

CHEQUE MATE

Written in the early 1980s, this tells the story of the pay dispute between NHS Computer Staff and the management at North Western Regional Health Authority when NHS IT employees were demanding pay parity with the private sector.

Some 40 years on, I have great misgivings about any social structure in which the rich not only keep the poor in poverty but force others into poverty while maintaining or increasing their own wealth.

It was late one Friday,
About half past five,
When Big John B
Turned into the drive.

He parked his car
Around the back,
Walked round to the front
To make his attack.

Resistance was low,
And that's a fact.
We weren't expecting
A traitorous act.

He went straight to
The R.C.S.O.,
Came on strong
And laid down the law.

Mon General surrendered
Under the barrage of words.
He gave up the cheques
Held back in reserve.

Held back by the union
In support of its claim
For parity in wages
With other jobs the same.

Out through the window
Went Big John B,
Away with the cheques -
And a torn trouser knee.

And so it was
That on the next day
Creditors were paid
By each A.H.A.

But that's not the end
Of the long-standing dispute,
For now they're on strike
And refuse to compute.

Ken Dearden
Early 1980s.