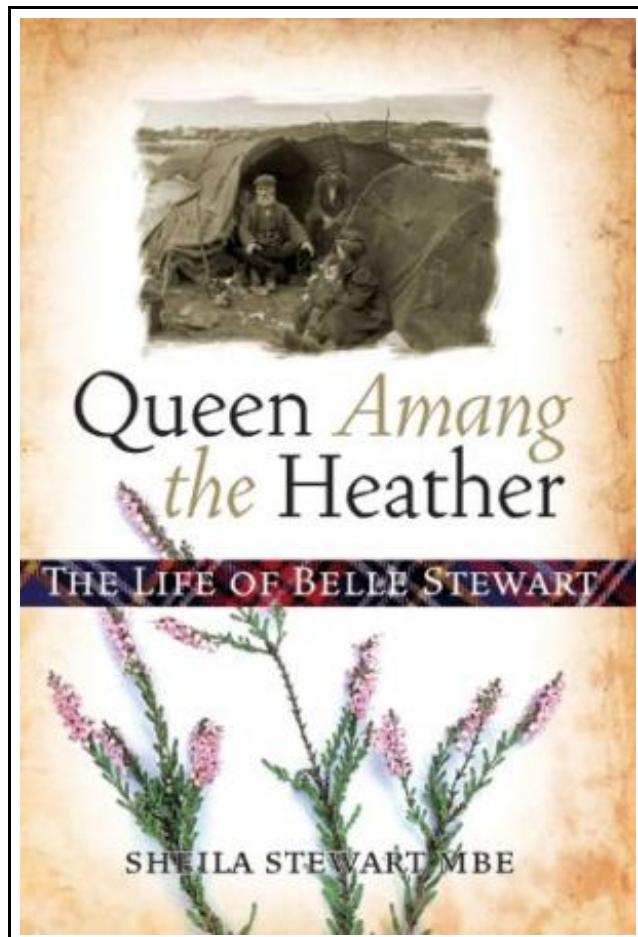


## Queen Amang the Heather: The Life of Belle Stewart



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Birlinn General. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Queen Amang the Heather: The Life of Belle Stewart, Sheila Stewart, Belle Stewart (nee MacGregor) was born in 1906 in a bow tent on the banks of the river Tay, into a travelling family of tinkers and pearlfishers. When she was seven months old, Belle's father died, and the family was no longer able to travel full-time. They settled in Blairgowrie, scraping a living picking fruit and potatoes. Growing up, Belle was surrounded by stories and songs that had been passed down over centuries through the generations of Scottish travellers. She continued learning, singing and writing songs as she travelled around Scotland and Ireland with her piper husband Alec Stewart, who she married in 1925. Perhaps her best known song, "The Berryfields o' Blair", spread amongst the travellers and was collected by Hamish Henderson in the 1950s. He managed to track down Belle as the writer of the song and so began to record the songs and stories of her family. The 'Stewarts o' Blair', as they were known, became stars of the folk scene, performing in concerts all over Europe and the United States. Belle's performances were compelling. Dazzling audiences with her warmth and elegance, she was awarded a BEM by the queen for her contribution to folk music. She died in 1997. In "Queen of the Heather", Sheila Stewart tells the moving story of her mother's life and career. Interspersed with the Stewarts' songs and stories told in Perthshire cant, this biography is an insightful and personal tribute to one of Scotland's most renowned folk singers, as well as to the rich culture of the travelling people.

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