

MORPETH OLYMPICS

Jez Lowe 2012

As troubles overwhelmed me, stress and strife befriended me,
And dark days had descended to take me by the hand,
I decided I should go forth from a world upon the warpath,
And I found myself in Morpeth, in fair Northumberland.

The day being hot and sunny, and me being strapped for money,
On a grassy bank so bonny, I lay me down to sleep.
I had the strangest dream of sorts, concerning crowds and men of sports
Clad in singlets and in shorts, as far as the eye could see.

CHORUS

*Can you jump or can wrestle, can you tug of war?
Or maybe want a wager or a bet?
This is what the working man's been waiting for,
The Morpeth Olympics are as good as it can get!*

Now I wasn't paralytic, merely soporific,
But the term "Morpeth Olympics" was one I'd never heard,
I'd not seen it on the news-stand, on World of Sport or Grandstand,
But it's the top event in all the land that seemed to be the word.

A feller selling panacaldy from a stall he'd set up next to me,
Said ever since 1870 they'd held these games,
"We can't boast of medals galore but, for each Cram Coe and Corbett,
We've had men who'd wipe the floor with many a well-known name".

CHORUS....

Now Ancient Greeks around the Parthenon would run around with nothing on,
And bits that never saw the sun would be on full display,
That well might gild the lily, but in Morpeth it's too chilly,
To run round willy-nilly, I am very glad to say.

So at the Grange House Field assembled men of size and men more nimble,
The vista it resembled something truly Homeric,
Then they announced the opening race, "The Alistair Anderson Steeplechase",
And off they went at quite a pace like horse-muck off a stick

CHORUS....

A man from Barnard Castle had come eighty miles to wrestle,
He paused to whet his whistle, and the bout it soon began,
He beat a local lad from Stobhill, who shouted I was robbed,
But he was told to shut his gob and so the pair of them shook hands.

The next event, the pole vault, had shuddered to a sudden halt,
When through someone's forgetful fault, they'd got in quite a hole,

No sooner started than it stopped, because an old lady in a strop
Had come to claim her clothes prop they were using for a pole.

CHORUS....

The crowd was quickly on its feet, as one man took a winning leap,
A woodbine still clenched in his teeth as he took off,
No mattress, mat or sand down, for him to safely land on,
His style was as outstanding as his smoker's cough!

After much delays and debating, with the crowd stood standing waiting,
And more deliberating, the tug of war it did begin,
The umpire shouted "Off ye go!", they tugged for half an hour or so,
Then tumbled down like dominoes when somebody broke wind.

CHORUS.....

Myself I am no athlete, but I was inspired to compete,
I was up and on my feet to join the relay team,
I was poised to give it all I've got, for victory or maybe not,
Then came the starter's pistol shot, and I woke from my dream.

It's many years since Morpeth saw, crowds of thousands, maybe more,
And sport is now a massive draw, with millions in the sack,
But ask me where I'd rather go, not to London, Tokyo,
Sydney, San Francisc-i-o, but to Morpeth in a crack