Activity 18.8 - A Yorkshire Dialogue

Yorkshire dialectal words and pronunciations

The pronunciations of the following dialect words are listed in alphabetical order of the spelling of the main vowels. The transcription is speculative sometimes, and assumes that the writer's spellings are consistent in representing the dialectal pronunciations.

<\textit{a}> = short [æ] - [a]

- farrand: with qualifying word refers to disposition, eg well-farrand.
- Fatther: pronounced with "short a" – [fæðər]
- gang: from OE gangan, the reduplicated form of gan which does not survive in Standard English.
- gat: original past tense of get from ON geta. StE got resulted from the assimilation of the vowel of gat to the vowel of the past participle gotten.
- mack: from OE macian, retaining the short vowel, [mæk]
- tack: from ON taka, retaining the short /a/ which in southern dialects lengthened and eventually raised to [ε] or [e].
- varra: variation of very.
- wallaneerin: Walladay and wellaway were expressions of sorrow, like alas. The form wellanear appears to have derived from the substitution of anear for away. The forms wellaneering or wallanear are extensions of wellanear.

<\textit{ai}> = [e:] & <\textit{ay}> = [e]

- flaid: past participle of fley from ON fleyja, OE flegan, = frightened, scared, worried.
- mains: from OE mægen or ON megenn meaning force, strength, used as an adverb to mean very
- say: past tense from OE seon, ON sea, = saw; compare OE past tense ic seah.
- sayr: from OE sar, ON sarr. The vowel has fronted to [e], whereas in other dialects and RP it retracted to [ɔ].

<\textit{aw}> = [a]

- awd: from OE northern dialect ald; StE old derives from the Mercian dialect, in which ald first lengthened to āld and then shifted to ōld.
- cawd: has a similar pattern of derivation from OE northern caled.
- Chawmber: retains the vowel of OF chambre.
- Crawe: from OE crewe, retaining the original vowel.

<\textit{æ}> = [æ]?

- Cael: = broth, soup

<\textit{ar}> = [ar]

- hard: past tense of bear, from Northern OE berde from beran and ON beyra.
- warke: the ON verb verkja meant to feel pain, acbe, and this is the meaning of warke here.
<are> = [ɛːr]

Evermare -mare from OE māra and ON meire. The vowel of OE māra rounded to the back vowel of māre in Southern dialects. Later, the vowel of Northern māre shifted in the other direction to the front vowel [ɛ].

<au> = [au]
Haud from Northern OE baldan and ON balda.
Naunt from OF aunte; the phrase mine aunt gave rise to the pronunciation my naunt by a mistaken division of the words - similar to the change of a nadder (OE an næddre) to an adder in Standard English today, but "in reverse".
Saul from OE sawol.

<aw> = [a]
Knaue OE cnāwan and ON knā. Another example of the retention of the older pronunciation in the North.
Snawke = inhale
Tawke ME talken from OE talu (tale) and tellan (tell).

<e> = [e]
Semper = simper

<ea> = [e]
Presumably Meriton is using the digraph <ea> to represent the open front vowel, so that <au> is a diphthong [ɛu].

Deaur from OE duru or dore.
Feaul from ME fol from OF fol
Leauke/leauks from OE locian

Greave [greːv], from OE greæf, ME græve.
Neay [nɛɪ], probably a single vowel; from ON nei.
Seave [seːv], from OF salver/sauver, ME sauven/sæven.
Seay [sɛː], from OE swā, ME sō.

<ee> = [iː]
Kneet [niːt], from OE cnibt, ME knight /knɪkt/.
Leet/ Leetsome [liːt], from OE leohst/libht, ME liʒt /liːt/.
Reet [riːt], from OE riht, ME riʒt /rɪʃt/.

Neen = een, (eyes) from OE eagan/egen, ME eʒen; compare the form neen with naunt.
Stee from ON stige/stege, ladder, staircase; only in Northern dialects.
Steeke from OE stecan, ME steken, (to shut); Northern dialects.

<ew> = /ɔ/ ? (rounded front vowel)
Newke nook, origin not known, but earliest recorded examples are Northern.
<i> = [i]

Clim retains the short vowel of OE climb which elsewhere lengthened.
gitten Northern dialectal form of getten from ON geta
wilta wilt thou, with reduced and assimilated spoken form of thou.
winderboard indicates reduced unstressed second syllable of window.

<i-e> = diphthong [øi] ~ [ai]?

Belive from ME be life = with life = quickly, soon.
sike reduced from of swilk, swik from OE swylc; elsewhere ME swich etc, MnE such.
stime origin not known; not to see a stime means to be unable to see anything.

<y> = diphthong [øi] ~ [ai]?

flyer fleer, probably from ON, to laugh.

<o> = [ɔ]

Cozen from French cousin.
dovening from ON dofnæ; the verb dover meant to doze.
onny from OE Ænig,

<oe/o-e> = [o/lengthmark]

whopes from OE hopian; the spelling <wh-> presumably indicates a pronunciation like [hw] or [ʍ].
woes = woos, from OE wōgian; retains original vowel.

<ou> = [u/lengthmark]

aboun reduced form of early Northern ME formation abufan, from a- + OE bufan.
stoun from OE & ON stund; only Northern dialects, meaning to smart, ache.

<u> = [u]

dus/duz [dʌs - doz]; RP pronunciation [dʌz] did not begin to emerge until the 18th C.
mun dialectal auxiliary verb from ON monu/munu, meaning must.
nut perhaps the reduced form of not, [nət] rather than [nʌt].
tull from OE tilian (to strive, acquire), here meaning to seek.

<ur> = [ʊ]

Snurles dialectal word meaning nostrils; compare the derivation of nostril from OE nos + pyrl.

<’th> = Meriton’s spelling of the reduced Yorkshire pronunciation of the, which is commonly an unreleased [t’]; often represented in written prose as <t’>.