

WORKSHEET

The Berryfields O Blair by Belle Stewart (1906 1997)

When berry time comes roond each year
Blair's population's swelling,
There's every kind o picker there
And every kind o dwellin.
There's tents and huts and caravans,
There's bothies and there's bivvies
And shelters made wi tattie-bags
And dug-outs made wi divvies.

There's corner-boys fae Glesgae,
Kettle-boilers fae Lochee,
There's miners fae the pits o Fife,
Mill-workers fae Dundee
And fisherfolk fae Peterheid
And tramps fae everywhere
Aa looking fir a livin aff
The berry fields o blair

There's travellers fae the Western Isles,
Fae Arran, Mull and Skye;
Fae Harris, Lewis and Kyles o Bute,
They come their luck to try.
Fae Inverness and Aberdeen,
Fae Stornoway and Wick
Aa flock to Blair at the berry time
The straws and rasps to pick.

There's some who earn a pound or twa,
Some cannae earn their keep,
There's some wid pick fae morn till nicht,
And some wid rather sleep.
There's some wha has tae pick or stairve,
And some wha dinnae care,
There's comedy and tragedy
Played on the fields o Blair.

There's families pickin for one purse,
And some wha pick alane,
There's men wha share and share alike
Wi wives wha's no their ain.
There's gladness and there's sadness tae,
There's happy herts and sair,
For there's some wha bless and some wha curse
The berry fields o Blair.

Before I put my pen awa,
It's this I would like to say:
You'll travel far afore you'll meet
A kinder lot than they;
For I've mixed wi them in field and pub
And while I've breath to spare,
I'll bless the hand that led me tae
The berry fields o Blair.

Words and what they mean:

Berry time: time for seasonal work picking fruit

Bivvy: small tent or temporary shelter (from bivouac)

Blair: Blairgowrie, Perthshire

Bothy: temporary hut; living quarters for single men on a farm

Corner-boys: unemployed men hanging about the streets

Divvies: sods of earth, divots

Kettle-boilers: unemployed, stay-at-home men in Dundee

The Yellow's on the Broom by Adam McNaughtan

I ken ye dinna like it lass, the winter here in toon
For the scaldies a misca us, and they try tae bring us doon
And it's hard tae raise three bairns, in a single flae box room
But I'll tak ye on the road again, when the yella's on the broom.

When the yella' s on the broom, when the yella' s on the broom
I'll tak ye on the road again, when the yella's on the broom
The scaldies ca us tinker dirt, and they spurn oor bairn's in school
But fa cares fit the scaldies think, for the scaldies but a fool
They never hear the yarlin's song, nor see the flaxen bloom
For they're cooped up in hooses when the yella's on the bloom

Chorus

Nae sale for pegs or baskets noo, that used to bide our lives
But I seem to work at scaldies jobs, from nie o' clock till five
But we ca' nae man oor maister, when we own the world roon
And I'll bid fareweel tae Breechin, when the yella's on the broom

Chorus

I'm weary for the springtime, when we tak the road aince mair
T ae the plantin and the fermin, and the berry fields O Blair
When we meet up wae oor kin-folk, frae a the country roon
And we yarn about wha'll tak the road when the yella's on the broom

Chorus

Words and what they mean:

Scaldie: In the language of the Scottish Travellers a Scaldie is a person from the settled, house- dwelling population

Yarlin: Another name for the Yellowhammer bird

Broom: A kind of shrub with yellow flowers that blossom in the Spring and Summer