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With a
different
view



I LOVE those old bits of local doggerel with their hints of ancient prejudice....

*"Blackshaw Head for travellers
And Heptonstall for trust.
Luddenden's a warm spot;
Royle's Head's cold
And when ye get to Halifax
Ye mun be varry bold".*

That was an extract from an old jingle that acted as a kind of travelogue for the ancient pack horse trail over the moors.

There is another bit of doggerel; which ran:

*"Halifax is
made of wax,
Heptonstall of stone.
Halifax has many a bonny lass.
Heptonstall has none."*

How does it go on? Ah, yes...

*"Halifax is a haddock town
Huddersfield fowk have cod.
Halifax lasses wear silken gowns
Huddersfield girls wear clogs"*

OK, I'd better own up. That last stanza was my own composition (not very good, was it? - ed).

But I wrote it because if it didn't exist I feel it ought to have done. I only wish I could think of a better rhyme for cod (although "cod/clogs" is no worse than "wax/lass")

My effort ought to have existed because this thing about Halifax being a "haddock town" while other, more degenerate localities favour cod or even (hold a cross at arm's length in front of you) whiting and dogfish, is deeply inbred.

You know how it is when you are growing up in Halifax. At about the age of five or six your father takes you on to his knee, lights his clay pipe, and says something like:

"Now then, lad. Tha's no longer a bairn. Tha'll be helping me in t'mill afore long. So there's a few things I mun tell thee. Nivver, nivver be the first to stand a round of drinks. Nivver trust a Southerner. And when tha goes into t'chippie remember tha's a Halifax lad an' if they doan't serve 'addock, put tha money away!"

It's all a bit fishy

Well, that's what my dad said to me anyway and it made a deep impression.

To be honest, I reserve most of my ire these days for those uncivilised regions that serve fried fish *with the skin on*.

But still there is this lingering idea round here that fish and chips aren't fish and chips unless the fish component is haddock, while neighbouring areas plump for cod.

After extensive, cursory research I just don't know why this should be, but Halifax's haddock preference is topical because there are predictions that the price of fish and chips may begin to raise sharply because the price of cod is going up.

Ah, but we prefer haddock!

Well, the fact is that haddock (*melanogrammus aeglefinus* to you) is a kind of cod, only distinguished by a couple of lines and spots. If there is a cod shortage you can bet that we're almost down to the last haddock too.

In time we are going to have to get a taste for other fishes (as if any of us can really distinguish between cod and haddock anyway, if we are being honest).

Snapper and chips. Grouper and chips. Wrasse and chips. Parrot fish and chips. Ling and chips. Goldfish and chips.....

And when the last fish has been caught, fried and eaten we will have to fall back on that old Scottish delicacy deep fried Mars Bar and chips.

But I predict that Huddersfield will be a fried Mars Bar town and Halifax people will only buy Twix and Chips.