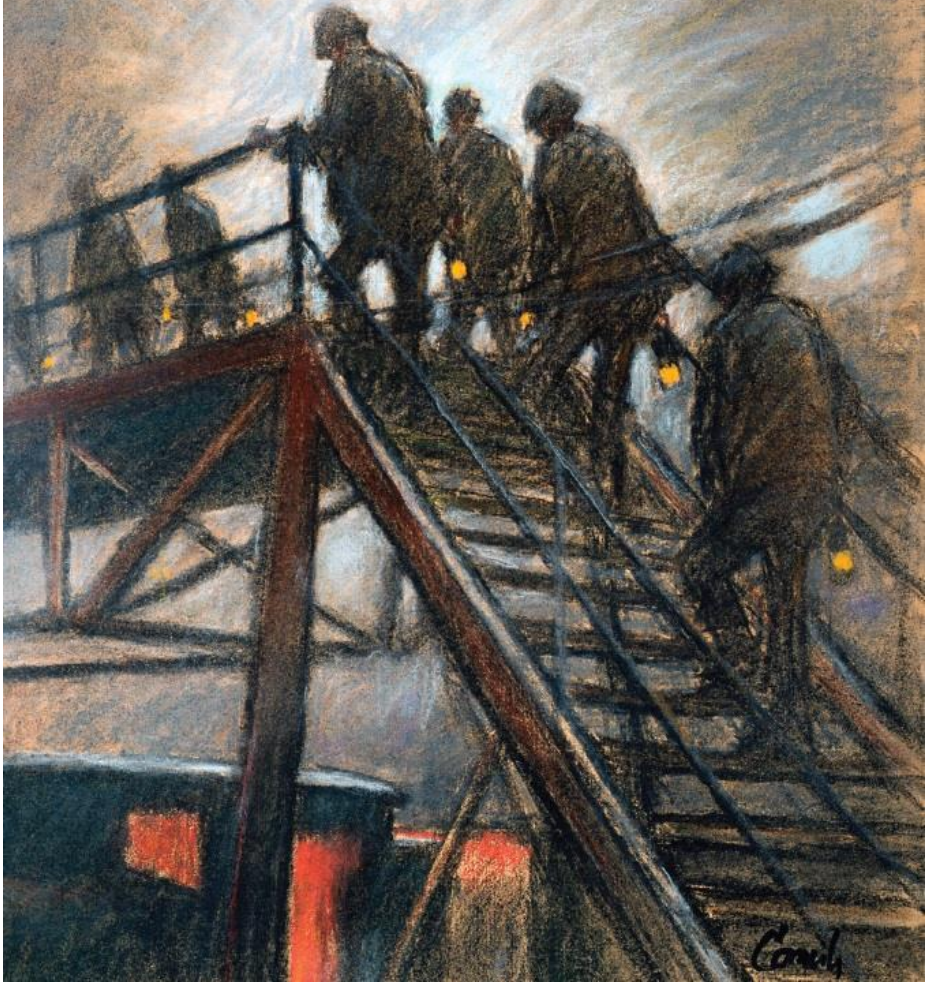


Cornish

CENTENARY 2019



A Celebration of Poems inspired by the work of
Norman Cornish

A Seam of Life

Norman Cornish's paintings have been a source of inspiration for many people, in a variety of ways, throughout his career. In his lifetime, they have been the subject of numerous television documentaries, the focus for essays from notable writers, journalists and interpreted by musicians.

The Centenary programme of events and activities has been embraced and enjoyed by thousands of visitors from all parts of the UK and beyond.

This anthology represents a creative response to Norman's work exhibited across six different galleries, with workshop sessions involving over 3,200 participants of all ages as part of a community engagement programme. Poetry has provided a creative outlet for people to express their own responses, influenced by Norman's life and work, as he toiled to overcome hardship and prejudice on his journey to be a professional artist.

We wish to express our sincere thanks to those who have enjoyed the opportunity to engage in the workshops, and indeed, our appreciation goes out to all those who were able to make the project happen. We would also like to offer special thanks to Tony Gadd - *Poet in Residence* - for a job well done.

Norman Cornish would have been delighted that his life and work continues to inspire and be of interest to future generations.

The Cornish family

Norman Cornish was perhaps the most famous artist to emerge from the North East of England in the 20th Century. His artwork captured the spirit of North East mining communities during the mid-twentieth century. Essentially self-taught, he worked as a miner in the Durham coalfield for 33 years before becoming a full-time, professional artist.

The centenary year in 2019 provided an unrivalled opportunity to celebrate Cornish's life and work across six venues, accompanied by a targeted programme of community engagement.

Public Exhibition Programme

- The Bob Abley Gallery, Spennymoor Town Hall "The Story of Durham Miners' Gala Mural"
- Mining Art Gallery, Bishop Auckland "Norman Cornish: A Slice of Life"
- Gala Theatre, Durham "An exhibition of Portraits by Norman Cornish"
- Greenfield Gallery, Newton Aycliffe "Norman Cornish: A Man of Destiny"
- Palace Green Library, Durham University "The Sketchbooks"
- The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle "The Definitive Collection"

The poems captured in this anthology have been created by people of all ages from across County Durham who visited the exhibitions and worked with local poet Tony Gadd to create their own response pieces to the work.

The project supported a new generation of people to be inspired by the work of Norman Cornish and to gain a deeper connection with their local heritage. The contents of this anthology have been selected by Tony Gadd and the Cornish family.

With thanks to

The Cornish Family
Arts Council England
Durham County Council
Gala Gallery, Durham
The Bob Abley Gallery, Spennymoor Town Hall, and Spennymoor Town Council
The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle
Greenfield Arts, Newton Aycliffe
Palace Green Library, Durham University
Mining Art Gallery, The Auckland Project, Bishop Auckland
Tony Gadd, Gong Fu Poets
Schools, Community Groups and workshop participants

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New Eyes

Exhibition seen through new eyes

A different perspective

Heritage seen and understood

Translated into the hear and now

What it means to them

Courage to change the script

Strength to get a grip, of life

and take hold of it

With both hands,

moving forward

Carried on the shoulders of those giants

forging new paths and roads

Destiny unknown

Still moving forward

One step at a time

eyes wide open,

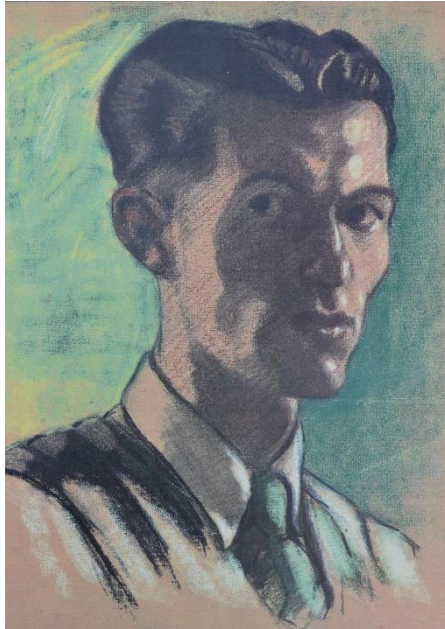
to possibilities and the future...

Tony Gadd

Gala Gallery, Durham

'Portraits and Self Portraits'

Workshops with Wingate Primary School; Easington Colliery Primary School;
St Joseph's RC Primary School Ushaw



Normans Self Portrait

I peer at you, from the corner of my eye
Wearing a shirt and tie, my hair slicked back
Burst of colour behind me
Drawn in chalk and pastel
You've never seen me before
So, what do you think?

Ella-May (age 10)

Norman

Brushing the dust off my shoulders
I walked to the pub
On entering
I saw a man in a flat cap, wearing spectacles.
Sitting down with my pint
I took out my pen and pad
And sketched away
Drawing that scene of a man, his flat cap, his spectacles, his pint
All found inside that pub

Anonymous

Self Portraits

I am
The swirling string, sneaking through leaves
The living rope, that terrorises the forest floor
I am
The music of the night
The one, that serenades, the Goddess above
I am
The prancing wonder, clipping, the clomp
The drums of wild feet, beat loud, on the cobbles
I am
The link, between and sky
The jewel, that flits to worlds unknown
I am
The most elegant dancer, a God among those,
who know these woods

Margaret (age 10)



Dorothy

She has blue, green eyes
Looks wild, yet kind
With light Brown hair
Wears a blue skinny top
And has a little wave in her hair

Jessica (age 9)

Dorothy is loving and kind
Wonderful and pretty
She stares out of the frame
With a generous heart

Aniya (age 9)

The Girl

Her eyes peer down at me
Chestnut brown like the stump of a tree
So far away, yet so close
Whisking you away to the woods

Her hair cascades down her back
It's a great, grey and brown waterfall
Take a very close look and you'll see
A river by the light of the moon

Her cheeks are blushing pink
Like the warm glow of a died-down fire
It takes you away to a place, cosy and warm
A cottage on a snowy day

Her clothes are made from a thousand strands
Blue like the brightest of days
Take a look, and fly
With those birds high up in the sky

Margaret (age 10)

I am a poet!

My bright, bold striped cloak shouts out

My wild hair attracts attention

My powerful words stomp across the page

I sit beside a cascading w

a

t

e

r

f

a

l

l

as the water thunders d

o

w

n

below

Dorothy

If I were a poet

I'd dress up as a butterfly

Have a special notebook and pen

Keep my hair in a bun so it's not in my way

I'd sell my poems for thousands of pounds

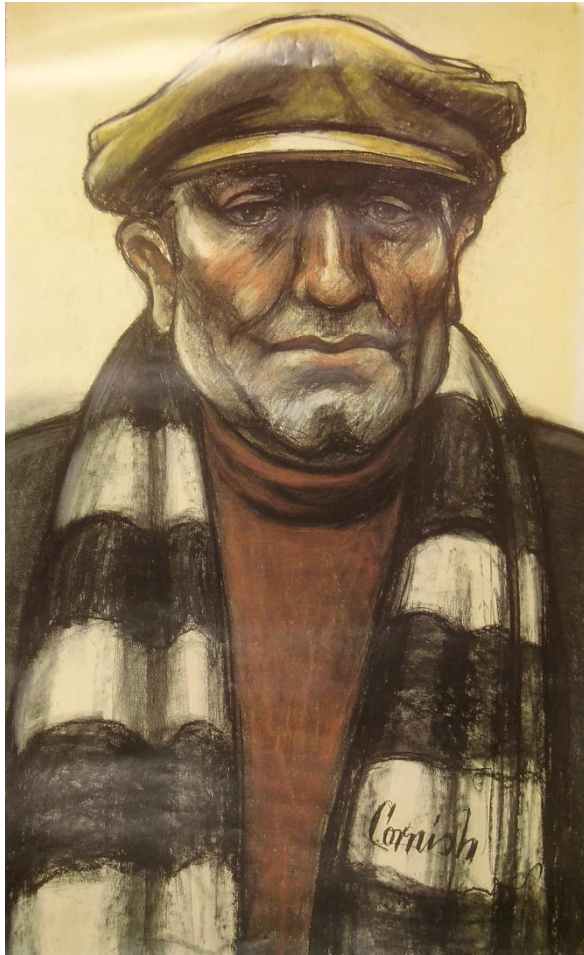
They would all be written on a bus, a plane or train

Or at my bedroom desk, wearing my slippers

I'd have snacks, a cuppa tea and hand sanitiser

My name would be, 'Artistic Butterfly',

Anonymous (Age 8)



Man in a scarf

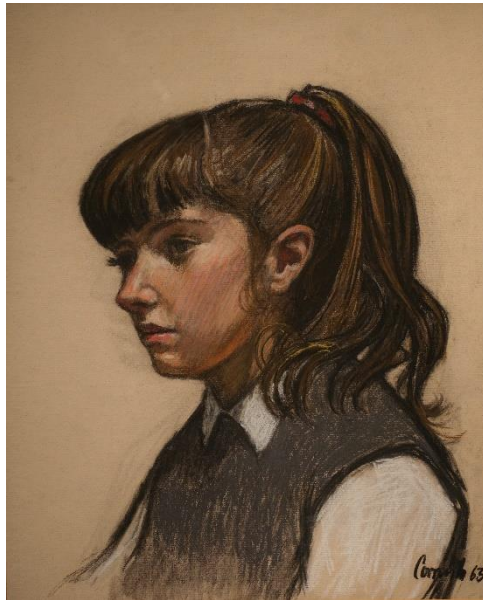
Black and white

It hangs around his bulging neck
He looks so powerful, his gaze so intense
I was terrified, shocked and frightened, perhaps

Hayden

I'm Ann
I had a plan, to play outside
Dad thought otherwise
"Hold it there, don't move" he said
Just so he could paint me
So, I sat, for many hours
Why couldn't he just have painted the walls!

Pippa (Age 11)



High ponytail
Gazing eyes
Small school
Pinafore dress
Dad Norman
Did a Portrait of me
I am very pleased
Abigail

Flat cap, round spectacles, a new clean suit,
An elderly, apparently friendly man,
All wrinkled, with a faint trace of a smile on his face
Jake



I have brown hair and baby blue eyes
Wear round black framed glasses and have ears just like big 'C's
I love to go out with my mates for a pint!
Anonymous

Mining Art Gallery, Bishop Auckland

'A Slice of Life'

St Johns School & Sixth Form College; King James I Academy;
Workers Education Association

I. Blackhands

Charcoal moving swiftly, quickly over paper
Such power, such strength
Eyes that look back at you
Black hands, Miners hands, Artist's hands

II. Boys will be Boys

Boys Climbing Fences
Freedom, excitement, adventure
Sharp edges, spelks and cuts,
It hurts but boys don't cry,
Suck the blood, taste it
and carry on

III. Artists Mother

Tired, care worn, old before her time
Warm kitchen, stew on the range,
Warm biscuits on the table
'Touch those and you won't know what
Cuddy's kicked you'

Elaine Pope (Workers Education Association)

Night Shift

Dark

Edgy

Quiet

Lonely

Stinks and

Smells of Grime and Dirt...

Anonymous



The Pit at Night

The weary, trudging homeward in the smokey darkness
The workday ending
The turbulent night moves around him
The darkness alive with the memories of the day
Its not the life he dreamed of when he played carefree,
balancing on fences
But he accepts the way, the world must go on
An endless route march downwards, draining energy,
and thwarting spirit
At the end, the reward of a good job done
A comforting hug and a pint

Wendy Palace (Workers Education Association)

Night Shift Imagined

Tired, been working hard
down pit
“Ow man John, I hate this job”
John Says “Aye, keep it up though Barry lad, we never give in”
“Aye but we only get a pound a day, soon we’ll be off to the horrors
of war”
“If I die it’ll be to keep others alive and no, I will never give in”

Anonymous



Three Boys

Spennymoor lads

One in red

Two in black

The smallest

Working harder to climb over the fence

Anonymous

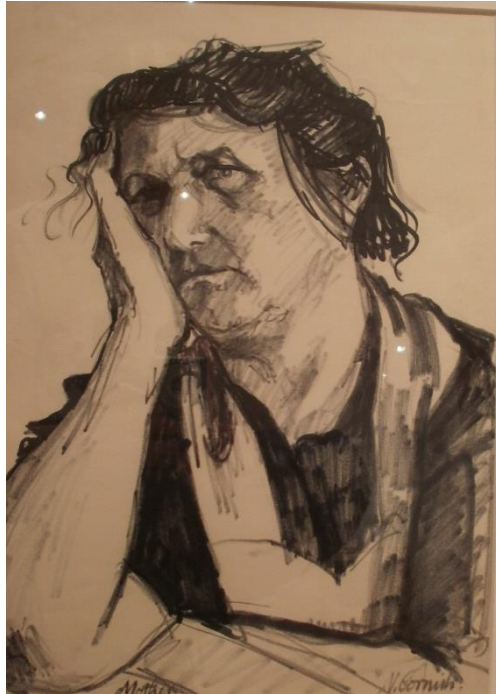
Normans Place

Keep the noise down
Your dads been on nights
Bait tin on the side
Boots at the back door

Her face is tired
She wipes her rough hands
On apron and continues to
Roll the pastry

Meat and tatttle pie

His life is the mine, the pub,
the mine
Her life is the kitchen sink
So tired



“Why does dad wear eyeliner for work mam”
She chuckles, such feminine look for a manly job
Proper men miners, she says

Black and white drawing
Like her life, no colour
No in-between

Anonymous

Artists Mother - Reminds Me

The tired old lady, sits on the cracket in front of an open fire
Mrs Stott's just popped in for a cup of sugar,
or perhaps a bit of tea, but she's forgotten to go home
The tired old lady, is my grandmother, bless her
She looks much older than her 59 years
She's had a hard life, nine children she has borne
Toiled everyday from dawn til dusk
Monday washing day
Lines of washing flying out in the back lane
Everyday of the week
Its own special task
Everyday, fresh bread
Baked in the big old oven
Nineteen sixty and still no running hot water

Liz Greener

Grandmother / Coming Home

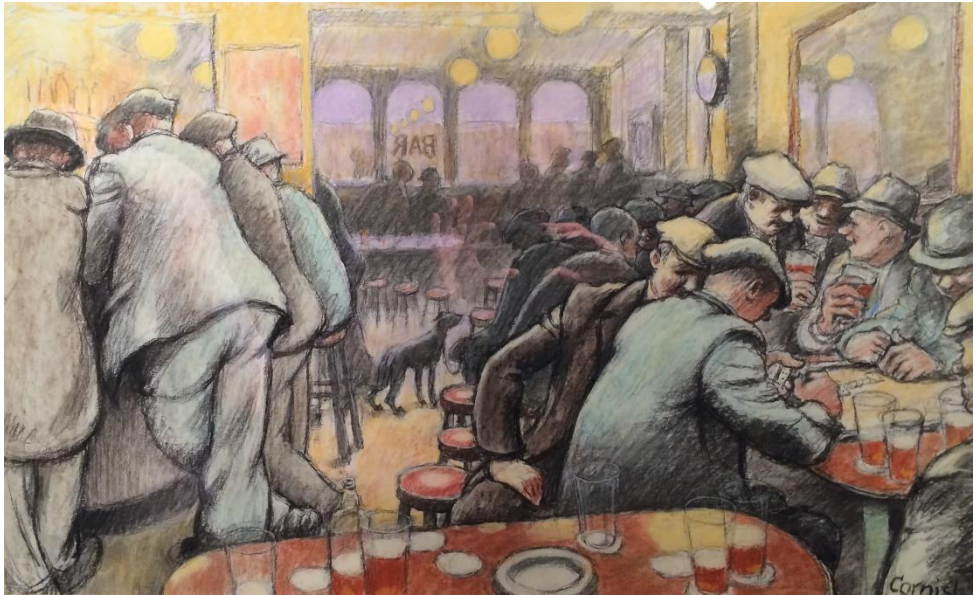
After a long shift down the pit, men walking back through the street
Heads down, shoulders rounded, just staring at their feet
With the sun coming up, their eyes are getting heavy
They are so ready to go home, to bed, to sleep, so they walk very steadily
The group split up, half home to the family, the rest off to the pub
Little thought of the women , back home waiting to give them a hug
The 'Mrs is waiting, alone, just so they know, their husbands come home
As the front door opens, she is filled with relief, minutes later they are both
curled up asleep

Abbie Fyfe Ellesworth

The Bar

Packed, full of men, wearing caps and smoking
They drank and drank and drank all night until
they could not see anyone in sight
The dog was alone attached to a leader
Watching the men as they drank lots of beer
The men were having fun, laughing and cheering
Making each other until their sides were bleeding
The tables full of beer glasses, some empty, some full
The room filled with thick smoke, catching and burning my throat
I washed it away with more beer

Ellie-May Cooke



Pub Scene

One dog and his man
Lots of men
Lots of beer
Lots of laughter
Lots of yellow stained walls
One dog and his man

Anonymous

Bishop Close Street

The snow came in the night
The BBC weatherman said it would, but still we're surprised
Like a ghost, soft, quiet, cold, from up above
Changing the way everything looked
Changing the way everything sounded
To the children it was not their street anymore
It had changed, it was now a sparkling, frosty, winter wonderland
How they jumped out of the bed when mothers opened the curtains
and said "Look snow"
Faces washed quickly, breakfasts gulped down
Warm clothes put on hurriedly, then out



Out to the street, that looks like a new planet

Excited cries, big smiles, loud laughter, bright eyes

Children slipping, sliding, skating

Holding hands, falling over, getting up quickly to catch up with
friends

Dogs getting in the way

Marjory Winnie (Workers Education Association)

Self Portrait – Cornish

This caught my eye
With all of its light and shade
Darkness and light
Full of detail of his hair, eyes
lips, glasses shirt and jacket
It draws us in, to understand how he looked
Gives us a picture of the man in our minds
Light and shade
A picture of contrasts

Raijeii Seduadua



Portrait of the Artist as a Fragile Human

Peering over my glasses into the mirror
How do I portray the artist as a real man?
Myopic eyes discerning detail or the thousand yard stare?

Where do I place myself? Noble savage?
“You a painter”? Hadaway man
And yet the dried ink and the boozy scent of solvents say otherwise

That ink. You have to be sure as a mountain goat
Taking a line for a walk
One false step and you’re over the edge, down the shaft
And that precious board or canvas is wasted

Alright, chin up lad, think of posterity
Feel the scratch of the wool and soft cotton against your neck
Your mam wouldn’t like that collar
Needs some starch
Now my neck feels starched
Who would be so cocky as to draw themselves?

Cheekbones strong, they tell a story
Generations of strong men and women, hewing and scrubbing
Living with the fear, always the fear
Mind that human being lads, he’s right femmer

Jude Murphy (Workers Education Association)

Little Things Mean A Lot

Patent 740802

Flo-Master pen

Normans weapon of choice

No second chance, quick drying

Permanent, transparent, opaque

A delightful companion

Matchless performance

A precision instrument

The finest most versatile ever produced

The valve its beating heart

Tamper proof, lasts indefinitely

Wet tip, light touch, light line, tonal effects abound

As sharp as a surgeons knife

Unconditional replacement

2/6d postage and packing

Cushman and Denison Company Ltd

Satisfaction Guaranteed

“Little Things Mean A Lot”

Tony Gadd

Bob Abley Art Gallery, Spennymoor Town Hall

'Miners Gala'

Rosa Street Primary School; Hardwick Primary School;
Sedgefield Book Ends Festival workshops



Miners Gala

Banners flying high in the sky,
People swaying, trumpets playing;
Baritones sing and drums set the pace of every tune.

Young boys on shoulders,
The smell of fish and chips in the air.

People talking loudly,
So many people flock, to see the hometown and village pit banner.

Ana Tarling

Durham Miners 'Gala

The smell of smoke passed by my nostrils,
The music playing in my ears,
Banners waving up high,
As children chant, and the brass band play,
Ice creams covered in sprinkles,
Burgers, hot-dogs too,
The fresh grass waving, as children run by,
Sun shining in the sky,
People peering out their windows,
Hats on heads,
Talking loudly,
This is, the Durham Big Meeting!

Owen Densham

Miners Gala

The breeze tickled my cheeks as the blinding light enveloped me in
its arms,
The glorious smell of fresh dew filled my nostrils,
The deafening chatter grew louder and louder,
As I clung to my guardian's rough jacket,
Until my knuckles went white,
Then I saw it...
Music filled the air, banners filled the sky;
The sun reflected off the brass instruments,
causing me to shield my eyes,
It was the most exciting event I've seen in my life.

Alicia Grabton

Miners Gala

Oak trees sway in the whistling wind,
Flowers dance amongst the grass,
Banners stand high up through billowing clouds,
Children running over playing fields,
The smell of sweet candy floss spreads its joy across the ground,
You could taste it,
People push their way through the crowds,
Just for a small peck of spun sugar.

Cody Monaghan

Flo Master

Flo-master pens and many bottles of ink,
Scribbled out sketches laid all over,
Completed paintings outside,
Self portraits, Durham cityscape,
And much more besides

Grace McGough

The Pit

Cold, snowy weather
Two men walking along the pit road
In darkness, the best of mates
Yet anonymous to others

Alicia Grabton



Spennymoor Snow Scene, Mount Pleasant

Children playing happily in the snow,
Dogs running and rolling around in the snow,
The floor carpeted in the snow,
Roofs of houses draped in the snow,
Church in the background, blanketed in the snow
Parents with kids, trudge in the snow
Dark skies and clouds, hang heavy in the snow,
Birds in the sky, their chirps echo in the snow
Fields in the background, look mountainous in the snow

Lamp posts, wear top hats in the snow
Telephone wires, cradle hushed words in the snow
Houses, chimneys, fences, are coated in the snow
Graveyard, hides past lives, all buried in the snow
In the snow, the snow, snow

Ethan A Bell

Spenny

(This long, busy street in Spennymoor, Normans home as a child)

Tall, brick houses, all in a row, down the west side of the street
Not a single man in sight, all off down pit
The women looking after the children, shopping and doing the
housework
Children playing in the street,
screaming whilst blackbirds in the blue sky squeak noisily
The bell at the top of the church at the end of the street rang aloud
The smell of fish and chips meandered down the cobbled road
Mingled with the stench of horse dung
I lived in the same house as Norman when I was ten,
I loved it, because no one was bullied
With all the teenagers off down the pit
I had the time of my life

Miley Gibson



Pit Road Winter

Two pit men take their dawn walk to work along the snow-bound
road.

Above them tower railway bridges, stacked chimneys and gantries.
Telegraph poles give them cock-eyed salutes.

Pit props creak far down below their walking boots,
where stubborn coal seams lie in wait,
with hard graft and bend-you-double tunnels
glistening black, coal dust caked.

Snow flakes fall quietly, pressing down
and whitening this cathedral to the black,
as chimney smoke and their frozen breath
reach upwards, escaping, sky-tracked.

Between sky and firmament, the pair shuffle
on along the endless switchback road,
under telegraph wires like coal truck tracks,
towards sullen slag heaps and bright pit lights.

Their dawn walk treads the line
between day and night, black and white,
the depths and heights;
treading on fractured ice
between sky and mine.

Pauline May

Exhibition

You enter the room full of paintings,
One will always catch your eye,
Letters displayed,
Then you come to a glass barrier,
Behind it, drawing pads and paint galore,
Grass green, oceans blue, and rose red too,
Canvases and stands,
Charcoal, graphite and paint brushes,
An Artists den...

Eloise Richard

*In the following poem, the italicised sections are Norman Cornish's own words,
taken from his sketchbooks, (published in 2017)*

Cornish in the Corner, Scribbling

Man walks into pub, bottle of Brown
sits in corner, sips, savours, looks round
shapes stories, shades forms
slides hand in jacket, pulls out pad, from poacher's pocket
pen poised ready, look see feel draw
Flowmaster oozes, images pour

One man, arm arched, dart perched ready to throw;
two men eyes down behind clutched dominos;
bridges of muffled conversations over mirrored tables;
frail fags cushioned in gently-clawed fingers;
backs of men daily bent to fit tunnels and drifts,
now framed in melody of motion, shape and form,
saturated with warm shades of umbra.
Whippets stand on legs straight as hand pumps.
Countless glasses of bitter or mild that mimic
Davy lamps, beacons of refuge, security, unity.
Dramas based on posture and attitude.

Walking home through dim wet streets,
seeds for growth packed close to his chest;
tomorrow night to coax, cajole and fashion
into pieces of jigsaws; men dogs fags pints;
multi-angled congregations devout
in rough-hewn smoke-filled cathedrals.

Tomorrow morning; bait box ready packed
for 3am shift down starry pit road,
Fireflies trapped in a giant steel spider's web.
Down deep; another world to make out shapes
through hazed light in shafts and tunnels:
Picks, hacks, shovels, mauls, propped straight,
stiff against bowed bodies of miners.

Eyes trained through dark,
in dim-lit pub and mine; heart opened;
he takes it in and gets it down;
medium for the human he knows.

Steve May

Two men in the pub,
A skinny dog, looks on in hope
Men talking about the pits and pay
Pints of beer in hand
Cigarette between middle fingers of the same hand
Thick woollen Jackets, worn at the elbows, frayed at the cuffs
Dirty, dark brown table, wobbles between them both
Their Inky black boots, have seen better days
A bit like them really

Millie Beamson

Edwards street, man walking his dogs,
On their way to the park.
Early morning rain falls
People pass by.
Street light turns on,
Birds fly away,
Rain pats the pavement,
Grey clouds float high and fill the sky.
Man in moss green jacket,
Compliments the grey coloured dogs walk by his side,
Smoke billows out of chimney pots atop the houses,
Footsteps echo, in the
Damp air...

Isaac A Smythe

Pub Scene

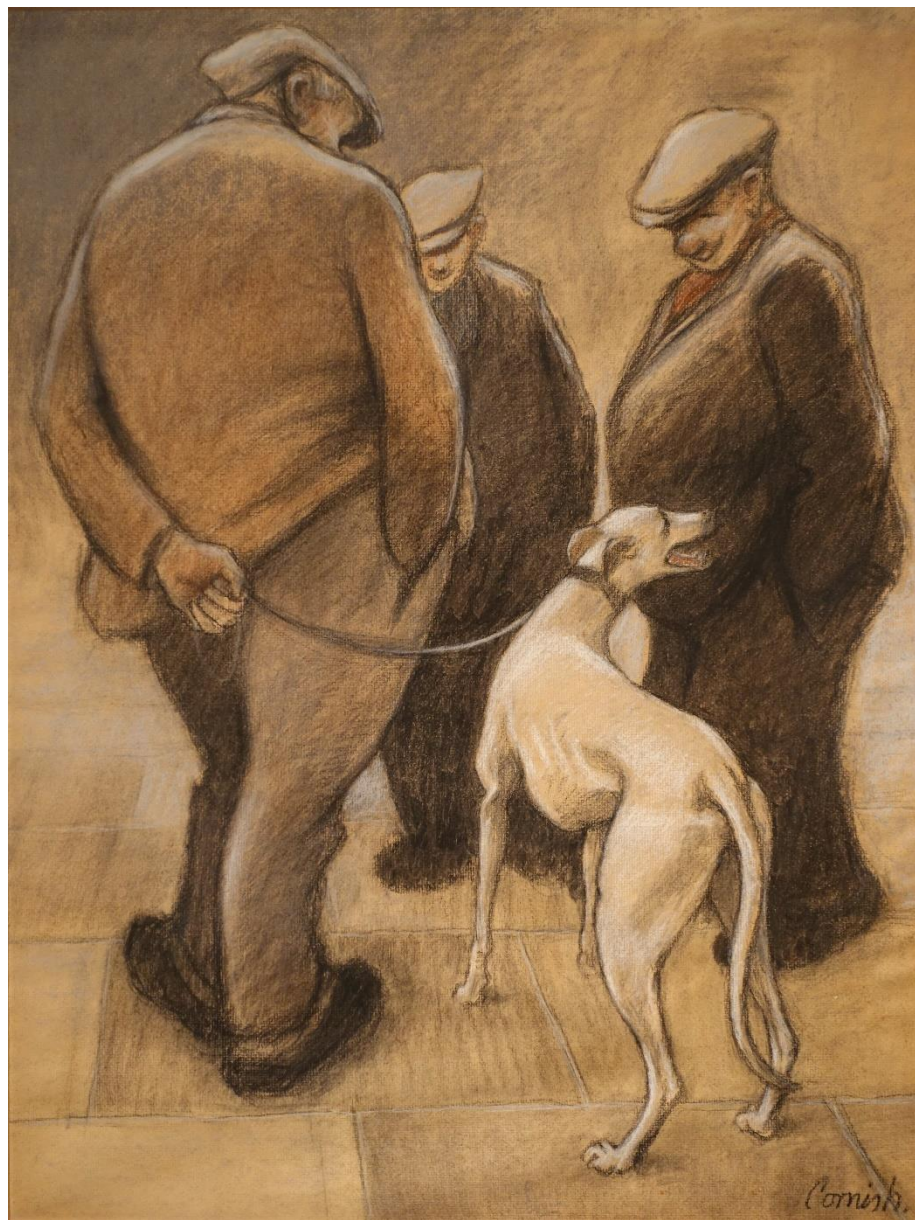
Norman paints his picture
Of the barmaid wiping up slops of beer
Wearing her navy-blue work coat
She pulls that heavy lever down
Beer that was an orange hue, fills the glass
It lets out bubbles, that sound like sighs
Her grey and yellowed hair
Matches the walls of the pub
And her life behind the bar

Anonymous

A man trudges home after a long day at work,
A steam train chuff chuffs by,
Street lamps lit up the leadened sky,
Stray cats lurk,
On the train, more coal was thrown into the fire,
Mechanics grabbed pumps and wires,
The man rested his hands on head and gate,
He stared at the sky that was a sombre grey,
Reminding him of his life,
His thoughts weighed down the atmosphere
Heavy on chest, you could cut it with a knife,
He glared at the slate roofs,
And thought of his home,
He cast an eye at the lifeless grass,
Wondered how long his sorrowful life would last,
Sometimes he was lifted by thoughts of creating art,
Others passed it off as scribbles,
No matter, he thought, it lifted his spirits
Sam

After a day at the pit
He stands there waiting
Waiting for that amber pint of beer
No women walking in
A perfect night for men
Many pints had vanished, as they all headed home
Leaving the barmaid to clean up
Her Life behind the bar

Lily Dickerson



Greenfield Arts, Newton Aycliffe

'A Man of Destiny'

Greenfield Arts Men's CREE with Greenfield Community College students

Norman

He shows you pictures, pictures of a
time, a place, a town, the people
A bold style to show the big picture
The age of mines and miners
The age of machines, of
people, working and fighting for a life
For a country and world
Run on the black stuff
Without it what would we be...

Anonymous

Celebration

Celebrate Norman, as
Norman Celebrates, the
People of Spennymoor
With the power of the pen
Pencil, chalk, oil and
Paint on canvas

Anonymous



Bus Stop

I'm waiting, forever
A roundabout without an exit
Purgatory, eternal torment
One day in '45, someone
Painted me, in this hell
Now, the bus is here
I must go too
But, a picture of me, will always remain

Anonymous

Purgatory

Stuck waiting, endless torment
I will never reach my goals
I will never reach my aspirations
I will always be in this picture
waiting for a bus
One shaft of light, hope, is you, who look upon me
Say I can be so much more
But I still wait...

Anonymous

Bus Stop

A bus stop
A junction
A point in time
A time in life
A world of possibilities
Do I have to be an artist to paint
Do I have to be a poet to write
Do I have to be a pitman to be a man
Do I need a label or a title
To follow my dreams
To be someone, no
I just have to be me

Anonymous

Coalminers

Coal

Of

Artist

Living

Miner

Intuitive

North Easterner

Eternal

Resilient

Stereotype

Prejudice

Personal

Restriction

Endeavour

Justice

Unequal

Determination

Ideas

Conflict

Evolve

Resilience

Really determined to succeed

Extremely Passionate

Self Aware

Involved in choices

Learning from mistakes

Involved in decisions

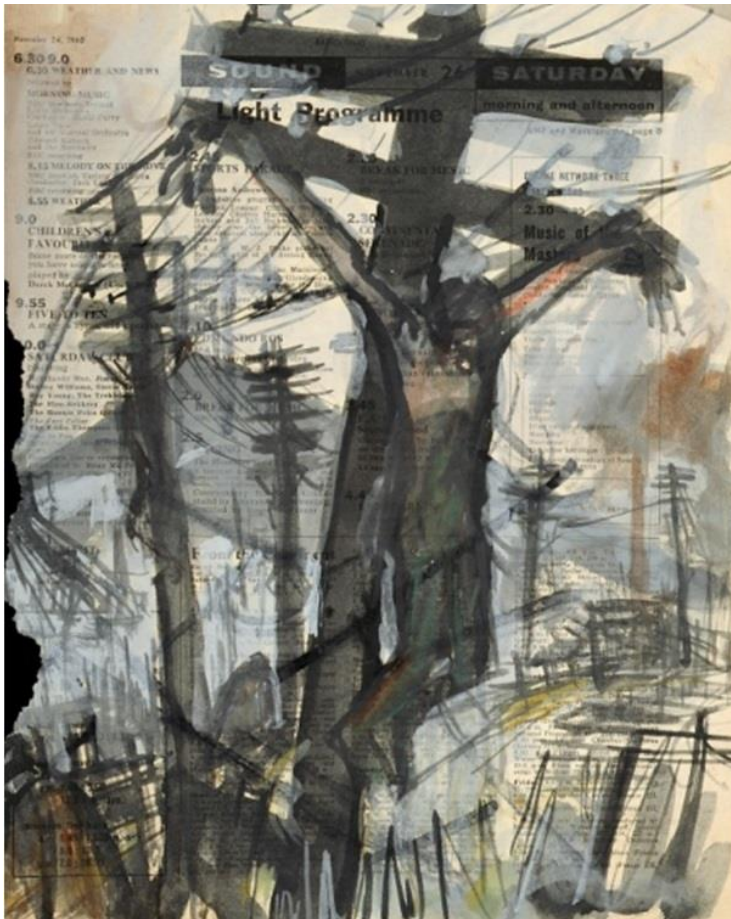
Enabled

Never gives up

Choosing to try again

Embraces failure

Anonymous



Journey

Journey of an artist, Norman Cornish

Ongoing perseverance and determination

Undeterred, making and creating against the odds

Resilient and hard working, making art on whatever he could find

Never giving up

Extraordinary, noticing the extra in the ordinary of everyday life

Your attention is drawn to "A Man of Destiny"

Anonymous

I Remember

(School and Teenage Year memories)

Seeing John Cornish sat at his desk, reminds me of my time at
school

A time I spent sat alongside my friend called George

I remember

School holidays camping with George and his brother David

No vacancies at Scarborough campsites

We slept in his car, with a squash and a squeeze

I remember

The three wheeled, electric milk float that passed by our car

Ordered 2 pints of gold top from the milkman

Who delivered every day to our car door

I've never clapped eyes on George, David or the milkman ever since

Fifty years on I still miss his company, Georges of course

I heard he went self employed, started painting houses

Always thought of him as a great artist

Then I heard he'd fallen off an extension ladder

I remember

Hearing he'd broken his back, uses a wheelchair to get about

Got married to a beautiful South African girl

They moved to Sunderland, not sure why

Not sure if he's even still alive

Always remember his fantastic drawings and art
Always remember that holiday, and milk of gold
Always remember the squash and squeeze,
The summer seaside breeze
And a time long gone
I remember...

Anonymous

Life

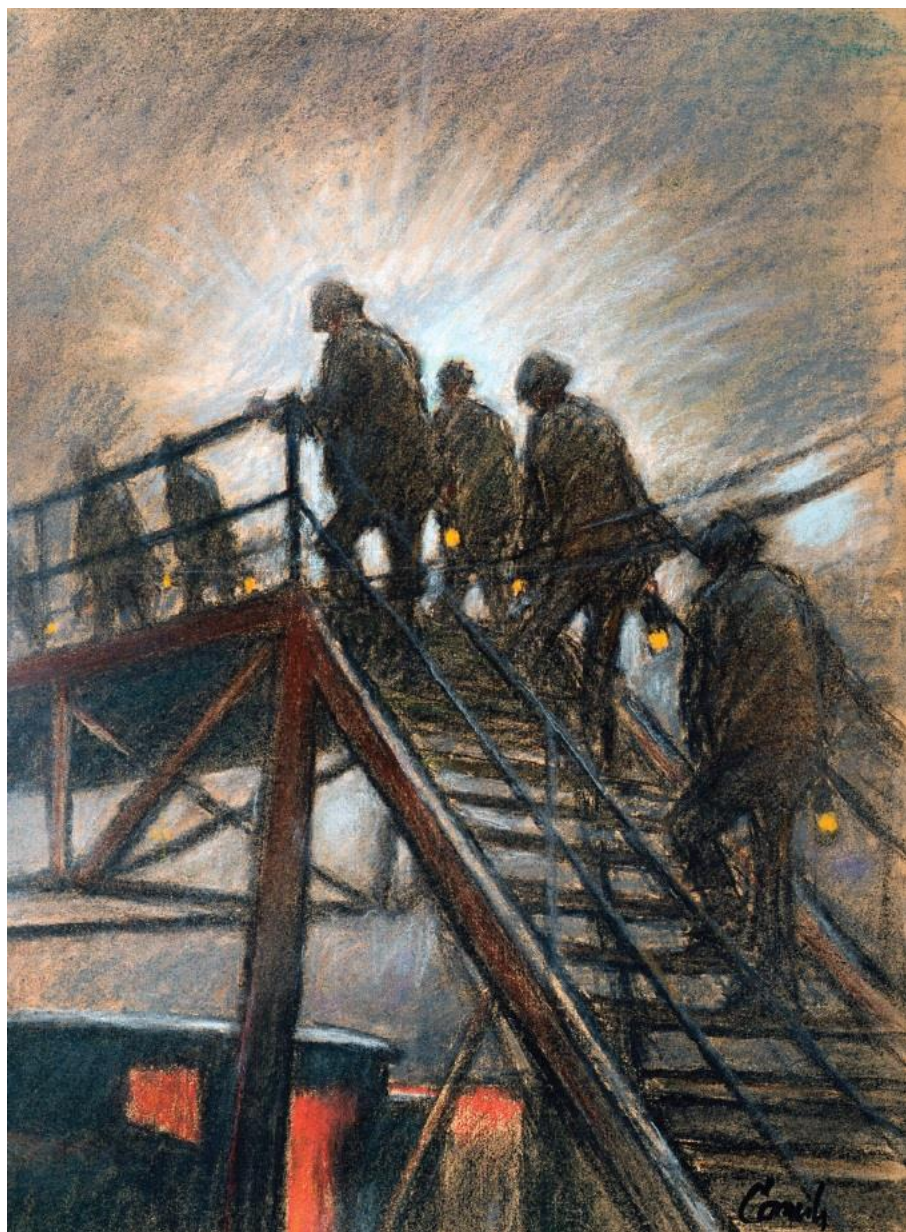
Life is where you start
It was where Norman started his journey
Forever changing his way, his work, his practice
Everything, everywhere and everyone changes

Anonymous

Journey

Journey is about getting started
Opening up your eyes
Unable to tell people he was great
Reminded himself never to give in
Never listened to those who said he'd never become an artist
Everyone liked his work
Yesterday was like my journey had just started

Anonymous



The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle

'The Definitive Collection'

Cockfield Primary School; Ramshaw Primary School; Woodland Primary School;
Butterknowle Primary School; Evenwood C of E Primary School

Street Scene

A winters day, no cars, just coal trucks, steaming by the end of our street
Get out to play quick, before the coal dust settles on the perfect white
snow

Sledge rides up and down the street

Snowball fights, the little'uns wrestle with the body of a snowman

Woollen mittens stick to snow, feet tingle with the cold

Balaclavas keep our ears and mouths warm, candles drip from noses

Jim's carted off home by his mam, for a teatime sandwich, of bread and
jam

Old Mr Jones back from a walk with Bob the dog

Whose looking forward to curling up in front of the fire

Norman's stuck his lips on the lamp post

He's frozen stuck, and can't shout for help

Reene and Ida check out the scene, and remember
what it used to be like, back in their day...

Woodland Primary School

Too and Fro

Home, dark when I open my eyes, and wake from sleep, to wake

Two mile trudge along the pit road to the mine

An autumn nightshift, back aching, I tell myself I'm fine

Dark when I leave for work

Lit Pit yard, pitmen trudge around, like a flock of sheep

Dark down the pit

Lit Pit yard, pitmen trudge around, like a flock of sheep

Dark when I leave for home

An autumn nightshift, back still aching, I know I'm not fine

Two mile trudge along the pit road from the mine

Home, dark when I shut my eyes and go to sleep, to sleep, sleep

Cockfield Primary School



On the Tools

Fowteen, ah started working down the pit

A daytal lad, a driver and a putter

Until I made it, as a full time hewer

Them days, we hewed, hagged or howked, with our hand-forged
trusty picks

Later on, we had to keep tight ha'ad, of oor Pneumatic, windy picks

Narrow work's hard graft, the extra money, the best

Sweat'n buckets, dressed in me hoggies, byuts and vest

Hard hat , lamp and knee pads, fer hingin onto that jigger

Nearly buried, undermining coal, carried away, makin me pay
cheque bigger

Ramshaw Primary School



Pit Pony

A pit pony to the posh'uns, A Gallowa to me driver

The young'n fed me choppy and called me 'Spider'

Shackled to the tubs a'lls laden with coals

Hewed deep underground by the human moles

If I'm good, work hard, divvent nip and nap and a dee what I'm telt

I'll get the odd carrot, an apple gowk, a lump o' bread and avoid the
belt

Can barely manage to hear my byuts gan clip clop

Nee room or space to break into a trit trot

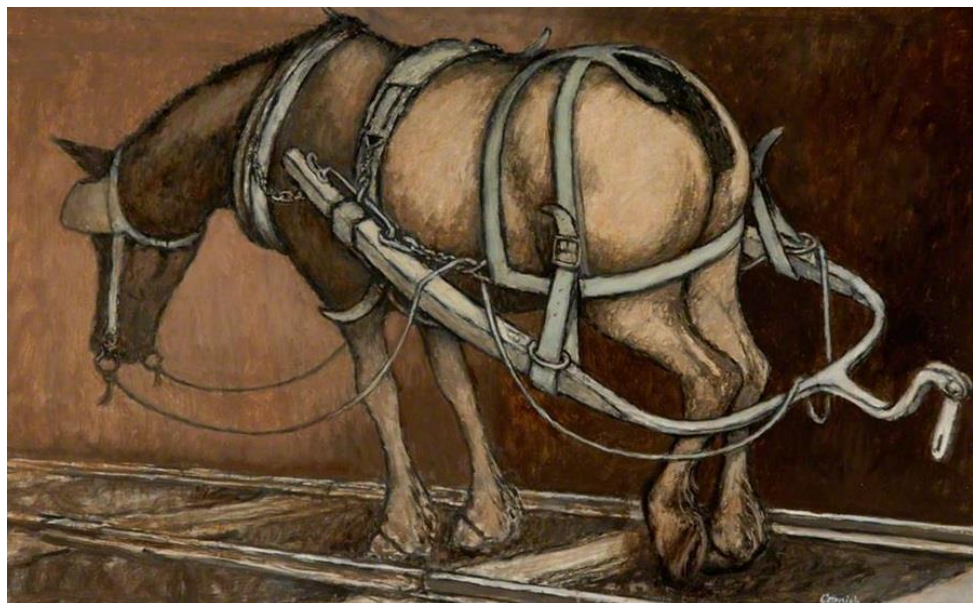
Until holiday fortnight, which comes round once a year

I'm hauled up in the cage by the winding gear

Nee mair damp, dust and dark, confined to that tight, squash and
squeeze

Galloping Gallowas, lush green field, we feel the warmth of that
summer breeze

Evenwood C of E Primary School



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Bar Scene

An amber glow, an amber beer, no women allowed in here
Blokes, stand shoulder to shoulder, glass to glass
Pints pulled from hand pump, with frothy heads
Washing away the dust and dregs, of the pit each day
Reading the paper, to check the racehorses form
Norman sketches the scene on an old copy all torn
Records pub life, of a time long gone
Our heritage captured in pastel, spot-on
Flat caps and whippets
Darts and doms
Time gentlemen please
Had'away to your homes

Butterknowle Primary School





Palace Green Library, Durham University

'Sketchbooks'

Alington House Visually Impaired Group; RT Projects Open Arts Surgery group;
Durham University Students

Cardigan

A threadbare cardigan, with
leather patched elbows
left discarded at the end of the bar

Holding it closed
A nicotine stained button, with
dirt ingrained
Looked like a football, that's
been hoofed around the yard

No-one came looking for you
So the button came off, and
you lined an old drawer
For the cat to sleep in

Jonah

On The Way Home

Walking home from the pit
Along the street with no name
To the street corner, where an amber glow
courts my attention
Warmth emanates from every viewpoint
It beckons me in, this pub full of Marras
A slight sojourn, a beer and some crack
Winding down, before heading off home
to wor lass and the kids
Time for some bait, and life
outside that pit...

Karen

Another Shift

Snow above and below
Round shouldered, and bowed
Huddled and cold
Trudging forward, flat cap protecting
Bait in the bag
Brusk walk to an oven
Another shift in the dark
An escape from the threatening light

Michael



Norman

From miner to artist

Norman Cornish is an inspiration

A true northern hero

A lifelong passion for sketching and painting he leaves us a legacy

His observations capture mining life in a positive way

Of ordinary people just going about their business day by day

A mining community that worked and thrived, lives on in Norman's pride

Colours of red and emerald green, a vibrant community is what you feel

Strong bold lines, shape the miners down the pit

See the strength, skill and focus, that these lines depict

Softer, rounder, gentle lines capture the miners at the pub

Seeing them all relax in their social hub

A meeting of friends, comrades, heads together, tight in their union

Winding down from a hard days graft, sharing stories and having a laugh

A few simple marks on the page, portrays smiles on their faces

With gentle ease he pulls you right into the scene

And now you witness what he must have seen

Preserved forever, all those moments in time

His study of people, places and of a time gone by...

Joanne

Geordie

Through crowds he walks, smart as a carrot, standing tall and proud
All five foot of him, long white stick in hand
Two sons in support, one upsides, one ahead
Navigating his way, on Durham big meet'n day, with thousands
merging, converging, here and now
Celebrating comradeship and community
The sea of bodies, it ebbs and flows
Geordie wouldn't have it any other way of course
Except perhaps, with the gift of sight
To see the explosion of colours on banners held high!
Of Marra's faces and of life outside
"Dint worry about me young'n, as all'reet, ah've got a lifetime of Gaylas
te mind me of what ah cant see! Tell us the lodge, a'll gi'ye the banner"
So it goes, one after another, band after band, banner after banner
Waxing lyrical, in glorious technicolour, he brings them all to life
Throwing in the odd tale, as tall as those banners held aloft
Through adversity, his sense of humour is never lost

He minds me, he minds me of me Granda Bert, small but with a
heart of gold
As strong as an ox and both made out of the same mould
Like a pit canary, head canted to the side, he draws on sounds and
smells

Whistles greet'ns to Marra's as they pass, they all stop and have some crack

Memb'rin stories o'the past, of times long gone, but never lost

Onto the racecourse he then marches

Haversack on his back, says he's down with the kids

Habits never change though, as out of it he pulls his bait, a tin of sarnies,

a flask of sweet tea,

"Ha'way man, I've done it since a was fowteen"

Ham'n pease puddin stottie, a saveloy dip, a singin hinny hoyed in fer'is pud

Then his young'n gans to Mr Whippy, buys a slack handful of 99's, drowned in monkeys blood

Geordie laments "I used to have a couple of swift ales, a canna now, the Doctor sez, besides, a dint want pullin up, drunk in charge o'me stick"

He carry's on laughing, as he disappears off through the crowds

Off hyem, full o' memories, another Gayla added tiv his list

As he follows out Durham Mechanics, 'Wester' (Westoe) Lodge Banner
'The Past we Inherit, The Future We Build'

Tony Gadd

Cornish

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