



ACTIVITY SHEET

THE JUTE MILL SONG

Lyrics

**Oh, dear me, the mill's gaen fast
The poor wee shifters canna get nae rest
Shiftin' bobbins coarse and fine
They fairly mak you work for your ten and nine**

**Oh, dear me, I wish this day was done
Running up and doon the pass is nae fun
Shiftin', piecin', spinning, warp, weft and twine
Tae feed and claithe ma bairnie affen ten and nine**

**Oh, dear me, the world's ill-divided
Them that work the hardest are the least provided
But I maun bide contented, dark days or fine
There's nae much pleasure living affen ten and nine**

Activity 1

In the song, ten and nine (ten shillings and nine pence) refers to the weekly wage that was paid to the women working in the mill. Can you find out what that is in today's money?

Activity 2

Do some research into old money. Can you find out what these are worth?

- Shilling
- Guinea
- Half a crown
- Silver sixpence
- Threepenny

Activity 3

Working in the mills could be very dangerous and people worked very long hours. Can you find out about some of the dangers which were involved? Make a poster promoting fair and safe workplaces.

Translations

- gaen – going
- canna – can't
- mak – make
- pass – passageway between the machines in the factory
- shiftin' – the shifter was the person who removed full bobbins from the spinning frames and replaced them with empty ones
- piecin' – the workers who had to join the ends of broken threads
- warp – threads on the loom through which the cross threads were passed
- weft – the cross threads of a web of material
- claithe – clothe
- bairnie – child
- affen – off of
- maun – must
- nae – no

