

The King's Shilling

Words and music by Ian Sinclair

March

1 A A D
Oh my love has left me wi' bairn-ies twa and that's the last o him I ev-er

4 A A/C# F#m
saw He's joined the arm - y and he's marched a - wa' He's taen the

7 A D E A A A
shi lling he's taen the shi-lling an he's marched a - wa' Come ladd-ies come

12 A D A F#m E A
Hear the can-nons roar Tak the King's shi-lling and we're off tae war

Ian Sinclair is a musician from Caithness who wrote this fine song about the practice of bribing or coercing young men into the army, and the fate that awaited them. The King's Shilling was offered to likely young men by recruiting officers and its acceptance was regarded as a binding agreement to join up. The history of Scottish soldiers going off to fight has been a rich source for songs over the centuries and can raise some very important issues today. The recording features children from P5/6 Sanquhar Primary School on the last chorus.

Activity:

Research soldier's uniforms and create an art piece showing the soldiers leaving for war. In groups discuss the effects war has on a community. Check out this website for great sound bites from Dumfries and Galloway residents. www.dumfriesandgalloway.hss.ed.ac.uk

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