

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## Katie Beardie

Katie Beardie

1.

Katie Beardie had a coo,  
Black and white about the mou';  
Wasna that a dentie coo?  
Dance, Katie Beardie!

Katie Beardie had a hen,  
Cackled but and cackled ben;  
Wasna that a dentie hen?  
Dance, Katie Beardie!

Katie Beardie had a cock,  
That could spin backin' rock;  
Wasna that a dentie cock?  
Dance, Katie Beardie!

Katie Beardie had a grice,  
It could skate upon the ice;  
Wasna that a dentie grice?  
Dance, Katie Beardie!

2.

Dally Bairdy had a coo,  
Black an' fyte about th' mou',  
I wat she was a dorty coo,  
Hey Dally Bairdy.

Dally Bairdy had a cat,  
That aye about th' ingle sat,  
She was a sleeket, plump an' fat,  
Canty Dally Bairdy.

3.

Dolly Bairdie haed a coo',  
Black an' white about the mou',  
Wasna' she a dainty coo--  
Dance, Dolly Bairdie.

Dolly Bairdie haed a cat,  
She could tak' baith mouse and rat,  
Wasna' she a dainty cat--  
Dance, Dolly Bairdie.

Dolly Bairdie haed a hen,  
She could lay baith but an' ben,  
Wasna' she a dainty hen--  
Dance, Dolly Bairdie.

Dolly Bairdie haed a cock,  
An' he could spin at the hard or rock,  
Wasna' he a dainty cock--  
Dance, Dolly Bairdie.

Dolly Bairdie had a wife,  
She could use baith fork an' knife,  
Wasna' she a dainty wife--  
Dance, Dolly Bairdie.

4.  
Wullie Wylie had a coo,  
Black and broon about the mou;  
Saw ye ever sic a coo  
As had Wullie Wylie?

5.  
Katie Beardie had a mouse,  
It ran up and down the house;  
Wasna that a denty mouse?  
Dance Katie Beardie.

6.  
Katie Bairdie had a cock,  
Stood and crew upon a rock;  
Wasnae that a dainty cock?  
Dance, Katie Bairdie.

Katie Bairdie had a hen,  
Speckled nou and speckled then,  
Wasnae that a dainty hen?  
Dance, Katie Bairdie.

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(1) Chambers PRS (1847), 193; (1870), 35.

There is a tune called Catherine Bairdie in the Rowallan MS (1612-28?); and the same tune, as Kette Bairdie, in the Skene MS. (?1629); see Dauney, *Ancient Scottish Melodies* (1838), 235 (no. 47), Kette Bairdie; but this is no longer used for the rhyme. Dauney's note (p. 277) quotes 2 stanzas, = 1 and 4 of PRS text. [Cf. "Simon Brodie".] Gregor (1881), 133, has 1st stanza (Kettie Beardie hid a coo, etc.). Ford CR 132, with 3.2 That could spin a gude tow rock; and a 5th stanza: "Katie

Beardie had a wean,/ That was a' her lovin' ain;" etc.;

MacLennan SNR (1909), 18, st. 1, 4, 2; Montgomerie SNR 99 (no. 121), with 3.2 That could spin, an bake, an rock. [The music there = Whistle o'er the Lave o't]. Nicht at Eenie (1932), 17, has stanzas 1-2, with bonnie for dainty.

(2) SNQ IV.5 (Oct. 1890), 94-5, from Aberdeenshire.

(3) Paul Past & Present (1881), 148 (no. 9); Gr cliv.2, from New Deer parish. St. 2, varied, in Rymour Club Misc. I (1906-11), 91: "Katie Beardie had a cat That could eat baith moose and rat;/ Wasna that a dainty cat? Dance, Katie Beardie!"

(4) Rymour Club I.92, from Aberdeen.

(5) Rymour Club II (1912-19), 41, from Alyth.

(6) Skipping rhyme from Strathblane, c. 1950.

N. Buchan 101 Scottish Songs (1962), 136, has "Katie Beardie" (with music; no source given), = 4 stanzas of version 3 (coo, cat, hen, wife,) and another stanza, a version of Ford's above:

Katie Beardie hid a wean,  
Widna play when it cam' on rain;  
Wisna that a dainty wean?--  
Dance, Katie Beardie.

[This text also in Hendry/Stephen Scotscape (1978), 27.]

Moffat 50 TSNR (1933), 8 ("Kitty Bairdie"), with music; has coo, hen, and cat, the last with line 2 "Sleek and sly and unco fat". Ritchie Singing Street (1964), 56, has coo ("It was black about the mou") and hen ("It could toddle but and ben").

MacTaggart Sc. Gallovidian Enc. (1824), 177, has a set of verses mostly by McT himself: "In Galloway now slumbers a singular old song and dance, called Dolly Beardy. After going through a world of trouble with great pleasure, I got a hint respecting the song, and here is the result of that--"

Dolly Beardy was a lass,  
De'il the like o'r on the grass,  
Her lad was but a moidert ass,  
Hey, Dolly Beardy.

Dolly Beardy had a leg,  
Ay, and she cud mak it fleg,  
And sometimes she was got wi' egg,  
Hooh, Dolly Beardy.

Dolly Beardy had a cow,  
Black and white about the mou',  
She kepted her ay rifting fu',

## Smock, Dolly Beardy.

Dolly Beardy she cud whud  
About the bonny birken wud,  
In spring time whan the saugh did bud,  
Sweet, Dolly Beardy.

Dolly Beardy lo'ed a cheel,  
His heart was cauld, it cudna feel,  
Sae him and her gaed baith tae de'il,  
Ha, Dolly Beardy.

Dolly Beardy steek thy een,  
They do confound us whan their seen,  
We lang to cuddle thee ateen,  
Dear, Dolly Beardy.

Dolly Beardy's blinking e'e  
Fairly hath dumfounder'd me,  
She is a hizzie fu' o' glee,  
Mark, Dolly Beardy.

Dolly Beardy ye hae craft,  
Dolly Beardy we are saft,  
Gallowa 'bout thee's run daft,  
Hech, Dolly Beardy.

A "curious variant" in Rymour Club Misc. II (1912-19), 79:  
"Katie Bairdie had a soo, It was reid, and black, and blue;/  
Ye needna gang wi' peelin's noo, For Katie Bairdie's killed  
her soo."

Cf. ODNR 117 (no. 98), "Charlie Warlie had a cow".

Two tunes are found with the text, one Shirramuir, and the other (more usual) Whistle o'er the Lave o't. The former, in Gow's Collection [whence Manson (1846), II.173], is a relative of the English nursery rhyme tune London Bridge is Broken Down. The words begin "Will ye go to Sheriffmuir?" [Do not confuse with the old set, = Cameronian Rant, as in SMM III (1790), 290 (no. 282); words begin "O cam ye here the fight to shun".] It is also found with "Be Baw Babbity", q.v. Whistle o'er the Lave o't is in Robert Bremner's Reels, 1759, vii, and with variations in Oswald's CPC xii, same date [Glen ESM 143]; SMM III.258 (no. 249), to Burns's "First when Maggie was my care", though old words are in Herd (1776) II.208 ("My mither sent me to the well" etc.). It is used these days for the Highland solo dance Sean Triubhas ("Shean Trews", i.e. "Old Breeks").

Confusion between the two tunes may have arisen because the last phrase (fitting the words "Dance, Katie Bairdie"), is

identical in both.

MS

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