*Extension: Poetry Analysis: ‘Let’s go and put the breeze up the Saxons’. How has the battle been interpreted?*

I'll tell of the Battle of Hastings,   
As happened in days long gone by,  
When Duke William became King of England,   
And 'Arold got shot in the eye.  
  
It were this way - one day in October   
The Duke, who were always a toff  
Having no battles on at the moment,   
Had given his lads a day off.  
  
They'd all taken boats to go fishing,   
When some chap in t' Conqueror's ear  
Said 'Let's go and put breeze up the Saxons;'   
Said Bill - 'By gum, that's an idea.'  
  
Then turning around to his soldiers,   
He lifted his big Nonnan voice,  
Shouting - 'Hands up who's coming to England.'   
That was swank 'cos they hadn't no choice.  
  
They started away about tea-time -   
The sea was so calm and so still,  
And at quarter to ten the next morning   
They arrived at a place called Bexhill.  
  
King 'Arold came up as they landed -   
His face full of venom and 'ate -   
He said 'lf you've come for Regatta   
You've got here just six weeks too late.'  
  
At this William rose, cool but 'aughty,   
And said 'Give us none of your cheek;  
You'd best have your throne re-upholstered,   
I'll be wanting to use it next week.'  
  
When 'Arold heard this 'ere defiance,   
With rage he turned purple and blue,  
And shouted some rude words in Saxon,   
To which William answered - 'And you.'  
  
'Twere a beautiful day for a battle;   
The Normans set off with a will,  
And when both sides was duly assembled,   
They tossed for the top of the hill.  
  
King 'Arold he won the advantage,   
On the hill-top he took up his stand,  
With his knaves and his cads all around him,   
On his 'orse with his 'awk in his 'and.  
  
The Normans had nowt in their favour,   
Their chance of a victory seemed small,  
For the slope of the field were against them,   
And the wind in their faces an' all.  
  
The kick-off were sharp at two-thirty,   
And soon as the whistle had went  
Both sides started banging each other   
'Til the swineherds could hear them in Kent.  
  
The Saxons had best line of forwards,   
Well armed both with buckler and sword -   
But the Normans had best combination,   
And when half-time came neither had scored.  
  
So the Duke called his cohorts together   
And said - 'Let's pretend that we're beat,  
Once we get Saxons down on the level   
We'll cut off their means of retreat.'  
  
So they ran - and the Saxons ran after,   
Just exactly as William had planned,  
Leaving 'Arold alone on the hill-top   
On his 'orse with his 'awk in his 'and.  
  
When the Conqueror saw what had happened,   
A bow and an arrow he drew;  
He went right up to 'Arold and shot him.   
He were off-side, but what could they do?  
  
The Normans turned round in a fury,   
And gave back both parry and thrust,  
Till the fight were all over bar shouting,   
And you couldn't see Saxons for dust.  
  
And after the battle were over   
They found 'Arold so stately and grand,  
Sitting there with an eye-full of arrow   
On his 'orse with his 'awk in his 'and.

Marriott Edgar.