

A TRIBUTE TO BILL MCLAREN

IN THE COURSE O LIFE'S LONG JOURNEY
COONTLESS MYRIADS OO MEET,
MAIST IR DESTINED TI BIDE STRANGERS
NAMELESS FACES IN THE STREET
BUT THERE'S SOME WHAE MAKE AN IMPACT
IN A VERRA SPAICIAL WAY
AND A'LL TELL EE NOW ABOUT YIN
IF EE'LL HEAR WHAT A'VE TI SAY
"THE VOICE O RUGBY", KENT TI MILLIONS
WHAE'VE NEVER MET UM, NEVER WILL
BUT HERE IN HAWICK, HEI'S YIN O US,
THE MAN THAT OO CA' BILL.

HEI WAS BORN AND BRED DOON WEENSLAND,
WILLIAM POLLOCK WAS THE NAME
HEI WAS GIEN WHEN HEI WAS CHRISTENED,
SCHULE SPORTS CHAMPION HEI BECAME.
A MUCKLE STRAPPIN PLAYER,
HEI PROODLY WORE THE FAMOUS GREEN,
RIGHTLY GOT A SCOTTISH TRIAL
AND A CAP WAD HEV BEEN GIEN
BUT FOR GAUN TI FIGHT MUSSOLINI
WHAE HEI BATE NEEDLESS TI SAY
BUT CONTRACTED TUBERCULOSIS
MEANIN HEI COULD NAE LONGER PLAY
THE RUGBY GAME SI DEAR TI UM
WHICH OBVIOUSLY HEI RUED
BUT BECAME A JOURNALIST INSTEID
UNDER JOHN MURRAY HOOD
AND HEI IT WAS THAT PUSHED UM
IN A NEW DIRECTION STILL
AND THUS RUGBY COMMENTATIN ACQUIRED
THE MAN THAT OO CA BILL.

WHEN A WAS A WEE LADDIE
TI ST MARY'S SCHULE A MADE MA WAY
NO THE SNOOTY YIN AT MELROSE
YON YIN UP THE CAFE BRAE
THEN MOVIN ON TI TRINITY
MA FIRST GLIMPSE A DID SEE
O THE BIG MAN IN THE TRACK-SUIT
WHAE'D GONE ON TI TEACH P.E.
HEI TAUGHT OO RUGBY, CRICKET, ROONDERS,
COUNTRY DANCIN, SOFTBA', GYM
AND A DINNI MIND TELLIN EE
A WAS GLIFFED STIFF FOR HIM.
SOME O MA PALS HEI BELTED,
THEY SAY THEY CAN FEEL EET STILL

NAW, HEI WASNI TI BE MESSED WI
THE MAN THAT OO CA BILL.
TI WATCH UM RIN A SPORTS DAY
WAS A MARVEL TI BE SEEN,
HEI'D GET THROWE FIFTY ODD EVENTS
IN YIN SHORT EFTERNUNE.
THE OLYMPICS TAKES A FORTNIGHT.
A OFTEN THOUGHT IF THEY'D JUIST SEND
BILL OOT TI ORGANISE THUM
HEI'D HEV THUM BY IN A WEEKEND.

HEI STERTED ON THE RADIO
IN NINETEEN FIFTY TWAE
MOVIN ON TI TELEVISION
AND HIS INIMITABLE WAY
DEVELOPED AS THE YEARS WENT ON
FOR HEI HED FUND HIS NICHE
WI HIS MAIST DISTINCTIVE TURN O PHRASE
AND RUGGED BORDER SPEECH
"ARMSTRONG BURROWS LIKE A MOLE"
"A LAMP-POST IN THE LINE-OUT, WEIR,
LEAPS LIKE A SALMON UP A CAULD"
"TOWNSEND JOUKS INTO THE CLEAR"
"THERE'S PETER WRIGHT, THE BLACKSMITH
HAVING A WORD IN THE REF'S EAR,
HE'S SAYING 'IT'S VERY WET TODAY
AND COLD FOR THE TIME OF YEAR'"
"IT'S LONG ENOUGH, IT'S HIGH ENOUGH,
IT'S STRAIGHT ENOUGH, IT'S THROUGH"
"THE GROUNDSMAN'S COUSIN KEEPS THE SEALS
AT EDINBURGH ZOO"
"LIKE A BAGGY UP A BORDER BURN,
LOOK AT LAIDLAW GLIDE,
THEY'LL BE DANCING IN THE CLUBROOMS
DOWN AT JETHART'S RIVERSIDE."

THERE'S BEEN MARVELLOUS COMMENTATORS
IN EVERY SPORTING FIELD
BUT ARLOTT, LONGHURST, MASKELL
A' TI YIN MAN HEV TI YIELD
FOR THOROUGHNESS O HOMEWORK
AND IMPARTIALITY
THERE'S NEVER BEEN YIN TI TOUCH UM,
A'M SUIRE EE'LL A' AGREE.
WHAE ELSE COULD STEY UNBIASSED
WHEN THEIR SON-IN-LAW TI BE
WAS SCORIN 'NEATH THE POSTS
AGAINST OOR AULDEST ENEMY
OR WHEN HAWICK'S AIN TONY STANGER
SCORED THE TRY THAT WON UM FAME

BREAKIN EVERY ENGLISH HERT
IN YON MAGIC GRAND SLAM GAME.
YET NOT A TRACE O OVER-EXCITEMENT
WAS NOTICED IN BILL'S VOICE
THOUGH INWARDLY HIS SOUL DID SING
AND HIS HERT IT DID REJOICE.
NEVER UNJUSTLY CRITICAL,
DERISIVE OR UNKIND.
WHENEVER IT WAS POSSIBLE
SOMETHING POSITIVE HEI'D FIND.
SOME COMMENTATORS HEV GONE ON OWRE LONG
TILL THEY WERE OWRE THE HILL
NAEBODY COULD SAY THE SAME
ABOUT THE MAN THAT OO CA BILL.

HEI WAS ASKED TI ANCHOR GRANDSTAND
AND TI LONDON TI MOVE DOON
BUT THAT WAD HEV MEANT LEAVIN
OOR BONNIE BORDER TOON
SO HEI CHOSE TI BIDE AMONGST OO
AND FRAE HAWICK HEI WADNA BUDGE
CHOOSIN INSTEID O THIS TI SPEND
SETURDAY MORNINS UP THE LUDGE
LAIRNIN HUNDERS O HAWICK RUGBY BOYS
THE BASICS O THE GAME
THAT WAD LEAD A FEW TI MURRAYFIELD
AND INTERNATIONAL FAME
DEANS AND RENWICK, HEG AND CRANSTON
FIRST HONED THEIR RUGBY SKILL
ON CAULD DAMP MORNINS AT WULTON PARK
WI THE MAN THAT OO CA' BILL

REAL PRIVILEGED TI WATCH GREAT GAMES
FINEST PLAYERS O THE DAY
AND BONUS FOR A CANNY SCOT
HEI'S NEVER HED TI PAY.
GERALD DAVIES, ANDY IRVINE,
MIKE GIBSON, SERGE BLANCO,
HEI PICKED HIS FAVOURITE TEAM YINCE
AND YIN THING A'LL NEVER KNOW,
HOW HEI CAME TI CHOOSE ROB ANDREW,
NO PHIL BENNET OR BARRY JOHN
AND HEI'D NAE ROOM FOR JIM RENWICK.
A'D ARGEE WI UM OWRE YON.
AND NEARLY A' THE TEAM HEI PICKED
CAME FRAE WHERE'ER THEY BADE
TI PAY TRIBUTE TI THIS SPAICIAL MAN
SIC AN IMPRESSION HEI HEZ MADE,
OR COULD EET BE, AW, SUIRELY, NO,
IT WASNI BILL AT A'

THEY WERE JUUST WANTIN A CHANCE TI GET
ANOTHER HAWICK BA'!
NAW, THEY A' RECOGNISED THE SHEER
PROFESSIONALISM AND SKILL
O THIS MASTER COMMUNICATOR,
THE MAN THAT OO CA' BILL.

SOME FOLK GET GEY BIG-HEIDED,
ALLOW THEIR EGO TI EXTEND,
FA' IN LOVE WI THUMSEL EARLY,
REMAIN FAITHFUL TI THE END
BUT BILL' S THAT UNASSUMIN,
HEI'S NO BEEN SPOILED BE HIS FAME.
HIS FEET'S STILL FIRMLY ON THE GRUND
AND HEI TREATS JUUST THE SAME
ROYALTY, POLITICIANS,
BLAZERS FRAE THE S.R.U.
AND UNKENT ORDINARY FOLK
THE LIKES O ME AND YOU.
HEI'S ALWAYS SHUNNED THE LIMELIGHT
AND YINCE HIS COMMENTARY WAS DUNE
HEI'D BE HEIDIN STREIGHT ON HAME TI HAWICK
BE THE NEAREST TRAIN OR PLANE
FOR HEI HEZ A FLOO'ER HEI CA'S HIS AIN
THE SWEETEST IN THE VALE
AND IT'S FOR BETTE'S DEAR SAKE
HEI HURRIES BACK TI BONNIE TEVIOTDALE
FOR SHE HAS BEEN HIS SOUL-MATE
HIS ANCHOR DOON THE YEARS
FRAE HILLEND DRIVE TI HILLERSDEN
THROWE THE SUNSHINE AND THE TEARS
AND WHERE MAIST OFTEN WULL EE FIND THUM
- GOLFIN UP THE VERTISH HILL
THE WUMAN WHAESE BEHIND THE MAN
AND THE MAN THAT OO CA' BILL.

AND NOW THAT EE'VE HUNG UP EER MIKE
SHE'S GOT WORK FOR EE TI DAE,
SHE'LL HEV EE AT THE HOOVERIN
AND AT THE DUSTIN TAE
BUT ON A SIMMER'S EVENIN
AS THE GLOAMIN STERTS TI FA'
EE'LL MAYBE GET THE CHANCE TI SIT
AND THINK BACK OWRE EET A'
AND AS EE DIV EE WULL REFLECT
WI GRATITUDE AND PRIDE
ON HOW EE'RE HELD IN SIC RESPECT
A' OWRE THE WORLD WIDE
FOR FOLK FRAE AUCKLAND TI THE CAPE
AND A' BITS IN ATWEEN

FRAE LANSDOWNE ROAD TI STRADEY PARK,
MILNTOON AND MYRESLAWGREEN
WAD WISH TI DRINK A TOAST WI ME
FOR IT IS SUIRELY PLAIN
THAT RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL
WILL NOT SEE YOUR LIKE AGAIN
AND NOW LIFE'S GOLDEN SUN GONE DOON
AHINT WULTON BURN HILL
OO'RE A' FAIR PROOD THAT OO HEV KENT
THE MAN THAT OO CA' BILL.

IAN W LANGLES
28 APRIL 2002