Consultation contribution:

Spelling and Pronunciation Guide
The Ulster-Scots Academy Implementation Group Proposals

Introduction

Commenting on the fact that spelling proposals have been agreed by the committee, the guide tells us that: “As a result, the traditional spoken language is made more accessible in written form to public and academic bodies, and to the community at large.”

That begs the question of whether the previous written tradition was inaccessible.

The guide also informs us that: “Educationalists have long insisted that an agreed spelling system is an essential prerequisite to the teaching of the language in schools...” Who are those educationalists? What empirical evidence have they produced that the previous written tradition was wholly unsuitable for the teaching of the ‘language’ in schools?

The guide also tells us that: “When Ulster-Scots began to write in their own tongue again in the 1700s, they largely had to re-invent a Scots spelling system outside of academia.”

That contention is of course flawed, since those who wrote Scots in Ulster from the 1700s were part of the same literary tradition that existed in Scotland. ‘Ulster-Scots’ did not invent a spelling system — they simply employed the same conventions as their Scottish peers.

Those Modern Scots orthographic conventions, crystallised in the work of writers such as Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson, included many Older Scots conventions, some Standard English conventions not previously shared with Older Scots — particularly where writers felt that they adequately indicated a Scots pronunciation — and what came to be known as the ‘apologetic apostrophe’ to show supposedly missing letters.

Those conventions were by nature supradialectal, so that the spellings were not an accurate phonetic representation of any dialect in particular but shaped a literary language used by speakers of all dialects of Scots. In that literary Scots, the pronunciation was provided by the reader not the author, something that gave written Scots a sense of ‘languageness’. The graphemes used mapped to Scots ‘sounds’, not Standard English ones. Later more dialect-specific writing emerged. In that dialect writing, the pronunciation was provided by the author, usually by employing deliberate Standard English sound-to-letter spellings.

The guide informs us that: “Nowadays, most native speakers of Ulster-Scots have never seen their own language in written form at all, and when attempting to write often adopt phonetic spellings based on English vowel sounds.”

1 Available for download at http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/language-cultural-diversity-r08/ulster-scots.htm
That results from the decline in knowledge of the established literary Scots tradition, something that also appears to be the case with the authors of the spelling guide.

**The need for a spelling standardisation process**

The authors of the guide appear to believe that Ulster Scots is a language in its own right (the issue of whether Scots as a whole can be considered a language in its own right is conveniently ignored here). However, the *Scottish National Dictionary (SND)* includes Ulster Scots, and Caroline Macafee, editor of the *Concise Ulster Dictionary*, has described Ulster Scots as ‘clearly’ a dialect of Central Scots. Indeed, the linguist James Millroy has described the dialects of Antrim and North Londonderry, in their strongest rural forms, as ‘barely distinguishable’ from Ayrshire dialects.

Scots in Ulster has not only been subject to the influence (both lexical and phonological) of Standard English, but also to the influence of more prestigious neighbouring non-standard dialects of English origin. As a result, traditional Scots forms may have been replaced by Standard English forms, or forms borrowed from neighbouring non-standard dialects of English origin.

If the aim of the Spelling Standardisation Committee is to promote (Ulster) Scots as a language in its own right, emphasising the traditional Scots forms would be paramount. Nevertheless, as forms and loans from the neighbouring (non-standard) dialects of English origin are now part of everyday speech, they should also be included, but clarification provided as to which is the traditional Scots form and which a loan from English.

**The criteria used**

Whatever the balance that the Spelling Standardisation Committee was seeking to achieve, the result is an incongruent, internally contradictory hotchpotch of a spelling system — if it can be considered a system at all.

**The method**

The methodology employed seems to have failed to analyse the underlying phonology of Ulster Scots (in isolation or as part of Scots as a whole).

Consequently, the Spelling Standardisation Committee appears to have been unable to examine systematically the most common or prestigious (supradialectal) orthographic representations of the underlying phonemes that can be found in the (Ulster) Scots literary tradition.

Such an approach — describing which phonemes map to which graphemes (and environments) — would produce a fairly straightforward description that would enable native speakers to spell most words by analogy rather than having to consult a bewildering
list of “approximately 60 different spelling ‘rules’” derived from Philip Robinson’s *Ulster–Scots Grammar*.

I might add that it seems rather surprising that Philip Robinson’s *Ulster–Scots Grammar* was taken as a basis at all, considering the reviews that it received after publication:

“Without a systematic treatment of the contrast between Ulster Scots and Scottish varieties, it is impossible for the reader to gauge the degree to which Ulster Scots can be understood as a fully-developed language in Robinson’s sense, or to the degree to which it is best described as a variety of Scots.”

“This orthographic double–take is opaque, counter–intuitive, and confusing. In attempting to replace conventional symbolism with something, in intention, mimetically realistic, it ends up offering only more and worse symbolism.”

The recommendations of the Spelling Standardisation Committee show little or no regard for the extant literary tradition. Instead of producing recommendations that emanate from, and facilitate the future survival of, the existing Scots literary tradition in Ulster, the members of the Standardisation Committee — seem to want to create a wholly new orthography in their own image.

Since the Standardisation Committee seems to have failed to analyse the underlying phonology of Ulster Scots, a brief outline is provided below. That will be referred to in comments throughout this document. It is from such an analysis that the usual Scots graphemes used to represent the underlying phonemes can be identified and a suitable selection made so that they may then be applied consistently by following easily defined ‘rules’ that produce a homogeneous literary (Ulster) Scots suitable for expository transactional writing. For a treatment of that and other spelling proposals see [http://www.scots–online.org/airticles/AwAeWey.pdf](http://www.scots–online.org/airticles/AwAeWey.pdf). For a comparison of Scots in Scotland and Ulster see [http://www.scots–online.org/airticles/awaeoo.pdf](http://www.scots–online.org/airticles/awaeoo.pdf).

The corpus of Ulster Scots literature from which the quotations here have been taken was compiled from sources freely available on the Internet. Owing to time constraints they have not been checked against printed sources so the occasional typographical or transcriptional error may inadvertently have been included.

The consonants in Ulster Scots are much the same as those in other Scots dialects, with many also shared with Standard English, except:

The fricative /x/ usually spelt <gh> in Standard English cognates. Interdental realisations of /d, t/ (/d̪, t̪/) before /r/, /n/ (/n̪/) and bilabial /φ/ and /β/ for /f/ and /v/ may occur in varieties influenced by an Irish substrate.

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A glottal stop (/ʔ/) for /t/ may occur between vowels or word–finally. The voiceless labiovelar fricative /ʍ/ <wh> has not merged with /w/.

The guide provides no direction on consonant doubling. However, contradictory practices are noticeable in some of the spellings suggested. The single consonant graphemes (<b>, <c>, <d>, etc.) are usually single after single and double vowels e.g. *wab, waik, bed, sweet, deil, bit, cot and cut*, etc., and doubled following a single vowel grapheme in the first stressed syllable in disyllabic words e.g. *waddin, siller and supper* etc. The graphemes <u, v, w> are not usually doubled and neither are the double graphemes representing a single sound (<sh> and <th>). A medial and root–final /k/ is usually represented <ck> rather than <k(k)>. A few exceptions to those ‘rules’ do, however, occur e.g. *mak–makkin, aff, bull, dwall, pull and yett*, etc.

The numbering system for Scots vowels developed by A. J. Aitken is used to describe the underlying vowel phonemes of Ulster Scots.\(^4\) From those, the most common or prestigious (supradialectal) orthographic representations of the underlying phonemes used in literary (Ulster) Scots can be identified, and a relatively straightforward description of which phonemes map to which graphemes (and environments) can be produced.

Vowel length is usually conditioned by the Scottish vowel–length rule and Ulster lengthening whereby the vowels /e, ɛ, a, ɔ/ are long in any monosyllable closed by a consonant other than /p, t, k, tʃ/.

The neutral vowel /a/ occurs in unstressed positions.

1. /ai/ short. /aɪ/ long. However, it is /ai/ and after /w/ and /ʍ/. /e/ may occur before /k/ in words such as *like* and *dyke*. In some dialects /æ/ and /ɛi/ may also occur.
2. /i/ 
3. The original vowel has merged with vowels 2 or 4.
4. /ɛ/ However, /ɛ(ː)/ may occur before /r/.
5. /ɔ/ However, there are some mergers with vowel 18.
6. /ʊ/ 
7. In Mid Antrim, North Ards and North–west Strangford the original /ɑ/ has merged with vowels 15 (/i/) in short positions and vowel 4 (/e/) in long positions. In North Antrim and North–east Londonderry, especially before /n/ and /l/, mergers with vowel 4 often occur, and in Donegal, Magilligan, the Mid Ards and West Strangford mergers with vowel 2 also occur. Before /k/ and /x/ the realisation is /(j)u/ or /(j)ʌ/ depending on word and/or dialect.
8. /ɛː/ The vowel may also be /ɛː/ or have merged with vowel 4.
8a. /ai/ or /aɪ/ after /w/ and /ʍ/. However, /æ/ may also occur.
9. /œ/ 
10. /ai/ 
11. /iː/ (root–finally)

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12. /ɑː/ or /ɔː/ (often after /w/ and /ʍ/ in eastern and central varieties) and /aː/ in western dialects. There are many mergers with vowel 17.

13. /ʊ/ is usually short before a voiceless consonant and before a sonorant followed by a voiceless consonant, but long elsewhere. Vocalisation to /o/ may occur before /k/.

14. /ju/  
15. /ʊ/ or /ʌ/, /ɛ/ may also occur in Donegal. /ʌ/ may occur owing to an Irish substrate. There are some mergers with vowel 19 (/ʌ/) after /w/ and /ʍ/.

16. /ɛ/  
17. /a/ There are occasional mergers with vowel 12.

18. /ɔ/ There are some mergers with vowel 5.

19. /ʌ/

**How to Use This Guide**

The notes on diacritics state that the accents themselves “can be omitted without any change to spelling”. If that is the case, there is clearly no need for them.

“There are only three recommended for standard use.”

**a)** Ō = / Ō/

Since what has traditionally been represented by the grapheme <i> in literary Scots in Ulster, will habitually be pronounced /ɪ/ by native speakers, there is no need for any orthographic innovation, as it cannot be confused with any other possible realisation of <i>.

**b)** ũ = /ʌ/

The grapheme <û> for /ʌ/ is unnecessary because, if the sound-to-letter correspondences are regular, <u> will usually map to /ʌ/ anyway. It is Standard English that is irregular here.

**c)** è = dental realisation of previous consonant

The use of <è>, etc. to show the interdental realisation of a preceding consonant is counter-intuitive, since diacritics normally represent stress or a modification of the vowel sound. Furthermore, how does one represent a word-final interdental realisation? The innovation is unnecessary, as the interdental realisation is marked by environment. Native speakers will habitually produce it.
Part 1

Older Scots spelling and its legacy in modern Ulster-Scots

The guide informs us that the "18th and 19th century Ulster-Scots writers did not use many of the Older Scots spellings. Robert Burns and the 'Scotch Poets' who preceded him in Ulster and Scotland were deliberately reviving a written form for what was to them only a spoken language. For this they almost always used English grammar and spelling rules. They were largely unaware of, or had lost contact with, the earlier spelling conventions of the 17th century and before."

Burns followed Ramsay and Fergusson, who were among those who ‘revived’ literary Scots after the Union. All those individuals were well aware of Older Scots, since they made literary references to it; from that it is clear that they must have read Older Scots. Hogg even wrote some ‘pastiche’ Middle Scots pieces. Books written in Older Scots were not pulped in 1707; they continued to be read, and consequently many literate individuals of the time were well aware of, and had not completely lost contact with, the earlier spelling conventions. Ramsay himself was well-known as an anthologiser of works written before 1600, and Burns, introducing one of his most famous poems, Tam o’Shanter, quotes Gavin Douglas (†1522).

Below is a selection of Middle Scots spellings, from later in the period, taken from the Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue. They may not all be the most wide spread or common, but they were all certainly used and known at the time.

Vowels/diphthongs

fine, fire, knife, like, wife but also byre, dyke, fyle, syne, wyte
bield, chief, dreich, skeich, neist, speir, sweir
freend, greet, keep, seek, weet
bere, here, hie
beir, heid, deid, deif. Note: forms such as bere, hede, dede and defe also occurred.
gear, leave, quean, season. Note: forms such as gere~geir, leve~leive, queen~quein and seson~seisoun also occurred.
an, bane, hale, hame, lane, stane
brae, sae, frae, gae
afore, note, poke, thole, troke, coal, coat, loan
about, broun, cou, dou, doun, drouch, house, mouth, nou, out, sou, toun
buird, guid, fuid, fluid, fluir, muir, pur, pruive
beuch, beuk, eneuch, heuk, leuk, neuk, sheuk, teuch, teuk
braid, mair, saip. Note: forms such as brade, mare and sape also occurred
day, say
gey, quey, Mey, pey
noise, boy, coy
byle, pyne, spyle
dee, ee, dree, free, see, tree, three
be, he, she, we
baw, caw, faw, waw, blaw, braw, craw, slaw, snaw
faut, saut, auld, bauld, cauld, fauld, hauch
awa, twa, wha
bowt, gowf, howff, howk, howp, lowp
fiowe, growe, howe, knowe, lowe, rowe
dew, few, new
bird, brig, drink, fit, hill, kist, licht, pit simmer, wid (wood), will, wirm
bed, bend, ebb, fecht, ferm, gled, hert, ken, lenth, seck, send, wecht
back, laft, lang, mak, tak, strang, want
athort, body, box, corn, on
bull, bund, drumly, dub, full, grund, hunder, pull, unce

Consonants
beuk, dyke, keep, seek, mak
back, seck, muckle
chief, wratch
beuch, dreich, eneuch, fecht, hauch, licht, skeich, teuch, wecht
gnaw
knee, knife, knowe
auld, bauld, bield, cauld, fauld
bend, bund, freend, grund, hunder, send
quair, quean
fish, she, sheuk. Note: <sch> also occurred.
kythe, that, the, thir
athort, drouth, lenth, mouth, thole, three
wha, whan. Note: <quh> also occurred but its use was in decline.

As those spellings predate the introduction of Standard English to Scotland, they cannot be phonetic adaptations of Standard English spelling convention. In fact they are traditional Scots spelling conventions, although some may have been influenced by practices further south. It should come as no surprise that Scots and Standard English spelling conventions are very similar, since the two varieties’ orthographies have a common origin. As a
consequence, it is also unsurprising that many of those conventions are familiar to anyone literate in modern Standard English.

Many, if not all, of the spelling conventions illustrated above were also used by "Robert Burns and the 'Scotch Poets' who preceded him in Ulster and Scotland", so the claim that they "were largely unaware of, or had lost contact with, the earlier spelling conventions of the 17th century and before" is unfounded.

a) *quh* for ‘wh’

"... this *quh*- spelling reflected a *[kwa]* pronunciation."

The *<quh>* spelling represented /xm/, later /m/ originating in Old English *<hw>*. The *<wh>* spelling was introduced by Anglo-Norman scribes by analogy with *<ch>*, *<sh>* and *<th>* etc. The spelling *<quh>* occasionally represented /x/, as can be seen in the spellings Farquhar, Urquhart and Buquhan for Buchan.

A /kw/ realisation for /m/ does occur in some Insular varieties owing to a Norn substrate. There is a similar interchange of /kv/ and /hv/ in Norwegian dialects.

b) ‘tw’ represented as ‘qw’

Aqween, aqweesh, rare quice, quarty, quunty and qual for twice, two or three, twenty and twelve. Namely tongue: quust twist and quuster ‘twister’ (of straw-rope)

The *<qw>* spelling most likely represents dialect variants realised as /kw/ rather than /tw/, particularly in North-east Central Scots (see *SND: Q*).

c) ‘Yogh’

Early Scots printers conflated the character *<ȝ>* /j/ with a cursive *<z>* and used *<z>* , when *<ȝ>* was not available in their font sets.

The sound /j/ was also the second element in *l* and *n* mouillé in, for example, *brulzie* and *senzie*, which were alternatively spelt *brulyie* and *senyie* to show the /j/ realisation.

d) Post-consonantal –ie for ‘–y’

Older Southern English also used *<ie>* rather than *<y>*. Later that was simply standardised to *<y>* , c.f. John Hart’s "An Orthographie" (1569).

The *SND* describes *<ie>* “as an adjective ending, corresponding to English –y” but also describes *<y>* “as an alternative to the commoner Scots spelling –ie.”

e) Final –ye for English final ‘–ay’
Hey, wey, pey and gey rather than hye, wye, pye and gye. Mey as suggested.

Vowel 8a, occurring finally, usually regularised <-ey>, is the vowel in all those words, i.e. hey, wey, pey and Mey, all of which are headword forms in the SND.

“Champ’t up wi’ kail, that pey the planter” — ‘To the Potato’, James Orr
“Blythe Bess obey’d the leal comman’” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“The bottle’s before us, we’re a’ gey an’ jolly” — ‘Air — A Wee Drap o’ Whiskey’, Samuel Fee
“The wey the auld four-poster shakes” — ‘The magic X’, James Mullan

f) sh for ‘s’, and sch for ‘sh’

The spelling <sch> is from Older Scots and was replaced by <sh> /ʃ/. See above. There is no need for <sch> in a contemporary orthography, since it has not been used for more than 300 years.

Shugger is an eighteenth-century English relic and may be a Mid–Ulster English loan. The Scots from is succar [ˈsʌkər].
Veshel, shew (sew) and ‘shune’ (soon) = suin (vowel 7). <sh> here represents a genuine Scots realisation, which is a development of /s/ followed by a palatal glide in words of French origin.
Sheuch, <sh> here represents a genuine Scots realisation.

Sall, suld and shud. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section h, English ‘oo’ to Ulster Scots ui, below.

The <l> in the Older Scots spelling suld came to represent the vowel-length after vocalisation of /l/, i.e. [sʊld]. That has been replaced by Standard English ‘should’ [ʃʊd]. The spelling shud simply represents an unemphatic colloquial realisation. One might argue that a literary orthography would use the emphatic form shoud.

g) Interchangeable ‘v’, ‘u’ and ‘w’

In Older Scots those letters were simply interchangeable, representing the same sound. At the time all writers were aware of the general variant system, each making their own personal and sometimes idiosyncratic choices from the available alternatives.

That is the case in giwe and hawe (give and have) where <w> represents /v/.

Also in adwise, craew (crave), Dawid, Gawan, lewy (levey), wozd (void), elewint (eleivent), ansuer, auin (awn), duell, tua (twa), tuell (twal), avay (away), vitt (wit), vas (was), vater (watter), ve (we) and varrent (warrant).
The following are pronunciation spellings where \(<eu\> = /ju/\), \(<ue\> = /u/\), \(<ou\>\), \(<ow\>\) and \(<ew\> = /u/\): neuis (news), puer (power), sourd (sword), toune, perswade, trew, zow (you), dowble (dooble) and grows (groose).

“Occasionally ‘f’ was substituted for ‘v’.

Such variants most likely represented pronunciations that varied between /f/ and /v/ particularly where /f/ was voiced to /v/.

The spellings \(lo’ed = lued\), \(co’erd\) (covered) = \(cuired\) and \(braw\), represent the Modern Scots outcome of Middle Scots v-deletion intervocalically and between a nasal/liquid consonant and a vowel.

That process produced many doublets, for example, \(brave\) and \(braw\), both occurring in many Scots dialects.

h) Loss of English ‘v’

This is the Middle Scots v-deletion described above, resulting in Modern Scots \(ower\), \(gie\), \(gien\), \(hae\), \(dou\), \(sweel\), \(deil\), \(lea’\) (also leave) and \(siller\).

The \(<w>\) in \(ower\) is part of the diagraph \(<ow>\) representing the diphthong \(/\text{xu}/\).

**Part 2**

**Representation of vowel sounds**

“Since the vernacular revival of Scots and Ulster-Scots literature in the early 1700s, ‘English’ vowel sounds (both as individual letters and in combinations) have been used to convey an approximate Scots pronunciation.”

As described above under Part 1, Older Scots spelling and its legacy in modern Ulster Scots, that is not wholly the case. As many of the spellings used predate the introduction of Standard English to Scotland, they cannot be phonetic adaptations of Standard English spelling conventions but are, in fact, often traditional literary Scots spelling conventions, although some may have been influenced by practices further south. It should come as no surprise that Scots and Standard English spelling conventions are very similar. The two varieties have a common orthographic origin.

The guide claims that “distinctive vowel sounds have proved to be difficult to represent”.

The literary record shows that was not the case in the past. The writers of the time were not attempting a phonetic transcription — they were writing as in any literary language, expecting readers to interpret the graphemes according to their own pronunciation. Other writers did, however, choose to write dialect deliberately, whereby the author provides the pronunciation rather than the reader.
There is no need to borrow “innovative devices”. As the literary record amply demonstrates, all the graphemes necessary to represent Ulster Scots already exist in the Scots literary tradition.

a) The short ‘i’ represented by i

This refers to vowel 15. That vowel has traditionally been represented by the grapheme <i> in literary Scots from Ulster. Native speakers will habitually pronounce it /ɪ/, and there is no need for any innovation because <i> cannot be confused with any other possible pronunciation. The introduction of <i> appears to be no more than an excuse to be different from English (and Scots).

If the spellings pag, hat and bag for traditional Scots pig, hit and big are not intended to represent /ɪ/, they may represent /ɛ̈/, which occurs in some Mid-Ulster English varieties. The spellings pug, hut and bug may represent an Irish substrate producing /ʌ/.

The realisation /ʌ/ after <w(h)> is predictable but not universal. Since the /ʌ/ realisation will be produced habitually by those native speakers that have it, there is no need for <u> in a literary orthography. Using <u> would be characteristic of phonetic dialect writing.

The guide mentioned the innovation <à> proposed by Gregg and Adams. Their system was for phonetic transcription rather than literary use. They had to make use of the symbols that the typewriters of the time provided. With computers we can now use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to show exact pronunciations.

b) The short ‘u’ represented by ü

This refers to vowel 19. The grapheme <ü> for /ʌ/ is unnecessary because, if the sound-to-letter correspondences are regular <u>, will usually map to /ʌ/ anyway. It is Standard English that is inconsistent here. In order to know when to use <ü>, one has to use Standard English as a frame of reference, which ultimately undermines the claim that Ulster Scots is a language in its own right.

The Scots form of bush is buss.

c) Aphæresis

Lastic, lectric, lapse, leven, legiance and lotment etc.

The initial vowel is most likely just a barely audible /a/ in unemphatic colloquial speech. It is, however, still there and should be represented in a literary orthography. That is also the case with possle (apostle) and rithmetic, but those would be better spelt apostle and arithmetic in a literary orthography. Showing the simplification of the cluster /st/ to /s/ and respelling with final <ck> are characteristic of pseudo-phonetic dialect writing.
Ledge and prentice are examples of aphetic forms of allege and apprentice, respectively, and have historical pedigree. Greeance is from Old French gréance.

d) Shared English and Ulster–Scots words with different spelling systems

Meat, eat, cheat, seat, beat, clean, cheap, beard, cheat, seat, sheaf, treat, beast, and fear rather than baird, chait or chate, chaip or chape, sait or sate, shaif, trait, baist/baste, bai[t]/bate because all have an underlying vowel 3 but faisible, maisles and traison. However, depending on word and/or variety/speaker the <ea> is realised either /i/ or /e/ (see pp. 47–48 in Wilson, J. (1926) The Dialects of Central Scotland, Oxford) having merged with vowels 2 or 4. The <ea> digraph is suitable for both realisations. Standard English manages fine with beat, beak, fear and great, break, pear, not to mention head, read (pt.) and sweat. Literate native speakers know how to pronounce those words.

"Than o' his meat"
"I think I hear the hail–stanes rattling yet"
"Or fear yer **** shou'd be mad cald" — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
"Cam' at the hour, tho' win' an' rain beat sair"
"An' gies a cheap, safe recipe, they try" — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr
"Cauld fear made cake, an' crudle" — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
"But yet wad eat, for a' that." — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter
"In quest o' meat" — ‘The Auld Wife’s lament for Her Teapot’, David Herbison
"That was baith cheap, an' sturdy mettle"
"An' fidgin' wink'd at Bess tae treat"
"Till mony a wife was chang'd tae beast"
"Tak' counsel imps, an' dinna fear." — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
"Tho' dim we shine; sae clean they scour" — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

Alternatively, one could use <ei>, which is usually used for the underlying vowel 3 in words such as heid, breid, deid, thread and deif. See Part 3, 'Words spelt with the vowel ‘e’ in English', section c, below.

If the intention is to show either an /i/ or an /e/ realisation, one should at least spell them consistently using the usual digraph for the vowel with which they have merged, though <ei> may be a better choice for the vowel 2 /i/ realisation than <ee>, with <a–e> for vowel 4. However, since the realisation of many of those words varies between /i/ or /e/, <a–e> (or <ai>) would not be a suitable representation of an /i/ realisation.

Waik (weak) has vowel 4 and, as suggested, is usually spelled waik.

Green, teen, meet, beef and week (the Scots form was (w)ouk) all have vowel 2, and, as suggested, are usually spelt <ee>.

"Wi' beef, cram well yer money–saul" — ‘An Elegy’, Robert Starrat
“Alang the heath beskirted green” — ‘The hawk and the Weazle’, Samuel Thomson
“An’ lasses made cockades o’ green” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“An’ wife, in a fear ay, that jilts meet her dearie” — ‘The Spae-Wife’, James Orr
“We’ll meet again, for a’ that” — ‘A Song on marriage’, Hugh Porter
“Baith black an’ green.” — ‘My Auld Mither’s Address’, Joseph Carson
“Tae watch thon birdies’ crests o’ green” — ‘Chaffinches’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong
“Meets nae return but aye a sneer” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of Ireland’, John McKinley
“The night been set tae meet again” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“Wi’ beef and meal” — ‘Address to Lettergull’, Sarah Leech

Hear seems to have vowel 2 only now.

“I think I hear the hail–stanes rattling yet” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat
“As wife’s wad be, wha’d see, or hear” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore
“The fields wad ring to hear him sing” — ‘Answer to Burns’ ‘Lovely Jean’”, Hugh Porter

Quare would seem to be the Ulster Scots form of queer. However, David Herbison did use queer in ‘My Ain Native Toun’.

Part 3

Spelling guide to Ulster–Scotts vowel sounds

The use of the word homonyms here is confusing. Perhaps the relationship between Scots and Standard English cognates is being referred to.

Words spelt with the vowel ‘–a’ in English

a) English ‘a’ to Ulster–Scotts ai (before ‘r’)

The literary spelling for vowel 8 /eː/ words is usually <ai> initially and medially. Merger with vowel 4 may produce /e/, and Ulster lowering of short front vowels may produce /ɛː/.

Shairp, airm, airt, cairt, chairge and pairt as suggested.

“That baith paid weir, and counted fair” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
“An’ braid receipts for them he’ll fill” — ‘Hornbook’s Ghaist’, Francis Boyle
“I faín wad speak a word or twa” — ‘The Gartan Courtship’, The Ulster Miscellany
“Sair-skaith’d, an’ quakin’.” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore
“Lye skail’d in a’ directions” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“A mug, fae whaur the ear is pairted”

“Ma hale domain a gairden plot” — ‘A Poor Man’s Petition’, Andrew McKenzie
“Guid faith I hae a min’ tae prent ye” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston
“And on, and past the aul’ grave yaird” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“The red cairts rattlin’ doon the brae.” — ‘The Invalid’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong
Herm and ferm rather than hairm and fairm, herm and ferm being common literary spellings for those words.

“An’ whaur’s the herm in this, noo?” ‘A rustic Love Making’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong
“An’ a’s gaed wrang wi’ the ferm!” — ‘The Prodigal Son’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong
“The fermer ploddin’ through his fields” — ‘Poetical Epistle tae Cullybackey Auld Nummer’, Thomas Given
“An’ dae ye little herm” — ‘The Bicycle’, Adam Lynn

b) English ‘a’ to Ulster–Scots e

The literary spelling for vowel 8 is usually <ai>.

The <e> here may represent Ulster phonology. However, the /ɛ(ː)/ realisation will be produced habitually by native speakers, as it is conditioned by environment.

Aiple, kaip and haimer rather than epple, kep and hemmer.
Faither and maister (less the diacritic) as suggested.

Cat rather than ket, as cat has vowel 17 usually spelt <a>. The spelling ket may represent the Mid–Ulster English raising of /æ/ to /ɛ/ after /k/, a prominent feature of Belfast vernacular.

“Wha wad hae bell’d the cat awee” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“They’re like the Cat, an’ a’ that” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter
“By cat or trap I’ll hae you taen” — ‘To a Mouse’, David Herbison

Lether and efter have vowel 16; as suggested here, the usual literary spelling is <e>.

“Did toom three aff the lether.” — ‘The Scare–Craw’, Francis Boyle
“Efter anither sweet repast” — ‘The Lint Pullin’”, Adam Lynn

The spelling ect for act represents a Mid–Ulster English realisation, whereby /æ/ becomes /ɛ/ before velars. The Scots form is act with vowel 17.

“Quo’ I, ‘Honest foreman, act somewhat mair justly” — ‘The Weaver’s Triumph’, Edward Sloan

c) English ‘a’ to Ulster Scots u

Whit and wis rather than whut and wus because those words have an underlying vowel 15, which has traditionally been presented by the grapheme <i> in literary Scots in Ulster. The /ʌ/ realisation is conditioned by the preceding <w(h)> but is not universal. Since the /ʌ/
realisation will be produced habitually by those native speakers that have it, there is no need
for <u> in a literary orthography. Using <u> would be characteristic of phonetic dialect
writing.

Words spelt with the vowel ‘e’ in English

a) English ‘e’ to Ulster–Scots /

This refers to vowel 15, here not spelled <i>, thus illustrating the inconsistency and
contradiction inherent in the guide. Good sense dictates that <i> be used in iver, niver,
ively.

Divil also has the form deevil and the doublet deil. The letter <v> is not usually doubled, cf.

“A’m ivery bit a patentee” — ‘The Bicycle’, Adam Lynn
“I niver get a bite o’ meat” — ‘The Old man and the Cat’, Agnes Kerr

Yit is usually yet [jɛt] in traditional literature. The spelling yit may represent a [jɛt]
realisation.

“I think I hear the hail–stanes rattling yet” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William
Starrat
“Yet in the en' we're truly please't” — ‘The Auld School at the Pun’”, Thomas Given

b) English ‘e’ to Ulster–Scots u

Let [lɛt] rather than lut as is usual in the literary record.

“Let’s drink a bumper o’ the best” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
“Or let it rive” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle
“As if they grieve’d to let her gang.” — ‘Crochan Hill — A Scotch Sang’, The Ulster Miscellany
“Who ne'er wad let us meet the gither” — ‘The Gartan Courtship’, The Ulster Miscellany
“Wad hardly let a haet be heard.” — ‘The Wanderer’, James Orr
“We needna let it dally” — ‘Written the Next Morning’, Hugh Porter
“A sang we may a’ let alane.” — ‘A Song for February’, Thomas Given
“An’ juist niver let on you.” — ‘Toothache’, Agnes Kerr

It is of course also possible that lut represents the past–tense form luit [lɪt] (vowel 7), with a
/ʌ/ realisation owing to an Irish substrate.

War rather than wur. The traditional literary form is war. The /ʌ/ realisation represents the
unstressed form in colloquial speech.
“Ye’d thocht ae time my guts war churnin’” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

c) English ‘ea’ To Ulster–Scots ei

This is usually vowel 3. See part 2, section d, ‘Shared English and Ulster–Scots words with different spelling systems’, above.

The usual literary spelling is <ei> in heid, breid, deid, as suggested. Threid and deif rather than threed and deef.

“Sets his heid tae the side, wi’ its feathers agee” — ‘A Song for February’, Thomas Given

“She weir nane noo, sure onyways”

“If he’s alive, sin’ if he’s deid” — ‘The Magic X’, James Mullan

Heard rather than heerd because the infinitive is hear [hiːr]. Forming the past tense regularly would give heard [hiːrd] (heerd), although it may also be haurd [hɑːrd].

“The blythest lilts that e’er my lugs heard sung.” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat

“As wives wad be, wha’d see, or hear” — ‘To A Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore

“The fields wad ring to hear him sing” — ‘Answer to Burns’ ‘Lovely Jean’, Hugh Porter

“Wad hardly let a haet be heard.” — ‘The Wanderer’, James Orr

“Tae hear o’ witty tales or cracks” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“Heard ye no tell o’ Stumpy’s Brae” — ‘Stumpy’s Brae’, Frances Alexander

Beasts rather than beece, which is a phonetic dialect spelling of beasts showing the simplification of the final cluster /sts/ in the plural beasts. As is usual for vowel 3, beast, may have /i/ or /e/.

“Thou feeds our beasts o’ ilka kin’” — ‘To the Potato’, James Orr

“Till mony a wife was chang’d tae beast” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“Noo a’ the beasts aboot the hoose” — ‘The Magic X’, James Mullan

d) English ‘ea’ to Ulster–Scots ai

This is usually an underlying vowel 3. See Part 2 ‘Representation of vowel sounds’, section d, above.

Rear, beard, meal, seat, sheaf, cheat, treat, beat and meat rather than rair, baird, mail, sait, shaif, chait, trait, bate and mate, but maisles,

“Than o’ his meat” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat

“May milk and meal ne’er fail ye”

“Ye hae been better treated” — ‘Tit for Tat; or the Rater Rated’, The Ulster Miscellany

“Wha here first rear’d ye.” — ‘To the Potato’, James Orr
“The ragged coat, an’ hamely meal” — ‘Fragment of an Epistle to Mr W.H.D—’, James Orr
“Cam’ at the hour, tho’ win’ an’ rain beat sair” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr
“Their seats maun be cushioned” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“In quest o’ meat!” — ‘The Auld Wife’s Lament for her Teapot’, David Herbison
“An’ figid’ wink’d at Bess tae treat”
“They beat the fern, the scrog, an’ scaur” — ‘Dodderly Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“Tae meal this day.” — ‘The Weaver Question’, Thomas Given
“The beaten pad an’ freenly grove” — ‘The Auld School at the Pun’, Thomas Given
“I niver get a bite o’ meat” — ‘The Old Man and the Cat’, Agnes Kerr

However, underlying vowel 3 does not occur root-finally, as tea is a later addition to the language from the Amoy word tê, so the word should be spelt tea rather than tay. The <ea> represented the [teː] realisation at the time the word entered the language. Later sound shifts led to the [tiː] realisation elsewhere. As vowel 3 can be represented by <ea>, the spelling tea is adequate. Native speakers know how to pronounce it.

“Wi’ tea, ye’r chief diversion” — ‘Tit for Tat; or the Rater Rated’, The Ulster Miscellany
“Or else if ye cleek up, an’ toss my delft tea cup” — ‘The Spae-Wife’, James Orr
“The wee drap tea” — ‘The Auld Wife’s Lament for her Teapot’, David Herbison

Hert rather than hairt, as that usually has vowel 16 /ɛ/. The literary spelling for it is usually <e>. However, for some speakers, hairt would also be phonologically accurate.

The spelling wake (weak) contradicts the spelling waik suggested above. Waik has vowel 4 and, as suggested above, is usually spelled waik.

e) English ‘e’ and ‘ea’ to Ulster-Scots a

This refers to vowel 17, usually spelt <a>.

Wall rather than wal.
Dwallin, waddin, wab, twal, wat, wather and walth as suggested.

“Three twal months sine fortall his deed” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
“To strip my wab o’ life.” — ‘Epistle to S Thomson of Carngranny’
“Had I your walth, I hame wad tak’ wi’ me” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr
“To speak about a wadin’ day” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter
“And cut, o’ my guid wab, a bout” — ‘To a Mouse’, David Herbison
“It aften strike’s twal, whan it shudna strike twa” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“Will to your dwalin’ homage pay” — ‘Epistle to Francis Boyle’, John Meharg
“But ane, an’ that’s the wadin’ way” — ‘Dodderly Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“In wather dry or drackey” — ‘Poetical Epistle tae Cullybackey Auld Nummer’, Thomas Given
Walcome rather than walcum. Come is the usual literary spelling. The spelling cum is characteristic of (eye) dialect writing.

“Come, tak your bicker, never think” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
“Come furth, and stretch your limbs a while” — ‘The Garvan Couthship’, The Ulster Miscellany
“Be meek; an’ firm whan crosses come your road” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr
“The day is come, my bonny bride” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter

Wrastle rather than wrassle, which simply shows the simplification of the cluster <stl> to /sl/ and is characteristic of pseudo-phonetic dialect writing.

“To tell me how ye wrastle thro’” — ‘Epistle to S Thomson of Carngranny’, James Orr

Such simplification of the cluster <stl> also occurs in other words.

“Cou’d whistle back an auld dead wife frae hell” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat
“By biggin’ castles in the air” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore
“O, nestle close aside my heart” — ‘The True Heart’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong

As suggested, the traditional literary form is whan, an /ʌ/ realisation perhaps being the unstressed form or having arisen by analogy with vowel 15 after <w(h)>.

“Whan chieals wha grudg’d to be sae tax’d” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“Wha’s e’e soon fills whan told about the pain” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr
“Whan I was a boy in my ain native toun.” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“Aye whan our theme’s a bonny lass” — ‘Epistle to Francis Boyle’, John Meharg
“But whan he keekit ower the wa’” — ‘Jamie Smith and the Grogan’, W. Clarke Robinson

Whether rather than whather. Forms with /ɪ/ or /ʌ/ may be unemphatic or occur by analogy with vowel 15 after <w(h)>.

“But whether this account be true” — ‘To a hedgehog’, Samuel Thomson
“He’s flitted, an’ whether for waaur or for better” — ‘An Epitath on a Miser’, C. K. Pooler

Help rather than halp. The form halp may be an archaism from Hiberno- or Mid-Ulster English.

“For if they crav’d his help in time o’ need” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr
“Wi’ the help o’ an Eastern breeze” — ‘Stumpy’s Brae’, Frances Alexander
“She’ll help ye, whaivver ye be” — ‘Miss Maud’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong

*Whaur* rather than *whar* (where), which indicates a merger of vowels 12 and vowel 17. The underlying phoneme is vowel 12 (/ɑː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect), usually spelt <au> initially and medially. The literary form is *whaur*.

“A mug, fae *whaur* the ear is pairted” — ‘A Poor Man’s Petition’, Andrew McKenzie
“That *whaur* the Tory chieftain fell” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“THE snug wee hoosie *whaur* she lees” — ‘The Invalid’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong

*Shade*, as suggested, has vowel 4 /e/, and is usually spelt <a–e> initially and medially.

**Words spelt with the vowel ‘i’ in English**

a) English ‘i’ to Ulster–Scots i

*King* and *pin* rather than *king* and *pin*. This is vowel 15, which has traditionally been presented by the grapheme <i> in literary Scots from Ulster. Native speakers will habitually pronounce it /ɪ/, so there is no need for any innovation. <i> cannot be confused with any other possible pronunciation, since it is usually /ɪ/. The introduction of <i> appears to be no more than an excuse to be different from English (and Scots). The forms *keeng* and *peen* with vowel 2 may also occur.

*Sax* rather than *six*. Six may be a Mid–Ulster English loan; the traditional Scots form is *sax* (vowel 17).

“Then ilka day in *sax* hours gaun” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle

*Quat* rather than *quät*. The <ä>, a suggested alternative spelling for the vowel realised /ɪ/, contradicts the suggestion to use <i>. The result is that three possible spellings for vowel 15, <i>, <ä> and <i>, are suggested where one would suffice. The last is the only one ever to have occurred in traditional literature.

Both *quit* and *quat* forms exist.

“Ha! Crummy, ha! trowth I man *quat* my sang” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat

*Meenistry* rather than *männystrie*, as it would normally have vowel 2 in Scots, usually spelt <ee>. The <ä> represents /ɪ/, a Mid–Ulster English realisation; the following <y> is no better a representation of the vowel than the traditional <i>. Some may think that the <y> has been used for comic effect. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘i’ in English, section c, English ‘i’ to Ulster–Scots ee, below.
“Is it at the deveesion o’ the land a’ll get it” — ‘Betsy Grey’ W. G. Lyttle
“tak a drap o’ this tae rise yer speerits” — ‘Daft Eddy’ W. G. Lyttle
“let the meenister ken” — ‘The Auld Meetin’ Hoose Green’ Archibald M’Ilroy

b) ‘i’ after ‘w’ or ‘wh’ spelt with u

Witch, Willie, wind, whin, switch and whistle rather than whutch, Wullie, wun, swutch and whussle, since those words have an underlying vowel 15. The realisation /ʌ/ after <w(h)> is predictable but not universal. Since the /ʌ/ realisation will be produced habitually by those native speakers that have it, there is no need for <u> in a literary orthography. Using <u> would be characteristic of phonetic dialect writing. See Part 2, section a, The short ‘i’ represented by i, above.

The Scots cognate of which is whilk.

“Nor Habby’s drone, cou’d with thy wind–pipe please”
“Cou’d whistle back an auld dead wife frae hell” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat
“but whilk in whilk, let fate decide.” — ‘The Gout and The Flea’, The Ulster Miscellany
“On some auld whin or thorn accurst” — ‘To a Hedgehog’, Samuel Thomson
“Her ban or switch” — ‘Elegy on a Loquacious Old Woman’, Sarah Leech
“The Witch–bush–bog, an’ a’ sae black”
“The burn that Willie’s mill’s weel feedin’”
“A whimper mair’ll ruin a’” — ‘Doddery Willowaím’, Robert Huddleston
“And white wi’ foam and black wi’ wind” — ‘Stumpy’s Brae’, Frances Alexander

c) English ‘i’ Ulster Scots ee

Leeve, seek, sweel, jeeg as suggested, with vowel 2, usually spelt <ee>.

Eediot reflects its Latin origin from idiota better than eedyit. Native speakers know how to pronounce it.

Sweem as suggested. Another Scots form, soum, also exists.

“On the tip–toe o’ hope to auld Leezie gae jeegin’” — ‘Leezie M’Minn’, Samuel Turner
“O, happier leeve the wee–bit birds” — ‘The Wanderer’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong
“Then meat tae gar the wee yins leeve” — ‘The Weaver Question’, Thomas Given

Many Romance words have vowel 2. Where it was represented in traditional literary writing, <ee> was invariably used.

“Words of Romance origin retain this vowel [i] in Sc.” (Grant and Dixon 1921: 41)

Peety as suggested.
Airtifeecial and parteecular rather than artyfeecial and parteeklar. The <y> in artyfeecial may give the impression of being used for comic effect.

"Noo hear the pair man’s peetious wane" — ‘A Poor Man’s Petition’, Andrew McKenzie
"what has led me intil this pheelosophy" — ‘The Repealer Repulsed’, William M’Comb
“there’s a sma’ error I maun crave leeberty to correct”
"whilk ye ken is just a ceevil name for robbery” — ‘Letter II’, William M’Comb
“tak a drap o’ this tae rise yer speerits” — ‘Daft Eddy’, W. G. Lyttle
“I’ll be for iver ableeged tae ye” — ‘Readings by Robin’, W. G. Lyttle
"let the meenister ken" — ‘The Auld Meetin’ Hoose Green’ Archibald M’Iroy
“Ye’ll see nae veessions in thon gless, A doo’t." — ‘The Elder's Experience: The Haunted Glen’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong

Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English

a) English ‘o’ to Ulster–Scots a or ai

English ‘o’ to Ulster–Scots a

Stane, hame and bane as suggested, with vowel 4, usually spelt <a–e> initially and medially.

“I think I hear the hail–stanes rattling yet” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat
“stumping about on the banes o’ his knees” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
“And tend your squeakin pups at hame” — ‘To a Hedgehog’, Samuel Thomson
“Na, haste ye hame; ye ken ye’ll ’scape” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“Tae bring hame luxuries tae me” — ‘A Poor Man’s Petition’, Andrew McKenzie
“On cauld flags o’ whin stane to hae a while’s chat” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“And elf–shot stanes your kye ne’er blight” — ‘Address to Lettregull’, Sarah Leech
“An’ stanes fu’ mony, mony brained.”
“I’m sure ye kent that your aul’ banes” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“An’ new gat hame” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston
“stumping about on the banes o’ his knees” — ‘Stumpy’s Brae’, Frances Alexander
“Gees his neb a bit dicht on a stane” — ‘A Song for February’, Thomas Given
“Sae bide at hame an’ keep yer moss” — ‘The Bee and the Stane’, David Cunningham

Ane rather than yin. The traditional literary form is ane. The [jin] realisation arose in some dialects owing to the stress falling on the second vowel of an earlier form [ian] so that the first vowel became weak and eventually became [j]. In some dialects that also occurred in words such as ale and aits (oats). The literary spelling ane, pronounced [jin], can be seen as analogous to Standard English one pronounced [wʌn] rather than rhyming with bone. It is something that literate native speakers master effortlessly.

“As ane wad wish, just a’ beneath my ee” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat
"Why do the POETS, ane an’ a” — ‘To the Criticks’, The Ulster Miscellany

“Ilk ane his house — there ye maun bide” — ‘The Gout and the Flea’, The Ulster Miscellany

“Ane half, alas! wad fear’d to face” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr

“Then, in hîn–hairst, when wee an’ big ane” — ‘To the Potato’, Hugh Porter

“Are bachelors baith ane and a” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter

“When this ane calves, and that ane’s dry” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of Ireland’, John McKinley

“Ane her children ane and a’. — ‘The Irish Widow’s Lament’, David Herbison

“Betocken’t that Nannie wad never get ane.” — ‘Leezie M’Minn’, Samuel Turner

“When younkers scamper, ane by ane” — ‘Address to a Cricket’, Sarah Leech

“Ye bachelors baith ane and a” — ‘Address to a Bachelor’, Sarah Leech

“But spun by ane frae loom or pleugh” — ‘An Epistle to Francis Boyle’, John Meharg

“By ane sae vile, the plague o’ caddies” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

“And aff tae Hell the base ane flappit” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“if ye meet ane there as daylight flees” — ‘Stumpy’s Brae’, Frances Alexander

“Mair aft than ony ane.” — ‘The Wee Lassie’s First Luve’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong

“It’s guid when ane is growin’ auld” — ‘The Bee and the Stane’, David Cunningham

Ae [e] is the adjectival form before nouns. It may be realised [je].

“AE windy day last owk, I’ll ne’er forget” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat

“Ae Sunday ev’ning, after mass” — ‘The Gout and the Flea’, The Ulster Miscellany

“To town ae morn, as Lizzie hie’d” — ‘The Hawk and the Weazle’, Samuel Thomson

“Gif thou’d withdraw for ane camping” — ‘To the Potato’, James Orr

“In ae short sentence — serve baith man an’ God.” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr

“What e’en ae night can bring about?” — ‘Written the Next Morning’, Hugh Porter

“They pray’d to ae God, and in peace pass’d awa” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison

“Wi’ ae request o’ mine agree” — ‘Epistle to Francis Boyle’, John Meharg

“Ye’d thocht ae time my guts war churnin’” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

“Ae day a bee and an auld, grey stane” — ‘The Bee and the Stane’, David Cunningham

The adverbial form is ance, a regular formation from ane. That may be realised [jïns] or [jïnst], the latter often spelt yinst in deliberate dialect writing.

“It happen’t ance in Donaghadee” — ‘Hornbook’s Ghaist’, Francis Boyle

“An’ only “kiss the cup” an’ hardly ance break bread.” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr

“Ance mair death bother’t, thank ye, thank ye” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

“Again it comes, ay, ane, twice, thrice” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

Muive, which has vowel 7, rather than mave. The spelling mave represents the long realistion [meːv] before /v/ (in North Antrim and North–east Londonderry the general
realisation of vowel 7). See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section h, English ‘oo’ to Ulster Scots ui, below.

English ‘o’ to Ulster-Scots ai

Saip, raip, baith, claiith, maist and mair as suggested. Although there is an underlying vowel 4, early merger with vowel 8 led to the literary spelling <ai> becoming established.

“That baith paid weel, and counted fair” — ‘An Elegy’, Willaim Starrat
“But yet mair famous for his cures” — ‘Hornbook’s Ghaist’, Francis Boyle
“Steal out, my dear, and slip them baith.” — ‘The Gartan Courtship’, The Ulster Miscellany
“A braid–claiith coat I aw ye” — ‘Tit for Tat; or the Rater Rated’, The Ulster Miscellany
“An’ want baith taste an’ skill.” — ‘Epistle to S Thomson of Carngranny’, James Orr
“Before the looking–glass a claiith they cast” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr

“In tryin’ times, maist folk, you’ll fin’” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“Mair lown,” quo’ she — “thir’s woefu’ times!” — ‘The Wanderer’, James Orr
“But part o’ baith mix’d up thegither”
“At least mak mair o’t for the money” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter
“An’ thief an’ liar baith he made him” — ‘Epitath for the Same’, George Dugall
“Wi’ conscience than his face mair black” — ‘An Epistle — To The Crochan Bard’, David Colhoun

“Baith milk an’ butter” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of Ireland’, John McKinley
“Baith but and ben.” — ‘The Auld Wife’s Lament for her Teapot’, David Herbison
“And something mair” — ‘To a Mouse’, David Herbison
“Baith black an’ green.” — ‘My Auld Mither’s Address’, Joseph Carson
“As brave a lad as e’er wore claiith”
“Wi’ mair o’ bogles, an’ sic craft” — ‘Dodderly Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“Queels maun be wun when claiith is wroucht”
“Nae mair this day.” — ‘The Weaver Question’, Thomas Given
“Guid–bye tae ye neebours, I’ll noo say nae mair” — ‘The Weaver’s Triumph’, Edward Sloan
“An’ gaithered moss baith nicht an’ day” — ‘The Bee and the Stane’, David Cunningham

b) English ‘o’ to Ulster-Scots a

Sab, lang, aff, drag and shap as suggested, with vowel 17, usually spelt <a>.
Appen rather than apen, which may suggest [epan].
Saften rather than saffen because inflected forms generally keep the root form. The spelling saffen is characteristic of dialect writing.

“Lang e’er he deed.” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
“And thrave sou saft, on drams, and wine.” — ‘The Gout and the Flea’, The Ulster Miscellany
“But safely whisper’d in his ear” — ‘Simkin’, Samuel Thomson
“Hae we been mute sae lang” — ‘Epistle to S Thomson of Carngranny’, James Orr
“A drag o’ milk tae them we add” — ‘A Poor Man’s Petition’, Andrew McKenzie
"'For flesh an' bluid can bear nae langer" — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter
"His sighs and his sabs are unheard by the crew" — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
"Tae bed the cobler aff was bore"
"Unto a cobbler’s shap careerin’.” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

*Wha and twa* as suggested. This is is vowel 12 (/əː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect). *Wha* and *twa* are the established literary spellings. Part 3, Long ‘a’ represented by á, aa and aw, below.

"*Wha* o’ his drink took far more care" — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
"*Twa* or three days in Hornbook’s care” — ‘Hornbook’s Ghaist’, Francis Boyle
"The *twa* auld wives ayont the fire” — ‘The Gartan Courtship’, *The Ulster Miscellany*
"As wife’s wad be, *wha*’d see, or hear"
"But we *twa* will hae haudins there” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore
"His thrapple ate in *twa*” — ‘The Hawk and the Weazle’, Samuel Thomson
"The leuks o’ wheens *wha* stay’d behin’” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
"*Wha* fain our necks wad tread” — ‘Written the Next Morning’, Hugh Porter
"Anither page or *twa* o’ paper” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter
"*Wha*’ scoured the muirs, through swan and sleet” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of Ireland’, John McKinley
"O’, *wha* the wife could wyte, or blame” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
"As catch yoursel’ a moose or *twa*” — ‘The Old Man and the Cat’, Agnes Kerr

c) English ‘o’ and ‘oe’ to Ulster–Scots ae

*Tae* and *dae* as suggested. Both have vowel 7, <ae> representing the long realisation. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section h, English ‘oo’ to Ulster Scots ui, below. The spelling <ui> in final positions never established itself in literary Scots. It was the *tae* and *dae* spellings representing the typical Central Scots realisation whose written forms that eventually established themselves.

"*Tae* furnish it nae flocks o’ geese” — ‘A Poor Man’s Petition’, Andrew McKenzie
"Stan’ teughly *tae* the healin’ trade"
"*Dae* ye intend that chaps like me” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston
"Is nou aboot *tae* go” — ‘The Auld School and the Pun’ Thomas Given
"Fareweel *tae* ye, Robin; adieu *tae* your foreman” — ‘The Weaver’s Triumph’, Edward Sloan
"It isna *tae* be compared” — ‘Toothache’, Agnes Kerr
"What will I *dae* wi’ you ava?” — ‘The Old Man and the Cat’, Agnes Kerr

*Sae, nae, gae, tae* (toe), *wae* and *fae* as suggested. All have vowel 4, usually spelt <ae> root–finally.

"To Canigate *sae* gash thy gab–trees gang” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat
"*Nae* ill he said, but bad the neist” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
“Sae, bonny Jenny, are ye there?” — ‘The Gartan Courtship’, *The Ulster Miscellany*
“Nae money ye shall get frae me” — ‘Simkin’, Samuel Thomson
“We’ll mak’ nae fire; the picquet bauld”
“I wad preserve my greatest fae” — ‘The Wanderer’, James Orr
“For flesh an’ bluid can bear nae langer” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter
“Sae for your credit dinna speak o’t.”
“An’ scrapes an’ worries Peggy’s taes” — ‘With a Little Dog’, George Dougall
“Meets nae return but aye a sneer” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of Ireland’, John McKinley
“Nae pride was amang us, nae boastin’ o’ gear” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“That wad sae spite her.” — ‘Address to Bachelors’, Sarah Leech
“May wae befa’ them, that would gie” — ‘Address to a Cricket’, Sarah Leech
“E’en let them gae” — ‘Epistle to Francis Boyle’, John Meharg
“By ane sae vile, the plague o’ caddies”
“Nae dou’t but it will gar ye smile” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

**d) English ‘oa’ to Ulster-Scots *oa***

The spelling <oa> usually represents an underlying vowel 5.

*Lost, loss, born, cost, corn, boag, rock, pocket* rather than *lost, loass, boarn, coast, coarn, boag, roak, and poaket*, which have vowel 18 /ɔ/, usually spelt <o>. The use of <oa> is a phonetic (eye) dialect spelling illustrating how some dialects merge vowel 18 with vowel 5 /oː/. The spelling <oa> was extremely rare for an underlying vowel 18 in literary Scots. Native speakers who merge vowel 18 and vowel 5 will habitually produce an /oː/ realisation

“It seems ye hae been born in lent” — ‘To Disapointment’, Hugh Porter
“I hae a pickle groats o’ corn” — ‘To a Redbreast’, John McKinley
“Whaur the rock-abysses deepen” — ‘Macananty’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong
“Gin I get nane its nae great loss” — ‘The Bee and the Stane’, David Cunningham

**Collie**, the established literary spelling, rather than the (eye) dialect *coalie*. **Collie** comes from the Older Scots for coal, i.e. black. **Coalie** would be a consistent, if unrecognisable, regularised Modern Scots spelling.

“Some paidlin’ collie on the trodge” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

**Dog** rather than **doag**. The Scots form is usually **dug** with vowel 19.

“Wae worth the silly worthless dug” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

**e) English ‘ow’ to Ulster–Scots –owe**

**Growe** as suggested, and **bowl** rather than **bowle**. This is vowel 13 /əʊ/. The digraph <ow> is usually used initially and medially and <owe> root–finally.
“And lanesome Ringwood yowls upon the brae.” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat

“Poor silly gowks” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle

“Mair lown,” quo’ she — “thir’s woefu’ times!” — ‘The wanderer’, James Orr

“They’ll grunt, an’ grane, an’ greet, an’ glower” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter

“Wi’ ourie rotw an’ empty wame” — ‘Descriptive Fragment’, George Dougall

“Despoilin’ your coffers o’ gowd and o’ gear” — ‘Leezie M’Minn’, Samuel Turner

“And dowie I am left alane” — ‘Address to a Cricket’, Sarah Leech

“Frae Willie’s howe tae Ebby’s thorn” — ‘The Gartan Coutship’, The Ulster Miscellany

“No’ just sae dear, but rhymin’ brither s” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter

“His mither’s o’ the terrier breed” — ‘With a Little Dog’, George Dugall

“Tither as suggested, usually in the collocation ‘the tither’.

“I doubt ye darna for ye’r mither” — ‘The Gartan Coutship’, The Ulster Miscellany

“They pass by weans an’ mithers” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr

“No’ just sae dear, but rhymin’ brithers” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter

“Anither, yet anither dram” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“Anither ane runs in the race” — ‘The Magic X’, James Mullan

And aye the tither cup they’re drainin’” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

Sin certainly represents a common realisation of son. However, differentiation of the homophones son, sun, sin and sin (since) should perhaps be considered.
g) English 'ow' and 'ou' to Ulster-Scots oo

Toun, cou, broun, nou, allou, croun, flouer, poover and doun rather than toon, coo, broon, noo, alloo, crun, flouer, poover and doon. Those have vowel 6 /ü/. The traditional Scots spelling is <ou>. The spelling <oo> is a dialect spelling borrowed from Standard English, where it usually represents the Standard English outcome of what became vowel 7 in Scots.

“Ambition and folly wad imp at the croun”
“Or sad times we'll hae in my ain native toun.”
“And dear they will be till my banes are laid doun” — 'My Ain Native Toun', David Herbison
“Nou grammal at display.” — 'The Auld School at the Pun', Thomas Given

Craw, blaw, snaaw and raw rather than craa, blaa, snaa and ra. Those have vowel 12 (/aː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect), which is usually spelt <aw> root–finally in literary Scots. The spelling <aa> usually occurred only in deliberate dialect writing aiming to represent the realisation in Northern and Insular dialects. The use of <aa> here may indicate a merger of vowel 12 with vowel 17.

“Frae rain an' snaaw” — 'On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman', Francis Boyle
“I rise e'er the cocks craw day” — 'Tit for Tat; or the Rater Rated', The Ulster Miscellany
“Folk wha lay list'ning 'till the cock wad craw” — ‘The Irish Cottier's Death and Burial’, James Orr
“The gentle breezes blaw” — ‘Answer to Burns' ‘Lovely Jean”, Hugh Porter
“See roun’ the ingle, in a raw”
“When surly winter 'gins to blaw
An robe himself wi' frost and snaaw” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of Ireland’, John McKinley
“Far, far awa, frae lands o' snaaw.” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

English 'ou' to Ulster-Scots oo

The spelling <oo> is a dialect spelling borrowed from Standard English, where it usually represents the Standard English outcome of what is now vowel 7 in Scots. The traditional literary Scots spelling of vowel 6 /ü/ is <ou>. However, in the words below the resulting spelling may now imply a Standard English realisation so there is some justification for the use of <oo>.

Clood, aboot, oot, oor, hoose, moose, mooth and cooncil as suggested.
Roond rather than roon. See Part 4, Modified Consonants, section n, 'Loss of final ‘–d’ in ‘–nd’ words, below.

“While Doddery gaped wi' mooth an’ een” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“An' she's tender wi' man' wi' moose” — ‘Miss Maud’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong
“Yet sure the auld scenes o' oor youth” — ‘The Auld School at the Pun’, Thomas Given
“And shut their mooth.” — 'Poetical Epistle tae Cullybackey Auld Nummer', Thomas Given
“Day in an’ day oot on his auld farrant loom” — ‘A Song for February’, Thomas Given
“It was but yestreen I had oot my bit claith, man” — ‘The Weaver’s Triumph’, Edward Sloan
“They murned aboot the bump” — ‘The Bicycle’, Adam Lynn
“Noo a’ the beasts aboot the hoose”
“Of coarse they didna see the singin’ moose” — ‘The Magic X’, James Mullan
“‘Ere he spak’ oot.” — ‘A Country Lad’s Observations at the Hiring Fair in Ballymena’, Adam Lynn
“As catch yoursel’ a moose or twa” — ‘The Old Man and the Cat’, Agnes Kerr

Dout rather than doot. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section g, English ‘ow’ and ‘ou’ to Ulster–Scots oo, above.

“Nae dou’t but it will gar ye smile” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

Plou rather than ploo, an elided form of pleuch, arguably with vowel 6.


Sowel rather than sowl (a person, i.e. a soul). Saul, the soul in a spiritual sense. Sowl would, however, be acceptable.

h) English ‘oo’ to Ulster Scots ui

The spelling <ui> became the established literary spelling for vowel 7 except before /k/ and /x/. An alternative Older Scots spelling <u–e> may also be found in Scots literature, especially where the vowel occurs before nasals. The <oo> spelling from Standard English cognates also occurred.

In Mid Antrim, North Ards and North–west Strangford the original /ø/ has merged with vowels 15 (/ɪ̈/) in short positions and vowel 4 (/e/) in long positions. In North Antrim and North–east Londonderry, especially before /n/ and /l/, mergers with vowel 4 often occur, and in Donegal, Magilligan, the Mid Ards, and West Strangford, mergers with vowel 2 (/i/) also occur. In Mid–Ulster English cognates before /r/, /ü/ may occur in words such as floor and board.

Buit, guid, guiss, muin, ruit, schuil, puri and bluid as suggested. Stuid and fluir rather than stud and flure.

“As guid as Johnny Ross could mak’” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle
“Guid God! is’t you? fair fa’ ye!” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“Wi’ han’s that reek’t wi’ bluid she’d shed”
“Gaun thro’ the muir awee ere”
“To hear a cuif, whose useless gold” — ‘Epistle to S Thomson of Carngranny’, James Orr
“For flesh an’ bluid can bear nae langer” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter
“The guidman maks and coals the split”
“Wha’ scoured the muirs, through snaw and sleet” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of Ireland’, John McKinley
“As my auld wrinkled, bluidless skin” — ‘The Auld Wife’s Lament for her Teapot’, David Herbison
“An’ sune deil haet ails the puir beastie ava!” — ‘Leezie M’Minn’, Samuel Turner
“Guid faith I hae a min’ tae prent ye” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston
“Wi’ best cluit foremost on he slaps” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“Quo’ she, “Guid man ye needna turn sae pale” — ‘Stumpy’s Brae’ Frances Alexander
“Come hame tae yer puir auld mither” — ‘The Prodigal Son’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong
“O’ puir hoose jaw and vapour” — ‘The Weaver Question’, Thomas Given
“An’ juist niver let on you.” — ‘Toothache’, Agnes Kerr

Beuk, teuk and leuk rather than buik, tuk and luk. The spelling <eu> became the established literary spelling for the outcome of vowel 7 before /k/ and /x/, realised /(j)u/ or /(j)ʌ/ depending on word and/or dialect.

“To slight my leuk"
“In my new beuk.”
“An’ teuk their fees” — ‘Hornbook’s Ghaist’, Francis Boyle
“Dear Reverent sir, here is your pleugh
Her timber’s season’t weel eneugh,
Cut aff the bank aboon the sheugh” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle
“The grace being done, the fellow leugh” — ‘Simkin’, Samuel Thomson
“The leuks in a glass, o’ the loun that’s in faut” — ‘The Spae-Wife’, James Orr
“Some hade, like hens in byre–neuks” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“For this bit Beuk, that’s no worth tippence”
“Wad make it aye leuk something cheaper” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter
“She birls roun’ a cup, an’ she bids ye leuk in.” — ‘Leezie M’Minn’, Samuel Turner
“They hardly please mysel’ eneugh”
“But spun by ane frae loom or pleugh” — ‘Epistle to Francis Boyle’, John Meharg
“Stan’ teughly tae the healin’ trade” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston
“While caul’ December’s cranreuch breath”
“The pleugh maun gae for next year’s corn”
“They search’d ilk neuks, ilk hole an’ bore”
“Ne’er fearin’ sheuhs, or dykes, or gaps” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“Doon’ roon’ Portafarry; an’ on tae Barr cleugh” — ‘The Spectre of Knockdoo’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong

Fit as suggested, with vowel 15. An Irish substrate may result in [fʌt].
Wid (wood) rather than wud. The underlying phoneme is vowel 15. The realisation /ʌ/ after <w(h)> is predictable but not universal. Since the /ʌ/ realisation will be produced habitually
by those native speakers that have it, there is no need for <u> in a literary orthography. Using <u> would be characteristic of phonetic dialect writing.

“That wadna wat her fit for fish” — ‘A Sang for Marriage’, Hugh Porter
“Till ‘thout a staggerin’ fit or faggin’” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“The win’ nigh lifts ye aff yer fit” — ‘The Auld Airds Tramp’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong
“As he spies a bit snaw drop at fit o’ the tree” — ‘A Song for February’, Thomas Given

_Door_ rather than _dure_. Door originally had vowel 18 in Scots. The realisation [dʊər] is most likely from Mid–Ulster English where /ʊ/ occurs before /ɪə/ in words such as floor and board. The spelling _door_ would suffice for both the [dʊər~doːr] and [duːr] realisations.

“Is filled up with poor folk a’maist to the _door_” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“Nane pass’d her _door_ without their dues” — ‘Address to the Bachelors’, Sarah Leech
“As frae the hen house _door_ she steppit” — ‘Doddery Willowiam’, Robert Huddleston
“And gi’ed the _door_ a shake.” — ‘Stumpy’s _Brae_’, Frances Alexander
“Wad open ony _door_.” — ‘The Magic _X_’, James Mullan

_Wad_, the traditional literary spelling rather than _wud_. The underlying phoneme is vowel 17. The /ʌ/ may represent an unemphatic realisation or have arisen by analogy with vowel 15 after w(h). The spelling _wud_ is characteristic of dialect writing.

“I fain _wad_ speak a word or twa”
“Who ne’er _wad_ let us meet the gither” — ‘The Gartan Courtship’, _The Ulster Miscellany_
“As wife’s _wad_ be, wha’d see, or hear” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore
“Wha _wad_ hae bell’d the cat awee”
“Ane half, alas! _wad_ fear’d to face” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“Had I your walth, I hame _wad_ tak’ wi’ me” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr
“But yet _wad_ eat, for a’ that.” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter
“The fields _wad_ ring to hear him sing” — ‘Answer to Burns’ ‘Lovely Jean’”, Hugh Porter
“_Wad_ make it aye leuk something cheaper” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter
“The fields _wad_ ring to hear him sing”
“_Wad_ hardly let a haet be heard.” — ‘The Wanderer’, Robert Huddleston
“Betocken’t that Nannie _wad_ never get ane.” — ‘Leezie M’Minn’, Sarah Leech

_Coud_ and _shoud_ rather than _cud_ and _shud_.

The <l> in Standard English _could_ is a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century addition by analogy with _should_ and _would_. As the <l> in _could_ and _should_ is also silent, those spellings were also employed in literary Scots alongside forms using an apostrophe. An apostrophe–less _coud_ and _shoud_ would suffice for [kʊːd] and [ʃʊːd] with vowel 6. The spellings _cud_ and _shud_ represent the unemphatic pronunciations [kʌd, kʌd] and [ʃʌd, ʃʌd] that occur in colloquial speech. As such they are characteristic of dialect writing.
“Not he wha whilome with his harp cou’d ca’n’ — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat

“Or fear yer **** shou’d be mad cald” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat

“As guid as Johnny Ross could mak’” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle

“Cou’d any saul of sense forbear” — ‘Crohan Hill — A Scotch Sang’, The Ulster Miscellany

“Shou’d court, and fleetch you to be free” — ‘To the Criticks’, The Ulster Miscellany

“This should be fix’d– fause criticks else” — ‘To the Criticks’, The Ulster Miscellany

“Cou’d mak’ a nest sae feat, an’ fair?” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore

“Should rude men wrang ye, to forgie them strive” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr

“I cock’d, like — wha could tell what” — ‘Written Next Morning’, Hugh Porter

“Lest Nick should hae nae fire to gie him” — ‘Epigram on an Honest Gentleman’, George Dugall

“Nor frae him could they keep the jade” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of Ireland’, John McKinley

“Could weel be read.” — ‘To a Mouse’, David Herbison

“Should prowlers by nicht or by day rype your biggin’” — ‘Leezie M’Minn’, Samuel Turner

“Lest he shou’d loss his regal throne” — ‘The Scare-Craw’, Francis Boyle

“What terror wild cou’d us affright?” — ‘Dodderly Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“Some hae succeedit as they should” — ‘The Auld School at the Pun’, Thomas Given

“You cou’d hae dune better by it than by lan’” — ‘The Weaving’, Agnes Kerr


i) English ‘old’ to Ulster-Scots oul

_Auld, cauld and bauld_ rather than _oul, coul and boul_. Those have underlying vowel 12 (/ɑː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect), usually spelt _<au>_ initially and medially. However, in Ulster Scots, diphthongisation to /əu/ may occur before /ld/. The traditional spellings are _auld, bauld_ and _cauld_, the diphthongised realisation conditioned by the following _<ld>_ (/l(d)/) and thus adequately marked by it. The _<ou>_ spelling traditionally represents vowel 6 /i/ in Ulster Scots, and the spellings _oul, coul_ and _boul_ are clearly borrowed from Standard English to represent the /əu/ realisation. That, and the elision of final _<d>_, is characteristic of dialect writing.


“ARE ye strange, frightfu’ chiel, auld Nick” — ‘The Scare-Craw’, Francis Boyle

“The twa auld wives ayont the fire” — ‘The Gartan Courtship’, The Ulster Miscellany

“The cauld house easin'” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore

“On some auld whin or thorn accurst” — ‘To a Hedgehog’, Samuel Thomson

“We’ll mak’ nae fire; the picquet bauld” — ‘The Wanderer’, James Orr

“I aft hae view’d auld Crochan’s side” — ‘An Epistle — To the Crochan Bard’, David Colhoun
“As my auld wrinkled, bluidless skin” — ‘The Auld Wife’s Lament for her Teapot’, David Herbison

“The auld clock is gane wi’ its time–honoured face” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison

“Shame fa’ th’ auld wife ‘twad no’ delight her” — ‘My Auld Mither’s Address’, Joseph Carson

“In the cauld kirk–yard of Raphoe” — ‘Address to Bachelors’, Sarah Leech

“He tauld o’ lovely courtin’ joys” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“That mak’s us bauld ower a’ our ill.” — ‘My Auld Mither’s Address’, Joseph Carson

“In the cauld kirk–yard of Raphoe” — ‘Address to Bachelors’, Sarah Leech

He tauld o’ lovely courtin’ joys” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“That nightly hauld their glamorous routs” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“But, haud a wee! Ye men o’ wealth!” — ‘The Weaver Question’, Thomas Given

“The auld clock is gane wi’ its time–honoured face” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison

“Shame fa’ th’ auld wife ‘twad no’ delight her” — ‘My Auld Mither’s Address’, Joseph Carson

“In the cauld kirk–yard of Raphoe” — ‘Address to Bachelors’, Sarah Leech

“He tauld o’ lovely courtin’ joys” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“That mak’s us bauld ower a’ our ill.” — ‘My Auld Mither’s Address’, Joseph Carson

“In the cauld kirk–yard of Raphoe” — ‘Address to Bachelors’, Sarah Leech

Houl: the traditional Scots form is Haud. The form hould is most likely due to the influence of Mid–Ulster English reversing historical l–vocalisation. Nevertheless, hauld (rather than houl) would follow the established literary tradition.

“But we twa will hae haudins there” — ‘To A Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore

“Haud up the mirror” to the times” — ‘Fragment of an Epistle to Mr W.H.D—’, James Orr

“But haud ye there, Salts bans yeir skill” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

“That nightly haud their glamorous routs” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“But, haud a wee! Ye men o’ wealth!” — ‘The Weaver Question’, Thomas Given

“But haud ye, a jiffey, my potstick-legged callan” — ‘The Weaver’s Triumph’, Edward Sloan

This may vary between /e, i, ɪ̈, ə/, the last being perhaps an unemphatic realisation or an influence from Mid–Ulster English.

It was spelt variously <a>, <ae> or even <ow> in Literary (Ulster) Scots. It might be wise to regularise it to <ae> so that it can encompass both the unemphatic /ə/ and /e, i, ɪ̈/ realisations.

The use of <ae> was certainly common in words such as windae.

“An’ in its windae was a wheen” — ‘The Sweetie–Shop’ in The Ulster Folk, Padric Gregory

Elbae rather than elba.

Fallae and yallae rather than fella and yella; swallae as suggested. All have underlying vowel 17.

Nairae rather than nerra. Underlying vowel 8 /eː/ is usually spelt <ai> initially and medially with Ulster lowering before /r/ to /ɛː/.

Follae rather than fallae, with underlying vowel 18 /ɔ/.

Windae rather than wundae, with underlying vowel 15. The realisation /ʌ/ after <w(h)> is predictable but not universal. Since the /ʌ/ realisation will be produced habitually by those native speakers that have it, there is no need for <u> in a literary orthography. Using <u> would be characteristic of phonetic dialect writing.
Holla: the traditional Scots form is Howe, resulting from Middle Scots v-deletion. See Part 1, section g, Interchangeable ‘v’, ‘u’ and ‘w’, above. Holla is most likely a Mid-Ulster English loan.

“Frae Willie’s howe tae Ebby’s thorn” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

Words spelt with the vowel ‘u’ in English

a) English ‘u’ and ‘ou’ to Ulster–Scots i

Rin, sin and simmer as suggested.
Sin certainly represents a common realisation of sun. However, differentiation of the homophones son, sun, sin and sin (since) should perhaps be considered.

Sich: the traditional Scots from is sic. Sich may be a Mid-Ulster English loan or a hybrid form.

Here the suggestion is to use <i> rather than <ï> although both are used to represent vowel 15. It appears that <i> is only used where the use of <ï> would produce a spelling identical or very similar to that of Standard English. That implies that a hypothetical learner of (Ulster) Scots who had no English would have to gain literacy in English first in order to know how to spell (Ulster) Scots. The frame of reference here is clearly Standard English, undermining the claim that (Ulster) Scots is a language in its own right.

“Sic kilter pat me in a merry mood” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat
“An can prescribe sic dose or pill” — ‘Hornbook’s Ghaist’, Francis Boyle
“This pleugh’s no’ made to rin on wheels” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle
“Yet young beginners, sic as me” — ‘To the Criticks’, The Ulster Miscellany
“On sic a day.”
“By dread to staun, by shame to rin” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“In sic a takin’, weel I wat” — ‘The Wanderer’, James Orr
“For flaes ther’s nae sic thing about him” — ‘With a Little Dog’, George Dougall
“They come in the spring time, they come in the simmer” — ‘Lizzie M’Minn’, Samuel Turner
“Your verses rin as true an’ fine” — ‘Epistle to Francis Boyle’, John Meharg
“Sic wark canna stan’, it maun fade awa soon” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“Sic time as ‘tis man, jump an’ rin”
“Yet roun’ her youthfu’ bloomin’ simmer.”
“On sic like night as we narrate” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

Cup rather than kip, as the underlying phoneme is vowel 19 /ʌ/, usually spelt <u>.

“Or else if ye cleek up, an’ toss my delft tea cup” — ‘The Spae-Wife’, James Orr
“And aye the tither cup they’re drainin’” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
Couple rather than kipple. Couple is the usual spelling, although it does have vowel 19.
b) English ‘u’ to Ulster–Scots ü

This is vowel 19 /ʌ/ usually spelt <u>. It is Standard English that is inconsistent here. Like <ï> above, it appears that <ü> is only used where the use of <u> would produce a spelling identical or very similar to that of Standard English.

*Push, pull, bull and butcher* rather than *püsh, püll, büll and bütcher.*

*Büsh.* The traditional Scots form is *buss.*

*Shügger.* The traditional Scots form is *succar.* *Shuggar* [ˈʃʌɡər] and *suggar* [ˈsʌɡər] are older forms surviving from eighteenth–century English and may be Mid–Ulster English loans.

“Fraught with the strength near of a bull” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“An’ A got sae hard tae push” — ‘The Bicycle’, Adam Lynn

‘The Lint Pullin”’, Adam Lynn

**Loss of final ‘e’ ...**

“The dropping of final ‘–d’ in words like ‘find’ and ‘blind’ → *fin* and *blin* represents an actual vowel sound change in Ulster–Scots.”

That has nothing to do with a vowel sound change. It is nothing more than simplification of the cluster <nd> in colloquial speech. See Part 4, Modified Consonants section n, Loss of final ‘–d’ in ‘–nd’ words, below.

*Tak* and *mak* as suggested.

“To tak’ their mault”

“Come, tak your bicker, never think” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat

“To mak’ them better.” — ‘Horbook’s Ghaist’, Francis Boyle

“Whan ploughmen whiles the hatchet tak” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle

“To tak a morsel, thick or thin” — ‘Simkin’, Samuel Thomson

“Had I your walth, I hame wad tak’ wi’ me”

“An’ stap the lights to mak’ the bield be black” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr

“At least mak’ mair o’t for the money” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter

“I’ll mak you sing a waeful strain” — ‘To a Mouse’, David Herbison

“Had I your walth, I hame wad tak’ wi’ me” — ‘Address to Lettergull’, Sarah Leech

“But this the plan ye tak’ tae sell” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

“Flee! Doddery, flee! mak’ speedy hame”

“That mak’s us bauld ower a’ our ill.”

“He maun it tak’, nor langer tarry, ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“A dose yei’d gie’s tae mak us weel” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

“Folks mak’ their bogies, gods, an’ deils” — ‘Jamie Smith and the Grogan’, W. Clarke Robinson
Daur, wauk and awaur rather than dar, wak and awar, with underlying vowel 12 (/aː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect), usually spelt <au> medially and final. The spellings dar, wak and awar may represent a merger with vowel 17.

Scar as suggested, with underlying vowel 17, usually spelt <a>.

"Fou scar’d, when school-boys chanc’d to stare”
“An’ guile bewaur o” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore
“Brag how they lately did their rivals daur”
“But see what crowds to wauk the Cottier come!”
“For trifles devils disna scar,” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

Wade rather than wad, with vowel 4 /e/. Ulster Lowering may produce /ɛː/.

“Through the floods we hae waded an’ swum” — ‘The Down Sodger’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong

Broke: the traditional Scots form is brak.

“The camp’s brak up. Oware braes, an’ bogs” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr

The past–tense is broke(n).

“Wi’ broken sighs, and ill redd phrase” — ‘Crochan Hill — A Scotch Sang’, The Ulster Miscellany

Also the past–tense form breuk, the [bruk] or [brʌk] realisations shown by the phonetic spelling <u> below.

“Heart–bruck by her lane he’rth–stane!” — ‘The Prodigal Son’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong

Divid (divide) represents an authentic Ulster Scots form.

Time, [tim] is simply an unstressed realisation of time. The spelling tim would be characteristic of dialect writing.

“Ye waste ye’r time awa” — ‘Tit for Tat; or the Rater Rated’, The Ulster Miscellany
“Sometimes he slept, and didna feel” — ‘The Gout and the Flea’, The Ulster Miscellany
“Ephie’s base bairntime, trail–pike brood” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“And auld times return to my ain native toun” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“They come in the spring time, they come in the simmer” — ‘Leezie M’Minn’, Samuel Turner
“I afttimes wunner hoo it comes” — ‘Toothache’, Agnes Kerr
Long ‘a’ represented by á, aa and aw

Awa and twa rather than awá and twá, with vowel 12 (/aː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect), traditionally spelt <a> in those words, as well as in wha and ava. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section b, English ‘o’ to Ulster–Scots a, above. One can only wonder why <á> was ever considered in awá and twá but not in wha and ava?

“Twa or three days in Hornbook’s care” — ‘Hornbook’s Ghais’t’, Francis Boyle
“Ye waste ye’r time awa” — ‘Tit for Tat; or the Rater Rated’, The Ulster Miscellany
“I fain wad speak a word or twa” — ‘The Gartan Courtship’, The Ulster Miscellany
“A day or twa.” — ‘To a Hedgehog’, Samuel Thomson
“An bear awa” — ‘To a Hedgehog’, Samuel Thomson
“Here they’re asleep — an’ there they slip awa’.” — ‘This Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr
“‘Twill drive your wits awa, that.” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter
“Anither page or twa o’ paper” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter
“Its no’ like ban’s ava, that.” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter
“But there ava you wadna rest” — ‘To a Mouse’, David Herbison
“What hell ‘bout devils, ane, twa, three”
“Ah! why man did ye speak ava” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“I maun hurry awa tae rehearsal, quo he” — ‘A Song for February’, Thomas Given
“As catch yoursel’ a moose or twa”
“What will I dae wi’ you ava?” — ‘The Old Man and the Cat’, Agnes Kerr

Long ‘y’ represented by medial ‘y’

Meenister, rideecule, peetifu and sacrifice rather than mannytstèr, ridicule/redycule, peetyfu, and secryfice. Those all have vowel 2 in traditional Scots. The <y> in mannytstèr, ridycule, secryfice may be seen as having been used for comic effect. The <e> in secryfice represents a Mid–Ulster English realisation, whereby /æ/ becomes /ɛ/ before velars.

Many Romance words have vowel 2. Where represented in traditional literary writing, <ee> was invariably used.

“Words of Romance origin retain this vowel [i] in Sc.” (Grant and Dixon 1921: 41)

“Noo hear the pair man’s peetious wane” — ‘A Poor Man’s Petition’, Andrew McKenzie
“A thocht a peetty o’ him” — ‘Paddy McQuillan’, W. G. Lyttle
“Ye’ll see nae veesions in thon gless, A doo’t.” — ‘The Elder’s Experience: The Haunted Glen’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong

Covenanter, residence, accident, barrister, beautifu, manifest, maximum, uniform, massacre and manufactur rather than coveynantèr, resyndence, eccydent, barrister, beautyfu, mannyfest, mexymum, massycrae, unyform and mannyfectèr.
The spellings with <y> may be seen as having been used for comic effect. The <e> in *eccydent, mexymum* and *mannyfectèr* represent a Mid–Ulster English realisation, whereby /æ/ becomes /ɛ/ before velars. A final <tur> in *manufactur* would reflect the etymology better. See Part 5, Representation of the [yih] sound, section d, Words ending ‘–ture’, below.

*Crucyfie* rather than *crucyfie*. Traditional Scots has final <-fee> with vowel 11 usually spelt <ee>.

“[…] in the pronunciation of older people (fi, fi ), but with the more modernised (fei) or (fei); terrify, older (tær´afi), newer (tær´i fei).” (Murray 1873: 136)

*Animal* rather than *annymal*. Perhaps *ainimal*.

**Long ‘o’ to Ulster–Scots ó**

*Road, boat, coat* and *toast* rather than *róad, bóat, cóat* and *tóast*. Those have underlying vowel 5 /oː/. The disyllabic realisation will be produced habitually by native speakers who have it.

”A braid–claih *coat* I aw ye” — ‘Tit for Tat; or the Rater Rated’, *The Ulster Miscellany*

”Be meek; an’ firm whan crosses come your *road*” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’

”The ragged *coat*, an’ namely meal” — ‘Fragment of an Epistle to Mr W.H.D—’, James Orr

”Our *coats* were hame spun, and our sarks were the same” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison

”Amang the first you tossed your *coat*” — ‘Poetical Epistle tae Cullybackey Auld Nummer’, Thomas Given

*Góat*. The traditional Scots form is *gait*, with underlying vowel 4 /eː/. However, early merger with vowel 8 /e/ established the literary spelling *gait*.

**Part 4**

**Modified Consonants**

a)  *Ch* for English ‘gh’

Older Scots used <ch> for /x/. Both it and <gh> both occur in Modern Scots. However, <ch> became more prevalent because it better emphasised the Scots /x/ realisation. As /x/ only occurs medially and finally, initial <ch> /tʃ/ cannot be confused with it. Elsewhere /tʃ/ is more often than not spelt <tch>. The cluster <nch> is realised as /ŋʃ/.

*Nicht, richt, ticht, licht, bricht* and *sicht* as suggested. *Hicht* rather than *heicht* to show the actual pronunciation.

“Should prowlers by *nicht* or by day rype your biggin”” — ‘Leezie M’Minn’, Samuel Turner

“The *nicht* is set ye ken again.”
“An’ ticht the stirrup ower them laced” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“He’ll no’ be here the nicht.” — ‘Stumpy’s Brae’, Frances Alexander
“An’ here’s we hae mony mair big nichts as this is”
“I’ll stand on my feet that ye’ll a’ get a sicht o’ me” — ‘Air — A Wee Drap o’ Whiskey’, Samuel Fee Given

“By nicht or day.” — ‘The Auld School at the Pun’, Thomas Given
“The nichts are dreich an’ lang.” — ‘Winter’, David Cunningham
“I’m a’ richt here an’ here I’ll bide”
“But what suits you micht no’ suit me” — ‘The Bee and the Stane’, David Cunningham
“They tramp me left an’ richt”
“Thereir feet micht touch the mire.” — ‘The Bicycle’, Adam Lynn
“But I ken richt weil if the A.B.C.”

“I micht coont up the length o’ ten” — ‘The Magic X’, James Mullan
“I’m no’ juist the auldest, an’ I min’ richt weil” — ‘The Weaving’, Agnes Kerr
“Seemed somethin’ held it tichtly!” — ‘Jamie Smith and the Grogan’, W. Clarke Robinson

An established literary spelling is echt, though realisation with vowel 4 /e/ exist. Ulster lowering may produce /ɛː/.

*Bocht, brocht, roch, wrocht* and *ocht* as suggested.

*Dochtèr* rather than *dochtèr*.

“Ye’d thocht ae time my guts war churnin’” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston
“Could nocht e’en dae to please a lass” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“FLOWER dochter in deein’ the lord o’ Knockreagh” — ‘Miss Maud’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong
“Should a’ oor noble thochts engage” — ‘Poetical Epistle tae Cullybackey Auld Nummer’, Thomas Given

“Sees nocht but rivers in a spate” — ‘Winter’, David Cunningham
“I aye wrocht on the same auld way” — ‘The Bee and the Stane’, David Cunningham

“An’ brocht me intae fame.” — ‘The Bicycle’, Adam Lynn

*Fecht* and *wecht* as suggested.

*Heich* as suggested, with vowel 2, <ei> is the usual spelling before <ch> /x/.

“The nichts are dreich an’ lang.” — ‘Winter’, David Cunningham

*Eneuch* and *teuch* as suggested. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section h, English ‘oo’ to Ulster Scots ui, above.

“Fair eneuch ye be” — ‘The Temptress’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong

“Juist eneuch for tae keep you twa days oot o’ debt.” — ‘The Weaving’, Agnes Kerr
Lauch rather than lach, with vowel 12 (/əː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect). The spelling lach may represent a merger of vowel 12 with vowel 17.

“Wha wad not laugh to hear him sing” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
“An’ laugh at a’ the sons o’ care” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore
“Frea laughin scarcely fit” — ‘Simkin’, Samuel Thomson
“At them I aft laugh till my sides like to split” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“The robin gets up an’ he lauchs in his glee” — ‘A Song for February’, Thomas Given

Straucht rather than strecht. However, the latter may be a local variant.

“But what wi’ straught rais’t raws can tally” — ‘To the Potato’, James Orr
“An’ straught fornent the gibbet moat” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

b) English ‘s’ to Ulster–Scots sh

See Part 1, section f, sh for ‘s’, and sch for ‘sh’, above.

Shew rather than shoo (sew), <ew> for vowel 6 being usual here.

Harnish and nervish as suggested. The <sh> here represents a genuine Scots realisation, a development of /s/ followed by a palatal glide in words of French origin.

Suit rather than shuit (clothes and ‘be convenient for or acceptable to’)
Suin rather than shane, which represents only the local North Antrim and North–east Londonderry realisation of vowel 7. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section h, English ‘oo’ to Ulster Scots ui, above.

Breest rather than breeght with vowel 2.

“Yit gain sae rules the human breest” — ‘A Poor Man’s Petition’, Andrew McKenzie

The /ʃ/ realisation in suit (although of French origin), suin and breest is not universal. Native speakers who have it will habitually pronounce /ʃ/ anyway. Users of Standard English have no problem with the /ʃ/ in sure and sugar.

Least and feast rather than leasht and feasht, both with vowel 3. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘e’ in English, section d, English ‘ea’ to Ulster–Scots ai, above.

Priest rather than preesht. <ie> is the usual spelling of vowel 2 here.

The /ʃ/ realisation in least, feast and priest is not universal and may be due to an Irish substrate.

“For the first hour, nae new made priest” — ‘An Elegy’, Willaim Starrat
“They’ll no’ be bought by onie priest”
“Sald for five guineas at the least” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle
“At least mak mair o’t for the money” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter
“The least blast o’ win’ maks the tiny thing rock” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“Tae feast the e’e an’ please the smell” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston
“For this nicht at least I’ll gie him the go–bye.” — ‘Air — A Wee Drap o’ Whiskey’, Samuel Fee

Given

c) Qhu– for ‘wh–‘

See part 1 section a, qhu for ‘wh’, above.

Wha as suggested. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section b, English ‘o’ to Ulster–Scots a, above.

Whit rather than whut with underlying vowel 15. That vowel has traditionally been represented by the grapheme <i> in literary Scots in Ulster. The /ʌ/ realisation is conditioned by the preceding <w(h)> but is not universal. Since the /ʌ/ realisation will be produced habitually by those native speakers that have it, there is no need for <u> in a literary orthography. Using <u> would be characteristic of phonetic dialect writing.

See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘–a’ in English, section c, English ‘a’ to Ulster Scots u, above.

Whaur rather than whar, with underlying vowel 12 (/ɑː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect). This is usually spelt <au> initially and medially. The spelling whar represents a merger of vowel 12 with vowel 17. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘e’ in English, section e, English ‘e’ and ‘ea’ to Ulster–Scots a, above.

Whan as suggested See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘e’ in English, section e, English ‘e’ and ‘ea’ to Ulster–Scots a, above.

Why as suggested, with vowel 8a.

Wheen as suggested, with vowel 2.

While and white as suggested, with vowel 1.

Hure rather than hoor, originally vowel 7, now vowel 6. The literary spelling is hure. The word never had <hw> in Old English. The modern Standard English <wh> spelling arose in the sixteenth century by analogy with who.

Hale as suggested, with vowel 4, usually spelt <a–e> initially and medially. The literary spelling is hale. The word never had <hw> in Old English. The modern Standard English <wh> spelling arose in the sixteenth century by analogy with who.

“Will mak’ thee hale.” — ‘Hornbook’s Ghaist’, Francis Boyle
“An’ want hale breeks to shift me” — ‘Epistle to S Thomson of Carngranny’, James Orr
“Ma hale domain a gairden plot” — ‘A Poor Man’s Petition’, Andrew McKenzie
“Ye’re *hale* an’ healthie now, an’ therefore” — ‘To Disappointment’, Hugh Porter

“An’ soon they’re hale.” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston

“The *hale* toon seemd tae be aware” — ‘A Country Lad’s Observations at the Hiring Fair in Ballymena’, Adam Lynn

d) Interdental pronunciation

Interdental pronunciations are not universal and are the result of an Irish substrate. The interdental realisation is marked by the following <r> so there is no need for a diacritic. Native speakers who have a dental realisation produce it habitually. See Introduction, How to Use This Guide, section c, è = dental realisation of previous consonant, above.

The use of <dh>, <th> and <tth> to show an interdental realisation was widely employed in Hiberno–English dialect writing. However, its use in literary Ulster Scots was, at best, extremely marginal (see Connolly 1981, Todd 1989).

*Watter* rather than *wattèr* or *watther*. A glottal stop is also possible here. See Part 4, Modified Consonants, section f, Glottal stop, below.

*Shouder* or *shouther* rather than *shoodèr* or *shooother* with vowel 6 from Middle Scots l-vocalisation, whereby /ul/ became /uː/. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section g, English ‘ow’ and ‘ou’ to Ulster–Scots oo, above.

*Ledder* or *lether* and *efter* rather than *leddèr*, *eftèr* or *efther*. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘–a’ in English, section b, English ‘a’ to Ulster–Scots e, above.

*Wunner* and *general* rather than *wunnèr* or *wunther* and *genèral* or *gentheral*.

The <th> may be mistaken for a /ð/ realisation, which does occur in the form *lether* (*ledder*).

*Winter* rather than *wuntèr* or *wuntther*. That has an underlying vowel 15, usually spelt <i>. The realisation /ʌ/ after <w(h)> is predictable but not universal. Since the /ʌ/ realisation will be produced habitually by those native speakers that have it, there is no need for <u> in a literary orthography. Using <u> would be characteristic of phonetic dialect writing. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘i’ in English, section b, ‘i’ after ‘w’ or ‘wh’ spelt with u above.

Gregg and Adams use of T and D was for phonetic transcription, owing to the fact that the typewriters of the time could not reproduce the IPA. Such devices were never intended to be part of a normal orthography.

“That four men *shouther’d* through the church–yard drear.” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr

“Stood nearly head an’ *shouther*” — ‘The Auld School at the Pun’, Thomas Given
"I afttimes wunner hoo it comes" — ‘Toothache’, Agnes Kerr

Better, butter, cooenter, denner, unner, dochter, wunner, (dum)foondert and scunner rather than better, butter, dennèr, unnèr, dochtèr, wunnèr, (dum)foondèrt and scunnèr.

Canister rather than kenystèr. The <e> before <n> is a Mid-Ulster English realisation, whereby /æ/ becomes /ɛ/ before velars. The <y> may be seen as having been added for comic effect.

Wander rather than wannèr/wanther. The /d/ may be pronounced by some speakers. It is easier to ignore an underlying written consonant than to insert one that is not shown. See Part 4, Modified Consonants, section n, Loss of final ‘-d’ in ‘-nd’ words, below.

"Whan wandering wi’ ither sculeboys to the scule” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“Sae blest we wander’d” — ‘Chaffinches’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong
"The bee o’ wanderin’ had his fill” — ‘The Bee and the Stane’, David Cunningham

Hunder and rander rather than hunnèr and rannèr. The /d/ may be pronounced by some speakers. It is easier to ignore an underlying written consonant than to insert one that is not shown. See Part 4, Modified Consonants, section n, Loss of final ‘-d’ in ‘-nd’ words, below.

Shinders rather than shunthers, with underlying vowel 15. The /ʌ/ realisation is not universal and may be due to an Irish substrate. The /d/ may be pronounced by some speakers. It is easier to ignore an underlying written consonant than insert one that is not shown. See Part 4, Modified Consonants, section n, Loss of final ‘-d’ in ‘-nd’ words, below. For /ʃ/ see Part 1, section f, sh for ‘s’, and sch for ‘sh’, above.

"Whaur turf an’ cinders smoulder” — ‘The Haunted Hill’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong
“I glowered at the ape wi’ twa een like red cinders” — ‘The Weaver’s Triumph’, Edward Sloan

Daunder rather than dannèr, with underlying vowel 12 (/aː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect). The /d/ may be pronounced by some speakers. It is easier to ignore an underlying written consonant than to insert one that is not shown. See Part 4, Modified Consonants, section n, Loss of final ‘-d’ in ‘-nd’ words, below. The spelling dannèr represents a merger of vowel 12 with vowel 17.

e) ‘the’ and ‘they’ as tha andthe’

The spelling tha for the [ðə] never occurred in the literary record. Why it is being used here is unfathomable. Is it simply a deliberate attempt to differentiate from (Standard) English (and Scots)? It tells us nothing about the pronunciation that ‘the’ does not. It is more likely to imply a realisation other than the habitual [ðə] produced by native speakers.
The day rather than theday, etc. ‘The’ is not from an abbreviation of ‘this’ but, according to the SND, a corruption of tae (to). Native speakers usually interpret the components as separate words, so they should be written separately (except thegither).

“Please guid,” quo he, “before the morn” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“BE hush’d my Muse, ye ken the morn” — ‘The Muse Dismissed’, Hugh Porter
“But part o’ baith mix’d up thegither” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter
“His hist’ry an’ himsel’ thegither” — ‘With a Little Dog’, George Dugall
“Ye’ll no tell tidin’s o’t the morn” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“He’ll no’ be here the nicht.”
“We walk’d sae gled thegither!” — ‘The Moonlit Road’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong

The spelling the’ is simply an attempt to indicate the unemphatic form of they (the usual spelling in the literary record). The emphatic realisation is [ðeː], with vowel 8, usually spelt <ay> word–finally. From that, the spelling thay suggests itself. One would expect the emphatic form to be used in a standard orthography. Transcribing the unemphatic form would be characteristic of dialect writing.

f) Glottal stop

Glottal stops occur for an intervocalic and (sometimes) final /t/ and are adequately marked by the environment in which they occur, for example watter (water).

In the following glottalisation has nothing to do with the following <l>. It is because the underlying /t/ is intervocalic.

The usual literary spellings are metal and petal rather than mettle and pettle. Bottle, nettle and rattle as suggested.

"Wi’ a pot–metal sock an’ reest” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle
“That he ran wi’ his rattle,” — ‘The Scare–Craw’, Francis Boyle
“Some rattled are, and rated” — ‘Tit for Tat; or the Rater Rated’, The Ulster Miscellany
“The cobler kept a nappy bottle” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

g) English initial ‘c’ to Ulster–Scots k–

The spelling <c> or <k> is due to established orthographic conventions conditioned by the following vowels rather than “vowel changes in some Ulster–Scots words. The SND describes the use of Initial <c> for /k/ “at the beginning of a syllable before the vowels a, o, u’ and “before the consonants l, r, w’ and the use of <k> “before front vowels and n’ (where the cluster <kn> is etymological). Similarly for <sc> and <sk>.

Cairt as suggested, with vowel 8.
Cat and catch rather than ket and ketch, both with vowel 17. The spellings ket and ketch may represent the Mid–Ulster English raising of /æ/ to /ɛ/ after /k/, a prominent feature of Belfast vernacular.

"Wha wad hae bell’d the cat awei" — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
"They’re like the Cat, an’ a’ that” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter
"By cat or trap I’ll hae you taen” — ‘To a Mouse’, David Herbison
"Tae catch the traveller whan bemin’k’d” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
"The red cairts rattlin’ doon the brae.” — ‘The Invalid’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong
"As catch yoursel’ a moose or twa” — ‘The Old Man and the Cat’, Agnes Kerr

Kaim rather than kame. Although vowel 4, early merger with vowel 8 led to the literary spelling with <ai>.

Keckle as suggested. Keechle may be a different word, but that is an acceptable spelling for it.

Kintra rather than kintrie.

"Just kintra weed” — ‘Hornbook’s Ghaist’, Francis Boyle

Couple and cup rather than kipple and kip. See See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘u’ in English, section a, English ‘u’ and ‘ou’ to Ulster–Scots i, above.

h) English ‘–ing’ to Ulster–Scots –in

In Older Scots the verbal noun (gerund) and present participle were differentiated <yng/ing> and <and>. By 1700, the two had generally merged to /ən/. That was either spelt <ing> or <in'> in literary Scots. Since apostrophes are no longer considered acceptable, the spelling <in> is a reasonable suggestion.

Sleepin as suggested.

Walkin rather than waakin. If the intention is to regularise the spelling, it should be waukin, since it has an underlying vowel 12 (/ɑː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect), usually spelt <au> initially and medially. The digraph <aa> occurred only rarely in Scots Literature from Ulster, and in Scotland generally only in deliberately phonetic representations of Northern and Insular Scots.

Fouterin rather than footerin, from Old French foutre, with underlying vowel 6. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section g, English ‘ow’ and ‘ou’ to Ulster–Scots oo, above.

i) English ‘–ngth' Endings
Lenth and strenth as suggested.

j) English medial ‘ng’

This has nothing to do with a “soft g sound”. That usually refers to a <g> realised as /dʒ/.

The cluster <ng> is always realised /ŋ/ in Scots. That is the realisation that native speakers habitually produce. The spellings <ng'r> and <ng'l>, which never occurred in the literary record, are more confusing than the established use of <ng>, as apostrophes usually indicate elision. How does one then represent word-final /ŋ/ in sing, ding and lang, etc?

Anger, hunger, finger, dangle, ingle, single and stranger rather than spellings with <ng'r> or <ng'l>.

Angle, tangle and strangle rather than eng'l, teng'l and streng'l. The <e> represents a Mid-Ulster English realisation, whereby /æ/ becomes /ɛ/ before velars. Why not in dangle and stranger?

k) English medial ‘–mbl–’ to Ulster Scots –mml–

In Early Scots the /b/ between /m/ and /l/ was lost or did not develop in many words.

Fummle, hummle and crummle as suggested

Gemble rather than gemmle, as the /b/ may be realised.

l) English medial ‘–mbl–’ to Ulster Scots –mm–

In Early Scots the /b/ between /m/ and /l/ was lost or did not develop in many words.

Nummer as suggested.

“An some horn–fingered harpie” — ‘To a hegehog’, Samuel Thomson
“A’ roun’ the ingle” — ‘To the Potato’, James Orr
“For flesh an’ bluid can bear nae langer” — ‘Poetical Attempts: Preface’, Hugh Porter
“See roun’ the ingle, in a raw” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of ireland’, John McKinley
“When their tears wi’ hunger fa’!” — ‘The Irish Widow’s Lament’, David Herbison
“And roun’ by the ingle we’ll joyful hurra.” — ‘O, Whiskey My Darlin’”, Robert Huddleston
“Dodds caredna it a single flee”
“He maun it tak’, nor langer tarry” — ‘In Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“O, I mind it weel, in my younger days” — ‘Stumpy’s Brae’, Frances Alexander
“The puir wee fingers frail an’ white” — ‘The Invalid’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong
“Why sae tangle me?” — ‘The Temptress’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong
‘Poetical Epistle tae Cullybackey Auld Nummer’, Thomas Given

However, *member, September, November* and *December*, as the /b/ is realised.

“For she remembers wi’ a tear” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of Ireland’, John McKinley

“While caul’ December’s cranreuch breath” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

The place-name *Commer* (Comber) may well be realised [ˈkʌmər].

m) English ‘–old’ to Ulster–Scots –*oul*

*Houl:* the traditional Scots form is *haud.* See Part 3 section i, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, English ‘old’ to Ulster–Scots ould, above.

*Cauld, auld, sauld* and *tauld* rather than *coul, ould, soul* and *toul.* See Part 3 section i, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, English ‘old’ to Ulster–Scots ould, above.

n) Loss of final ‘–d’ in ‘–nd’ words

The /d/ is an underlying phoneme. The cluster <nd> is not always simplified in colloquial speech. The /d/ often occurs in derived forms so should be represented in the orthography. Native speakers habitually simplify where possible, as is shown by the fact that it is a “characteristic feature of all Ulster vernacular speech”. As the /d/ may be pronounced by some speakers, it is easier to ignore an underlying written consonant than to insert one that is not shown. Not writing the <d> would be characteristic of dialect writing.

*Haund* and *laund* rather than *han* and *lan* have vowel /æː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect), usually spelt <au> initially and medially, (except in compounds –land [–lan(d)]). The spellings *han* and *lan* may represent a merger of vowel /æː/ with vowel /17/.

*And* always simplifies to /æn/, so the spelling *an* is acceptable.

*Blind* and *find* rather than *blin* and *fin.* See Part 3 Loss of final ‘e’ ... above

*Pund* or *poond, roond, fund* and *grund* rather than *pun* or *poon, roon, fun* and *grun.*

*Pund, fund* and *grund* have vowel /19/.

*Poond* and *roond* have vowel /6/. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section g, English ‘ow’ and ‘ou’ to Ulster–Scots oo, above.

*kind* and *mind* rather than *kine* an *mine*, both with vowel /1/.

*Cauld* rather than *coul*, with underlying vowel /12/. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section i, English ‘old’ to Ulster–Scots, above.

*Field* rather than *fiel*, with vowel /2/ (<ie> is a common spelling before <l> and <v>).
“AE windy day last owk, I’ll ne’er forget”
“Nor Habby’s drone, cou’d with thy wind–pipe please”
“Here Nansy ends wi’ grief opprest”
“For stopping o’ our dear freend’s breath” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
“Sic pleughs wad never till our fields” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle
“To hinder the sma’ birds to pick” — ‘The Scare–Craw’, Francis Boyle
“Or send them a’ to join the bikes” — ‘To the Criticks’, The Ulster Miscellany
“That sounds me sae — and then wi’ a rair” — ‘The Gout and the Flea’, The Ulster Miscellany
“As if they griev’d to let her gang.” — ‘Crochan Hill — A Scotch Sang’, The Ulster Miscellany
“Tho’ minds mair noble”
“Frae some bit bield, whose leash is spent” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore
“Portends some dire misluck that day” — ‘To a Hedgehog’, Samuel Thomson
“The chief gets’t in his nieve” — ‘Simkin’, Samuel Thomson
“While a fand Wifie fast is fislin”
“Upsettin’ England sudna ding” — ‘To the Potato’, James Orr
“Whan chiel wha grudg’d to be sae tax’d” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“An’ there they’ll find a sting behin’” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter
“The fields wad ring to hear him sing” — ‘Answer to Burns’ ‘Lovely Jean’”, Hugh Porter
“Forsake the fields, and seek the byre” — ‘Descriptive Fragment’, George Dugall
“Wi’ twa’r three lines to recommend him”” — ‘With a Little Dog’, George Dugall
“And mends the fire”
“An spendin name” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of Ireland’, John McKinley
“Peace she canna find ava” — ‘The Irish Widow’s Lament’, David Herbison
“For a’ kind o’ wark we had plenty o’ cash” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“Dae ye intend that chaps like me” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston
“Far, far awa, frae lands o’ snaw.”
“And on he creeps field side the dyke”
“Wi’ mony a bellow, scrieve, an’ curse.”
“And didna stap, ye may believe us”
“Come, bind him fast, an’ gag him swith” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“The auld man’s head swam round and round”
“And stump! stump!! stump!!! around the twa’” — ‘Stumpy’s Brae’, Frances Alexander
“The bluebell–beds wi’ blind’ light” — ‘Chaffinches’, George Francis Savage–Armstrong
“The fermer ploddin’ through his fields” — ‘Poetical Epistle tae Cullybackey Auld Nummer’, Thomas Given

o) Loss of final ‘–t’ in ‘–pt’ words

This is not ‘loss’ but simplification of the cluster <pt> to /p/ in colloquial speech. However, the /t/ occurs in derived forms, as shown by the suggested past–tense form temp~temptit.
As the /t/ is an underlying phoneme, it should be shown in the orthography. Native speakers simplify the cluster /pt/ habitually.

Kept, slept and swept rather than kep, slep and swep, as those are in fact past-tense forms. Also keepit and sleepit. The traditional Scots form of sweep is soop.

“Sometimes he slept, and didna feel” — ‘The Gout and the Flea’, The Ulster Miscellany

“While e’er you kept frae aff the loom” — ‘To a Mouse’, David Herbison

“Wha kept the beagles a’ in boun’s” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

“But kept the lasses in a lowe” — ‘The Auld School at the Pun’, Thomas Given

Tempt rather than temp. The <t> is an underlying phoneme, as shown by the suggested past-tense form temptit.

“A temptin’ wee hizzie is Betty MacBlaine.” — ‘Betty MacBlaine’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong

p) Loss of ‘l’ before ‘t’ and ‘d’

This is Middle Scots l-vocalisation, whereby /al/ (except intervocally and usually before /d/) became /au/, finally merging with vowel 12 (/aː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect).

Saut and maut as suggested, with vowel 12.

“And well I wat false swearing is a sin” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat

“His maut wi’ meel.” — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat

“In the saut water” — ‘Hornbook’s Ghaist’, Francis Boyle

“No’ to the false, but to the true.” — ‘To the Criticks’, The Ulster Miscellany

“Nor sloth’s false smiles” — ‘To the Potato’, James Orr

“Yet on the battle ilka cauf” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr

“An’ ithers, kneeling, stream’d a saut, saut flood” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr

“The leuks in a glass, o’ the loun that’s in faut” — ‘The Spae-Wife’, James Orr

“The stout maut did the strength retain, ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

Moutur, shouder or shoucher rather than moote and shoothèr, with vowel 6. See above.

“That four men shoucher’d through the church-yard drear.” — ‘The Irish Cottier’s Death and Burial’, James Orr

“Stood nearly head an’ shoucher” — ‘The Auld School at the Pun’, Thomas Given

q) Final ‘–ic’ to Ulster-Scots –ick
There is no need for this. It may be seen as having been added for comical effect. Better *mathematic*, *Gaelic* and *arithmetic* (for the initial <a> see See Part 2, section c, Aphæresis, above.

*Muisic* rather than *music* with vowel 7. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section h, English ‘oo’ to Ulster Scots ui, above.

*Pheesic* and *paraleetic* rather than *physick* and *parlytick* with vowel 2. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘i’ in English, section c, English ‘i’ Ulster Scots ee, above. The <y> in *parlytick* may look like it has been added for comic effect.

r) Final ‘-all’ to Ulster-Scots –aa

Aa, caa, baa, faa, waa. The digraph <aa> only ever occurred rarely in Scots literature from Ulster, and in Scotland for the most part only in deliberately phonetic representations of Northern and Insular Scots.

The traditional way to represent l–vocalisation (see section p, above) was with an apostrophe, i.e. a’, ca’, ba’, etc. That is now, rightly, considered unacceptable. Since the result of l–vocalisation was a merger with vowel 12 (/ɑː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect). The usual grapheme for that, <aw> root–finally, provides a suitable spelling.

Aw, caw, baw, faw, waw and haw.

"Now may we aw the trade gee o'er" — ‘An Elegy’, William Starrat
"Aboon him caw'd a flock o' cra's" — ‘Jamie Smith and the Grogan’, W. Clarke Robinson

The advantage of using <aw> reveals itself in regularly derived inflected forms such as fawin, fawen, cawed, cawer rather than faain, faan, faa'n, faaen or caad, caa'n or caaen, caaer or caa'r.

*Knowe* results from Middle Scots l–vocalisation of /ol/ to /au/ followed by merger with vowel 13 /əu/. Also *howe*. The root–final spelling is usually <owe>.

s) English final ‘-ful’ to Ulster-Scots –fu

*Pouerfu* rather than *pooerfu*, with vowel 6. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section g, English ‘ow’ and ‘ou’ to Ulster–Scots oo, above.

*Nievefu, wunnerfu* as suggested.
*Nielifu* rather than *peetyfu*.

t) English final ‘-ull’ to Ulster–Scots –u
Fou and pou rather than fu and pu. Both the result of l-vocalisation of /ul/ to /uː/, vowel 6. The two have the doublets full and pull. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘u’ in English, section b, English ‘u’ to Ulster–Scots ū above.

“Fou scar’d, when school–boys chanc’d to stare” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore
“Would pou the fruit for a that” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter
“Deil fill your belly fou o’ soot” — ‘To a Mouse’, David Herbison
“Fou braw this day.” — ‘The Auld School at the Pun’, Thomas Given

u) Ulster–Scots final ‘–it’ for English ‘–ed’

A comprehensive verb table may be found at [http://www.scots-online.org/grammar/verbs.php](http://www.scots-online.org/grammar/verbs.php)

In Older Scots, the past tense of weak verbs was usually formed by adding <-it> or <-yt> to the present tense. Since the Older Scots period, an ongoing process of simplification has been occurring, whereby the past tense often became <-t> or <-(e)d>.

That simplification process started with verbs ending in a vowel, whereby the past tense is now usually formed by adding <-(e)d>, or, if the vowel ends in <-e>, by adding <-’d>.

allou~allowed, caw~cawed, draw~drawed, follae~follaed, leeve~leeved, pey~peyed, rowe~rowed, hy~hyed, knaw~knaewed.

dee~dee’d

Note: say~said

Simplification later followed after liquid, fricative and nasal consonants.

deal~dealt, gar~gart, skail~skailt, golder~goldert, scunner~scunnert, daunnder~daundert, learn~learnt, fill~fillt, gaither~gaithert, plaister~plaistert, tell~teltl tauld

After final <-le>, the past tense is formed by <-elt> (or by adding <-d>)

wrastle~wrastelt, haundl~haundelt

lauch~laucht, catch~catcht
streetch~streetcht, aks~aks’t

appen~append, belang~belangt, jine~jine’t, turn~turnt

In Modern Scots, the inflection <-it> now usually occurs only after the consonants /b, d, g, k, p/ and /t/.
As a consequence of the continuing process of past-tense simplification, the inflection in
the above has also been reduced to <-t> in many words. The question arises of whether to
represent the simplification as <-'t> or simply as <-t>.

cowp~cowp’t| cowpt, drap~drap’t| drapt, pick~pick’t| pickt, stap~stap’t| stapt
Both <-it> and <-'t/-t> forms may occur:

walk~walk’t| walkt, talk~talkit| tak’t| talkt

Past tenses in <-ed> are also possible (including the above).

wale~waled, thole~tholed, please~pleased

Where the verb root ends in a /d/ or /t/, the past–tense inflection is assimilated.

divide~divid

Some verbs have both weak and strong forms.

Strong Verbs

Strong verbs usually form their past tenses by a change of vowel and in the past participle
usually add <-en>.

The historic Germanic strong verb ablaut sequences are usually represented in six classes.
Although many contemporary Scots strong verbs no longer fit neatly into those classes,
showing the verbs in such groups, as far as possible, illustrates the sound and spelling
changes of the conjugations better than ad hoc lists.
Those marked * indicate convergent past tenses where the past tense may take the same
form as the past participle in colloquial speech.

come~cam~come

drink~drank~drunk

gie~gied~gien

hing~hang~hung

rin~ran~run

see~saw~seen

sing~sang~sung

sweem~swam~swum* (soum~soumed)

sweir~sweired~sweired (sweir~swuir~sworn)
beat→beat→beat(\text{en})
eat→ett→ett(\text{en})

brak→broke→broke(n)
faw→fell→fell
growe→growed/grew→growed/grew(\text{en})
lie→layed→layed
ride→rade→rid(\text{den})*
write→wrate→writ(\text{ten})*

hit→hut→hut(\text{ten})
pit→pat→pit(\text{ten})*
lat→liut→liut(\text{en})

\text{v)} \quad \text{English final } ^{-\text{\textasciitilde}n't} \text{ to Ulster-Scots } ^{-\text{nae}}$

The traditional literary spelling for the negative particle is <\text{-na}>, variously [na, nɪ, ne]. The <\text{-nae}> represents a particular dialect realisation and, as such, is typical of dialect writing.

“Good God! what tuneless heart
strings \text{wadna} twang” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Starrat

“An’ coulter-band that \text{winna} slack”

“Ye \text{needna} care wha does it see” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle

“He \text{sudna} scorn my mental pow’rs” — ‘Hornbook’s Ghaist’, Francis Boyle

“They \text{darna} look you in the face” — ‘The Scare-Craw’, Francis Boyle

“Come forth and \text{dinna} say me na.”

“I’ll warrant them, they \text{winna} miss ye.”

“I doubt ye \text{darna} for ye’r mither” — ‘The Gartan Courtship’, \textit{The Ulster Miscellany}

“And when he did, he \text{cou’dna} grip it” — ‘The Gout and the Flea’, \textit{The Ulster Miscellany}

“But och! thy troublers \text{donna} care”

“Thou \text{needna} think this outrage odd” — ‘To a Sparrow’, Robert Dinsmore

“Gudefaith thou \text{donna} want for pikes” — ‘To a Hedgehog’, Samuel Thomson

“My head I’ll bestow ye, if I \text{donna} shew ye” — ‘The Spae-Wife’, James Orr

“He \text{wadna} let me stay a’ night” — ‘The Wanderer’, James Orr

“Wha Point an’ Prataoes \text{donna} tak”

“Upsettin’ England \text{sudna} ding” — ‘To the Potato’, James Orr

“But \text{canna} sing.”

“I \text{needna} strive. My want and woe” — ‘Fragment of an Epistle to Mr W.H.D—’, James Orr

“A knot that \text{winna} draw, that.”

“Wha \text{wadna} toil to plant the tree” — ‘A Song on Marriage’, Hugh Porter
“We needna let it dally” — ‘Written the Next Morning’, Hugh Porter
“But dinna turn him to the Meeting”
“The waefu’ cause she needna spier” — ‘A Winter Night in the North of Ireland’, John McKinley
“They winna sit down as our forefathers sat”
“It canna be ended without a law suit!”
“The devil himself’ couldn’a match sic a crew!” — ‘My Ain Native Toun’, David Herbison
“It wadna vent the sma’est blade” — ‘The Auld Wife’s Lament for her Teapot’, David Herbison
“For they canna work ava”
“And we needna spin ava” — ‘The Irish Widow’s Lament’, David Herbison
“But dinna turn him to the Meeting” — ‘My Auld Mither’s Address’, Joseph Carson
“And as for me, I needna think” — ‘Epistle to Francis Boyle’, John Meharg
“For trifles devils disna think.”
“Yon canna be nae out-post picket”
“And if thou couldn’a want a wife”
“Some weel ken’d youths I dinna name” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“What Muse O, wadna spread her wing” — ‘On Salts’, Robert Huddleston
“Dinna ye mark a fir-tree stand”
“The stumpy canna cross the burn”
“Quo’ she, ‘Guid man ye needna turn sae pale” — ‘Stumpy’s Brae’, Frances Alexander
“If ye dinna let me tak Maggie I’ll gang an’ list.” — ‘Readings’, W. G. Lyttle
“But, ah! its builders canna move”
“That needna noo be printed” — ‘The Auld School at the Pun’, Thomas Given
“Some o’ thir names I canna ken” — ‘The lint Pullin”, Adam Lynn
“I canna haud ane fur” — ‘The magic X’, James Mullan
“It isna tae be compared” — ‘Toothache’, Agnes Kerr
“You canna let a ha’porth be.” — ‘The Old Man and the Cat’, Agnes Kerr
“They cou’dna attend them wi’ bobbins ava” — ‘The Weaving’, Agnes Kerr
“We canna weel say, nor it’s no muckle matter” — ‘An Epitath on a Miser’, C. K. Pooler

be~binna
bes~besna

is~isna,
wis~wisna
war~warna

are~arena
daе~daenaj dinna
daes~daesnaj disna
did~didna
hae–haena/ hinna
haes–haesna
haed–haedna

will–willna/ winna
wad–wadna

can–canna
coud–coudna

sall| shall–sanna| shallna| shanna
soud| shoud–soudna| shoudna

maun–maunna

daun–daurna
daurs–daursna
durst–durstna

micht–michtna

w) Loss of ‘r’

Frae–fae

The usual literary form is frae. However, fae is an acceptable alternative.

“I shanna bauk the like frae you.” — ‘A Pastoral in Praise of Allan Ramsay’, William Sterrat
“Nae Carle frae Congregation Tub” — ‘An Elegy’, William Sterrat
“Frae rain an’ snaw” — ‘On Presenting a Plough to a Clergyman’, Francis Boyle
“Or frae the horse’s heels a lash.” — ‘To the Criticks’, The Ulster Miscellany
“Fowk tell how thou, sae far frae daft” — ‘To a Hedgehog’, Samuel Thomson
“Ta’en twa rash gills frae Herdman’s quart” — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“I hunted you frae room to room” — ‘To aMouse’, David Herbison
“Blaws frae the North with whistling din” — ‘Address to a Cricket’, Sarah Leech
“Whan he frae out his aerial coach” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston
“The blackbird keeks oot frae the fog at the broo” — ‘A Song for February’, Thomas Given
“Tae creep frae place tae place.” — ‘The Bicycle’, Adam Lynn

“A mug, fae whaur the ear is pairted” — ‘A Poor Man’s Petition’, Andrew McKenzie
“Fae gettin’ new soles on my broges” — ‘Doddery Willowaim’, Robert Huddleston

x) ‘r’ metathesis
Aupron~aupern rather than apern with initial vowel 12 (/ɑː, ɔː, aː/ depending on dialect), usually spelt <au>. The spelling with <a> represents a merger of vowel 12 with vowel 17.

Modren, gress~girse and wastern~wastren as suggested. pretty~purtie rather than purtie.

Part 5
Representation of the [yih] sound

“once represented by yogh”

The letter <ʒ> was sometimes used instead of <y> /j/ in Older Scots.

a) Palatalisation after initial consonants.

Palatalisation simply means that the consonant is pronounced as if followed very closely by /j/.

Deuk rather than deuck, and teuch, neuk and heuk as suggested, all with vowel 7 before /k/ and /x/. See Part 3, Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section h, English ‘oo’ to Ulster Scots ui, above.

Eneuch as suggested, but feugie rather than feuggie (no doubled consonants after vowel digraphs).

In some dialects a /j/ glide may have developed after the initial consonant. Moot, nimp, knir, nirps and natter rather than myowt, nyim, nyir, nyirps and nyitter. Myowt may be an onomatopoeic alteration influenced by miaow as of a cat. Yirm rather than nyirm (with intrusive initial n). Nyaff as suggested. Nyam may simply be onomatopoeic. Speuch from spleuchan?

b) ‘Yoching’

What this is supposed to mean is anyone’s guess. Yogh <ʒ> is a letter. See Part 1 Older Scots spelling and its legacy in modern Ulster Scots, section c, ‘Yogh’.

Yowe simply has initial /j/.

Yin has nothing to do with yogh. The traditional spelling is ane. The adjectival form before nouns is ae. See Part 3 Words spelt with the vowel ‘o’ in English, section a, English ‘o’ to Ulster–Scots a or ai, above.
You~ye, your~yer as suggested, but year rather than yeir.
The above have nothing to do with 'yogh' as a letter. That is simply initial /j/.

"Yet mony a year afore I die" — ‘Epistle to Francis Boyle’, John Meharg
“A youthfu’ guide frae year tae year” — ‘The Auld School at the Pun’, Thomas Given
“I watched you weel in years remote” — ‘Poetical Epistle tae Cullybackey Auld Nummer’, Thomas Given

In some words (especially in Southern Scots) a /j/ realisation arose owing to the stress falling on the second vowel, so the first vowel became weak and eventually became [j].

Yill (ale), yerl (earl), yird~yirth
Earn rather than yirn.

Yon~thon as suggested.
Yonder~thonder rather than yonner~thonner. As the /d/ may be pronounced by some speakers, it is sensible to retain it in the orthography. Native speakers who simplify the cluster <nd> to /n/ do so habitually where possible. It is easier to ignore an underlying written consonant than to insert one that is not shown. Not writing the <d> would be characteristic of dialect writing.

“But yonder she’s tane up, you see” — ‘The Gartan Courtship’, The Ulster Miscellany

c) Platalisation after ‘I’

Tulzie and culzie have vowel 7, and the letter <z> was used as a substitute for ‘yogh’ <ȝ>. Better tuilyie and cuilyie. See Part 1, Older Scots spelling and its legacy in modern Ulster Scots, section c, ‘Yogh’, above.

Ceilidh rather than kaylie or kailye. The word ‘kailie’ is a known Gaelic loan, in the case of Ulster very likely brought from Scotland as part of Plantation scots rather than adopted from Irish. Why respell it?

The spellings polyute, colyeum, flyue, glyue, blyue give the impression of having been created for comic effect. Better pollute, column, (in)flu(enza), glue, blue. The <y> is simply the result of some speakers having developed a /j/ glide after the initial consonant. They will pronounce that habitually.

Fluit rather than flyute with vowel 7.

d) Words ending ‘-ture’

Standard English developed a palatalised pronunciation in that suffix. Here it is perhaps better to keep in line with the Latin etymology, therefore pictur, naitur, manufactur, furniture and mixtur rather than pictèr, naitèr, furnitèr and mixtèr.
The spelling *mannyfectèr* gives the impression of having been created for comic effect. The <e> before <ctèr> is a Mid-Ulster English realisation, whereby /æ/ becomes /ɛ/ before velars.

"Wha lang ere night lay tortur’d" — ‘Donegore Hill’, James Orr
“Och, Natur’ ‘t is that gi’es the law” — ‘A Rustic Lovemaking’, George Francis Savage-Armstrong

Part 6
The Hamely Tongue

The spellings in the Hamely Tongue are clearly intended to be phonetically accurate dialect spellings rather than a guide to literary Scots. The spellings used, sensibly avoided “awkward orthographic structures”. Any spellings reflecting literary Scots practice were most likely arrived at by coincidence rather than design.

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Bibliography


