Arthur Wharton Poem

Written for a Doncaster Libraries event celebrating the UK's first black footballer

Born in Ghana
'Cross the sea
In the Nineteenth
Century   *Long Ago!*

Arthur's Dad is
A Missionary
And his Mother's from
A Royal Family   *How posh!*

[Chorus: Call and Response]
    He's our Arthur!
        He's our Arthur!
    Arthur Wharton!
        Arthur Wharton!
    Local Hero!
        Local Hero!
    Super Sportsman!
        Super Sportsman!

Then Henry Wharton
Sent his son
Back in Eighteen
Eighty-One   *Off you go!*

Away to England
To go to College
There to study
Bible knowledge   *Read those books!*

    He's our Arthur *(chorus as above)*

But on the Sports Field
Arthur finds
He leaves the others
Far behind!   *Watch him go!*

In just ten seconds
He ran a hundred yards
And a brand-new record
Was on the cards   *Hoo- ray!*

    He's our Arthur *(chorus as above)*

Cricket, cycling,
Rugby too
Was there nothing
Arthur couldn't do?   *Not much!*

He got looked down on
For being black
But did he let it
Hold him back?   *No fear!*

        He's our Arthur *(chorus as above)*

But it's football
That's in his soul
No-one gets past him
When he's in the goal   *Get back!*

The roughest players
Other teams could pick
Arthur fools'em
With his spider kick!   *Where'd he go?*

        He's our Arthur *(chorus as above)*

He plays for Darlington,
Preston North End,
Rotherham, Sheffield, and
Stockport in the end   *He's been around!*

Once he's with Preston
They were on the up
And reached the semis
Of the F A Cup!   *Wem-ber-ley!*

        He's our Arthur *(chorus as above)*

Later Arthur
Starts a baccy shop
And runs a pub
(He likes a drop!)   *Hic! Burp!*

Works in mining
'Neath the ground
Down in Edlington
His grave is found   *Down below...*

        He's our Arthur *(chorus as above)*

The first black player
In professional soccer
Then forgotten –
What a shocker!   *It's not fair!*

No-one remembered –
What a crying shame!
But now we'll shout... out... loud
Arthur's name!   *Let's hear his name...*

      He's our Arthur *(chorus as above)*

One last time...!

      He's our Arthur *(chorus as above, to finish).*

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