

Leadgate Stories  
Mervyn Craig

Mervyn lived in Leadgate and wrote a number of poems which were published in at least 2 books

Robert Gowland

**The Bard of Leadgate**

Mervyn Craig who emigrated to Australia in 1970 and had published 2- books of poems and a novel.

I went to secondary school with Mervyn.

He died in Aug.2007 and had half of his ashes interred in St. Ives Churchyard on 5th. Oct. 2007. in his Mum's Grave who had died when we were in class sitting together.

I have given 'a talk' to several church groups in the past and saw your Redwell Hills appeal. I am shielding at present !!

One of Mervyn's poem is below

**Fields of Coal**

**You can sit and wonder all you like  
To what's beyond that Pont-top-pike  
Men walk ower the coal to reap  
From that aaful place called stoney heap  
Leadgate lads both young and auld  
All brave the rain and winter cauld  
To gan doon the mine and work the coal  
They say it's better than the dole  
Their dust filled lungs it's hard to breathe  
They curse and gripe their angers seethe  
Their hearts bursting with fits of rage  
No man refuses to ride the cage  
For he has a family, Wife and bairn  
The pit yakka's lament he'll hev to learn  
Heed doon arse up and fill that tub  
Eight hours of graft afore the club  
A nice cauld pint afore ya tea  
To wesh away that misery  
One turns to two, three and four  
Happiness resumed in the heed once more  
So if you wonder what's ower the hill**

**Remember this, it's a bitter pill  
Divvent gan there lads it'll drag yee doon  
Yee're better off with a job in the toon  
Deep mining's days are over and done  
The cages stopped and divvent run  
Newcastle coal fields mighty and vast  
Are being ravaged by the open cast  
Stop open cast mining It's fraught with greed  
So stop this now I beg and plead  
This practice is bad what I don't like  
You're ruining my views from Pont-Top-Pike**

More parts about Mervyn to follow in due course.