

This poem was read out at the centenary celebrations of the Ayton and District Cow Insurance Society in 1949. In 1953 the Society's membership numbered 36 and 57 cows were insured.

A Stitch in Time

Geordie McClusky bocht a coo;
Mebbie it was when he was fou,
For Geordie could drink it frae a pail,
When meetin' his freends at Reston Sale.

Tae his hame he had it brocht
The very day that it was bocht.
It fair dumbfoondered his wife Mag –
She thocht 'twad be another nag.

In the shed they tied it safe;
Mag at first was very lathe
At the teats tae gie a pu',
'Twas lang since she had milked a coo.

But the beast was canny as a lamb;
Frae every teat the milk it ran,
Until the pail was fu' tae the brim;
Geordie, there was nae haudin' him.

He was shair a bargain he had got;
He thocht it juist a lot o' rot,
That tae buy a coo ye needed skill;
Wha'er said that was a muckle fule.

He bragged an' bragged about the beast;
His freends got fed up, tae say the least,
For they kent that Geordie was inclined tae blaw
About a'thing he bocht an' a'thing he saw.

Ane day he met in wi' Wullie Bell;
Tae him o' his coo he had tae tell.
Wullie jaist listened an' winked his e'e,
As Geordie rhymed off lee efter lee.

Then Wullie spiered, in voice maist demure,
If this grand coo he wadna insure
Wi' the Ayton Club for a sma' bit fee,
Juist in case the beast micht dee.

Geordie got mad; he swore Wullie awa',
His coo wis soond, wi' nae faults at a'.
He'd gie nae money tae yon Wullie Marshall,
Nor tae Wullie Bell either, or ony rascal.

Weeks passed; the coo began tae fail;
Its milk nae langer filled the pail.
At first the gress was gi'en the blame,
An' then the drooth, an' then the rain.

By this time the beast was fairly ailin';
Her back-bane stuck up like a bar o' palin'.
Her coat was dry; her udder was gane;
She wad sune be a coo, but only in name.

Ane day she lay stretched on the flair;
Geordie and Mag couldna hide their despair.
The vet he cam', but tae prophesee -
He could dae naething; the coo wad dee.

An' this is juist what can easily happen
Tae folk wi' kye, even if they're no' braggin',
There's nae doot at a', it pays tae insure
Wi' a club that has funds baith safe an' secure.

So noo that this club's reached its hundredth year;
An occasion we celebrate wi' a' this guid cheer,
Let's think o' the help it's gi'en folk in the past;
Far intae the future may its grand work last.

Anon