

Lochee Underpass Mural

Hello!

A new mural is being organised by The Love Lochee Group for the underpass at the bottom of Lochee High Street. We are asking for the help of Ancrum Road Primary school and St Mary's primary school with the design!



Here are some photos of the underpass. The mural will cover both walls, the ceiling and the concrete bits at both ends of the tunnel.

If you are nearby have a look at it in person to get an idea for how big it will be!

The idea

We wanted this mural to reflect some local Lochee history and after speaking to a local history group (thanks to Tam, Larry and Mike!) we settled on Berry picking as it has lots of imagery that should work really well as a mural.

Berry Picking was a big part of summer in Lochee for around 100 years from the early 1900s up until the 1990s. People would get picked up from Lochee in the morning by bus and get taken to the farms surrounding town to pick strawberries and raspberries. At the end of a day picking your bucket or basket would get weighed and you would be paid for your work with the bus taking you back home.

We would like you to use the berry picking inspiration to draw them into a mural design.

Below are some photos and testimonials to give you some inspiration and a place to start. However if your family has been living in Lochee for a while you could ask your older relatives if any of them went berry picking, then you could use their stories as your inspiration instead!







I remember when I was young, we used to take off to the berries in the summertime. If we were lucky we got to Blairgowrie - the klondyke of the berryfields. They used to say the berries were just hinging aff the bushes there. Well I couldn't imagine them hinging any place else.

Wir mithers made oor pieces up. We always seemed to have the same meat-paste ingredients on our pieces, and a bottle o' Barries lemonade which I thought was the best lemonade in the land.

You could pick berries that you put in small baskets that were then sent off to make jam but you were better off *on buckets*, because these berries were sent off to make dye. You could put a stane in the berry-bucket to make it seem heavier, but you had to watch at the weighing of the berries that they didn't spot the stane or you would be in big trouble. Our best trick was just to pee in the buckets of berries.

Elizabeth remembers happy summers berry picking...

Driving around Perthshire, the sight of raspberry fields always takes me back to my Fifties childhood when, along with my mum and two sisters, I spent each summer holiday 'at the berries'. For despite the early starts and the hard work, I loved the exciting new dimension it brought to my life.

The first treat of the day was boarding the 'berry bus'. Full of noisy, excited children and their long-suffering mums, it drove us some six miles to the berry farm near Bankfoot. Once on board, the older children and teenagers rushed upstairs, while the mums stayed downstairs with the smaller children.

On arrival, we piled out of the bus and into the berry field, where the gaffer assigned a 'dreel' to each pair of pickers. And after hanging our coats on the end post, tucking our piece bags in the bushes, and collecting our berry pails from the huge pile at the top of the field, we were ready to start.

One on either side of the bushes, we carried our pails to the far end of the dreel, doing our best to avoid a nasty scratch from a protruding stray branch. And after a rainy night, we would try to dodge the wet bushes that slapped against us as we squelched down the muddy dreel in our wellies.

My younger sister and I were too small to reach the higher branches at first. So mum and my older sister Helen took a side each, while Catherine and I were their helpers, picking the lower berries. After a few years, however, we had grown tall enough to stretch to the top berries, and were allowed our own sides.

Once our big pails were full, we took them to 'the weights'. Stationed at the top of the field was a flat cart upon which were huge hanging scales, a row of barrels and a table with a money box. We would heave the pail up to the weights man who deftly emptied the berries into the weighing pail then hung it on the scales, noting the weight before tipping the berries into one of the barrels.

Then came the exciting bit. We were paid there and then, according to how much we had picked. When we started in the early Fifties the rate was a penny ha'penny per pound of berries, so picking eight pounds of rasps would earn us a shilling. Proudly tucking our earnings into the little drawstring purses attached to our belts, we would return to our dreel, eager to make some more. And after several such trips in a day, counting up our money at night was a satisfying business.

Once home, we would recount the day's adventures to our dad, while mum got our tea ready. Then it would be a wash and an early night, while mum prepared clothes and food for the next day, then took a well earned breather.

Meanwhile, our money boxes were filling up, and when the berries were over, there would be a shopping trip, where we could spend our berry money on something special. I bought my first watch one year; another year it was a tennis racquet.

Then it was time to return to school, and in the excitement of being in a new class with a new teacher, berry time was soon forgotten – until the next summer when the magic started all over again!

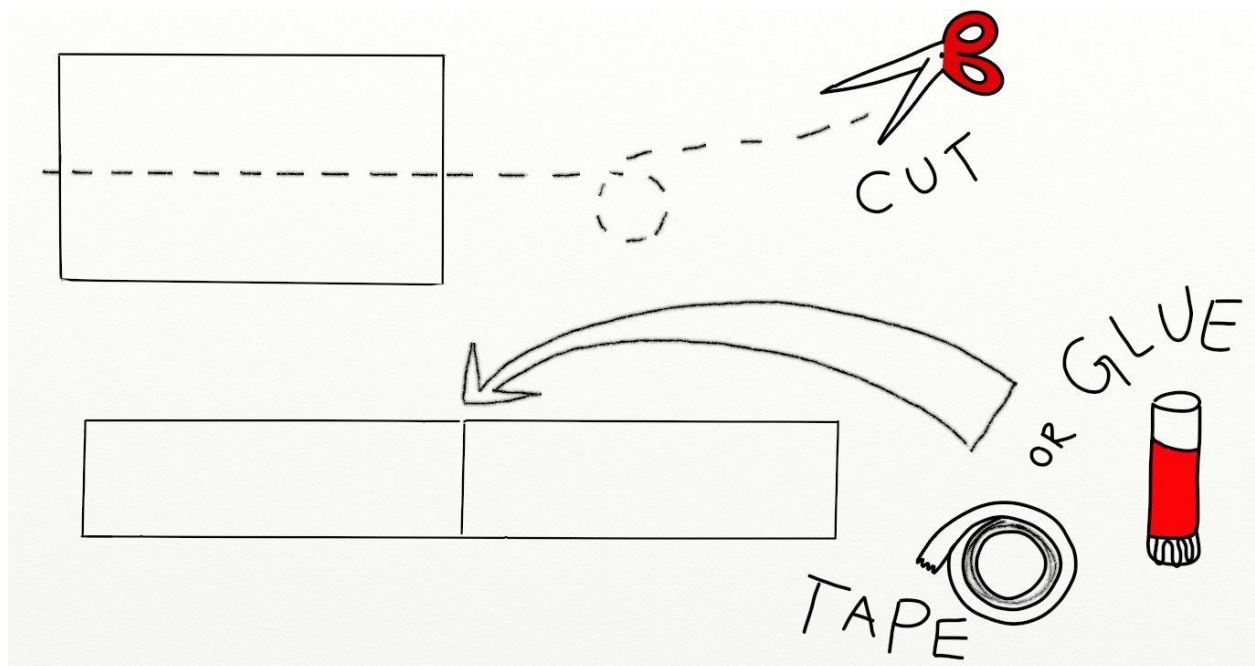
(This memory of berry picking is taken from History Scotland)

Designing your drawings

After looking at the inspiration (or maybe talking to your relatives) the next step is to choose what parts are important for telling the story. In this mural we won't be using words so you have to try and think about how the painting can explain the story of berry picking just through pictures.

For example you could show people traveling to the berrys by bus or maybe bicycle, you could show them picking with their buckets and baskets, having lunch, the nature and animals you might see in the countryside, then spending their hard earned cash. What would you do with your berry picking money? These are just suggestions though, you can choose whatever parts you like for your drawings!

Because the mural is going to be in the underpass you might find it helpful to cut and stick your paper so it's in a longer strip a similar shape to the wall.



Once the pupils are done with their designs I will look at them and use what they have made as inspiration for the final design. This is a colour pallet to give you

an idea of the paint that's going to be used but you can use different colours for your drawings if you like.



Here are some photos of some other murals I have done to give you a rough idea of the sort of style the final mural will be.





After the final design has been made the plan is to have some pupils for both primary schools come and help with the painting!

The aim of this project is to make the underpass a bright and colorful space that tells a little piece of Lochees history as well as involving both of the nearby primary schools.

Thank you and can't wait to see your drawings!

