

TIC TAC TOE,  
HERE WE GO,  
WHERE WE LAND  
WE DO NOT KNOW!

produced at the Institute of Early Childhood  
Development, 4 Madden Grove, Kew, 3101,  
Victoria.

.....

## ***The I.E.C.D.***

## ***Collection of***

## ***Australian Folklore***

This is the first issue of a new publication which we hope will draw together people from a diversity of backgrounds and professions who share a common interest in children's folklore. More particularly, we intend to focus on Australian children's folklore -- territory sadly neglected despite the evidence of an enduring, buoyant and richly inventive 'underground' culture of childhood in this country. From Aboriginal Australia to the multicultural Australia of today, there are continuing tracks of play ways, vulgarities, taunts, tricks and taboos which mark out the domain of childhood. This Newsletter is a tool and a resource for all those adults with a personal or professional interest in such territory.

We welcome contributions, suggestions, letters -- and of course, subscriptions. This issue of A.C.F.N. is free, but if you wish to receive subsequent issues, please fill out and return the subscription form at the back of the Newsletter.

*Gwenda Davey  
June Factor  
Joint Editors*

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Where can one study children's folklore in this country? In the next issue of A.C.F.N. we wish to publish a list of all tertiary institutions, adult education centres, etc, which offer courses in aspects of children's lore and language. Please let us know if/where such courses exist, with a brief resume of their duration, level and content.

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At present, the Library at I.E.C.D. houses over 9,000 children's playground rhymes, chants, games, insults, autograph album ditties, etc., together with a number of cassettes and some films on children's school-yard play. As well, there is a section containing the Multicultural Cassette Series and a collection of field recordings of folklore for children in Italian, Greek, Turkish, Spanish, Macedonian, Serbo-Croatian, Arabic and English.

All the material centres on CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE -- both folklore OF children and folklore FOR children.

No such archive exists elsewhere in Australia, although the National Library in Canberra and the LaTrobe Library in Melbourne have some original field recordings of general Australian folklore. It is hoped that the I.E.C.D. Collection will be a major national resource within Australia, and of interest to folklorists overseas.

The contribution of collectors outside the Institute is welcomed.

# Top Ten in the Nursery

Last year I.E.C.D. students interviewed 90 Anglo-Australian mothers of babies under 12 months about the games, songs, rhymes and routines they played with their infants. 124 different items were mentioned, and a clear 'Top Ten' emerged, as follows:

Peek-a-boo  
This Little Piggy Went to Market  
Round and Round the Garden  
Humpty Dumpty  
Pat-a-Cake  
Can you Keep a secret?  
Rock-a-bye-baby  
Clap hands till Daddy (etc.) comes home  
Baa Baa Black Sheep  
Twinkle Twinkle

All the above items were mentioned at least 20 times; 1-5 more than 35 times. After the 'Top Ten', the frequencies fell off sharply. Ipsy Wipsy Spider (in various versions) was mentioned 10 times; after this, most items were rarely mentioned more than once. Perhaps the most interesting feature is that almost all the 124 items are traditional English language rhymes, and could be found for example in the Oxford Book of Nursery Rhymes. It is hoped to carry out further research in this area.

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THANKS for the first issue:

- I.E.C.D. post-graduate students Ronis Chapman, Sally Wishart, Anita Carmody.
- I.E.C.D. Principal, Dr. Des. Connelly for underwriting costs of Issue No. 1.
- Sue Lisle for typesetting and layout.

## Realia - Australian Children's Play Artefacts

The Australian Children's Folklore Collection at I.E.C.D. is to be expanded to include examples (original or facsimile) of children's traditional play materials: jacks, marbles, skipping ropes, swap card collections etc.

It is hoped that I.E.C.D. will mount regular exhibitions of such realia, produce annotated catalogues, and generally enhance our understanding of children's play.

The organisers of the Collection are seeking contributions from all over Australia. Much of this material is regarded as ephemeral and thrown away when children grow up, but at the back of many cupboards there still lurk bags of marbles, autograph albums, old whipping tops and all the rest. At I.E.C.D. such realia will be carefully labelled, catalogued and displayed for the pleasure and enlightenment of all those interested in children's folklore. All contributions will be gratefully acknowledged -- please help us to establish this important archive!

# **"Sir if you please your shoe is unbuckled"**

In Britain in 1825, William Hone noted that April Fool's Day Jokers turned their attention from buckles to shoe laces with the change in fashion (Opie p. 265).

Although April Fool's Day has been observed for centuries in several countries, the actual origin of the custom is unknown. It resembles the Hilaria Festival of India and its timing seems related to the vernal equinox (March 21) when nature "fools" mankind with sudden changes in the weather.

If your roots are in Scotland you may have heard your nannie refer to "Huntingowk Day", where victims are sent on fruitless errands to hunt-the-gowk (or cuckoo bird) - a similar request to asking the apprentice for the left-handed hammer or more elbow grease.

In Melbourne on April 1st, 1981, we found that children are still actively involved in the old tricks that mark this special day. Although not confined to the child's domain, this age old practice bears the mark of children's folklore in its mysterious talent to preserve and resurrect old tricks and taunts, and then promptly bury them again till next year.

According to many adults, April Fool's Day is a thing of the past. We set out to find if indeed this was the case. With ears to the playground we found that the traditional practices appear to be alive, well and flourishing - at least in downtown Clifton Hill and out of town Doncaster, Melbourne, and we suspect in sites urban, suburban and rural throughout the country. This is the one day when people suffer tried and true old jokes for half a day (no tricks after twelve or you're the April Fool - although this is disputed by some who say notes can be pinned on backs in the afternoon).

"Your shoelace is undone" was the most popular taunt at Spensley Street Primary School (Clifton Hill) in 1981, as it was found to be in 1825 by More, and throughout the 1950's in the British Isles by Iona and Peter Opie. Other common tricks include: "There's a spider on your back, head, arm ..."; sending the unsuspecting on false errands; and above all tricking parents and teachers.

We found fake broken arms at Clifton Hill and Doncaster, and also spur of the moment tricks, such as catching the investigators by telling us our tape recorder had stopped. (Yes - we were caught!.) One variation we found was the calling out of "April Fool's Day" rather than "April Fool" or "You're an April Fool" (noted by the Opies and remembered by the writers).

Some of the tricks are described here by the children in their own words:

We all stumbled into the classroom, and the boys all had some type or size of an "April Fools" trick.

The first one that caught my eye was a (plastic) piece of doggy's "poo". This was put on Miss ....'s table on her plans for the day. She screamed and very disgustingly wrote our writing on the board.

This was the writing that was on the board!!! "The government have decided that all children have to attend school on Saturday Mornings to improve their Mathematics and Spelling Skills". As we were very surprised at how we were going to fit it in we started chatting, the teacher clapped her hands and yelled.

Then Scott had a bandage around his arm and he kept complaining about it. But he took it off later in the afternoon.

Then there was a boy, his sister put make-up on his eye to make it look like a black eye and it really looked real.

### April Fool's Day (continued)

On April Fools Day i set the alarm clock in my house to 7 o'clock and everyone woke up at 7 o'clock.

(presumably early - or late! eds)

From Tim

April Fools Day is a day to play tricks on people. bernies group put a note on the table saying there was a meeting in the staff room at 9.30 (maths time)

From Freya Age 10

I dont know how april fools originated, I did knot play any tricks on people exept put sighns on peale back.

From Cassandra Age 9

S. Wishart  
R. Chapman  
A. Carmody

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 1, Benton, U.S.A., 1980.

Opie, Iona and Peter; The Lore and Language of School Children. Paladin, Great Britain, 1959.

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## Multicultural Cassette Series

The Institute of Early Childhood Development is offering for sale a series of cassette tapes for young children in Italian, Greek, Spanish, Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian, Arabic and English. The cassettes contain stories, songs and rhymes in each of the languages concerned, linked together with authentic music from the appropriate culture groupings. Materials are both traditional and contemporary, and were selected to appeal to pre-school and early primary school children in the approximate 3-8 year age range.

### Multicultural Cassette Series (Continued)

Each cassette is of 30 minutes duration, and each side contains a complete 15 minute programme. There is no English on the cassettes, but an English synopsis is contained in the manual, which is an essential accompaniment to the cassette tapes and should be purchased with the initial order. Cassettes are \$3.50 each; manual \$12.00.

The Multicultural Cassette Series was produced under a grant from the Australian Government Children's Commission (now Department of Social Security, Office of Child Care).

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## The Colonial Child

*Papers presented at the 8th Biennial Conference of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Melbourne, 1979. Edited by Guy Featherstone. Royal Historical Society of Victoria 1981. Available from the R.H.S.V., 459 Collins Street, Melbourne, 3000 or Melbourne University Bookroom. Price \$8.00.*

The Colonial Child is an immensely valuable contribution to our slender knowledge of Australian children in the colonial era. There are eight papers on various aspects of colonial children's life, dealing with health, music, books, home life and the life of the 'outcast children in Marvellous Melbourne', described by Chris McConville. The authors are well-known, and include K.S. Inglis, Margarat Ingham, Gwen Jones, Robert Southby, Robin Stevens, and Stephen Murray-Smith. Folklorists will be particularly interested in June Factor's paper, 'Fragments of Children's play in Colonial Australia'.

The Colonial Child was reviewed by Michael Cannon in the Melbourne 'Age' of July 4th, 1981, and I take issue with his review of June Factor's contribution.

(continued)



## The Colonial Child (continued)

Cannon states that she emphasises that 'only middle-class children' of the last century enjoyed anything approaching the leisure and freedom known by most children today and includes 'children's games' among the 'simple delights ... available only to a favoured minority of children..'

Michael Cannon's comments fail to do justice either to children, the colonial poor, or to June Factor's article. Indeed, June Factor expresses a strong sense of wonder that so much elaborate play existed among children even under harsh conditions. Cannon might well have quoted her extracts from Mundy (1846) about the 'milkboy' and the 'vegetable lad' and their impromptu street cricket, or the dolls made from pegs or pieces of tree roots. He might also have quoted her reference to Victor Daley writing in The Bulletin in 1898 about the prevalence of traditional singing games among Sydney girls - and their local variants, for example:

Johnny and Jane and Jack and  
Lou,  
Butler's Stairs through  
Woolloomooloo;  
Woolloomooloo and cross the  
Domain;  
Round the Block and home again!

Heigh ho! Topsy toe,  
Give us a kiss and away we go.

Verbal play and humour in particular survive under the harshest conditions, and traditional games and routines are handed down orally from generation to generation. Even the country schoolchildren about to be 'softened and humanised' by school music as described in Robin Stevens' article in The Colonial Child were said to be 'engaging in rude horse play ... (and) indelicate familiarities'. The indelicate familiarities may well have included predecessors of the vast repertoire of sexual and scatological rhymes and jokes transmitted orally amongst pre-adolescent children (Lowenstein 1974).

As for 'rude horse play': versions of the game 'Buck buck', which involves jumping on one's peers' backs has been recorded in Brisbane in 1979 (Lindsay & Palmer) and in Nero's Rome (Tylor 1871). There is no suggestion in either case that only 'favoured children' were players!

Gwenda Davey

Lindsay, P.L. & Palmer, D., The Playground Game Characteristics of Brisbane Primary School Children, ERDC Report. In press.

Lowenstein, W., 1974, Shocking, Shocking, Shocking. Fish & Chips Press, Melbourne.

Tylor, E.D., 1871, The Origins of Culture, 1970, Peter Smith, Gloucester, Mass.

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### ♦♦RELATED PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE♦♦

The following can be purchased from either the Free Kindergarten Union, Multicultural Resource Centre, 273 Church Street, Richmond, 3121, Vic., or Richmond Community Education Centre, 123 Church Street, Richmond, 3121, Vic.


The Middle East, a source book

Easter for Children, a source book

Christmas for Children.

These source books contain valuable information researched among ethnic communities in Victoria. A great deal of traditional material is included such as, songs, stories and games.

(continued)



the  
**children's**  
FOLKLORE NEWSLETTER

C.W. Sullivan III, Editor  
English Department, East Carolina University  
Greenville, North Carolina 27834

The *Children's Folklore Newsletter*, published three times a year, is sent to all members of the Children's Folklore Section. Special arrangements can also be made with any folklore-related organization wishing to receive copies. All materials to be considered for publication should be sent to the editor.

Published by East Carolina University  
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## RELATED PUBLICATIONS (continued)

International songs for children compiled by Priscilla Clarke and Belinda Williams. A multilingual publication, researched in Melbourne. Available from the Free Kindergarten Union, Multi-cultural Resource Centre Victoria.

Dissertation: A Sociological View of Children's Traditional Spontaneous Games, by Anne Kotzman. B.A. (Hons) Dissertation, Monash University, 1973.

The rare Australian dissertation on children's games is a valuable addition to knowledge in the field. Copies can be purchased from the writer, Anne Kotzman, at the Institute of Early Childhood Development. Anne Kotzman is a former Kindergarten teacher, a graduate of Monash and LaTrobe Universities and is now student Counsellor at I.E.C.D.

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## ***A Literary Bun in the Oven***

In 1980, June Factor received a Literature Board Special Purpose Grant to assist in the production of a book on Australian children's folklore. At present, historical, anecdotal and analytic material on this subject is scarce and largely inaccessible to non-specialist readers. This book is intended to bring together already published material -- such as the article by Victor Daley reprinted in the first (1969) edition of Cinderella Dressed in Yella -- and hitherto unpublished descriptions and commentaries on children's games, rhymes, secret rituals, etc.

If any readers of this Newsletter are interested in contributing to this book, or have any suggestion regarding published or unpublished sources, they can contact June Factor at the I.E.C.D. address.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY (A)	NL	National Library of Australia.
	NU	Australian National University.
	CAE	Canberra College of Advanced Education.
	DE	Australian Department of Education.
	IAS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.
NEW SOUTH WALES (N)	U	Fisher Library, University, Sydney.
	NCU	Auchmuty Library, University, Newcastle.
	SL	State Library, N.S.W.
	UNE	Dixon Library, University, New England.
	CTC	Catholic Teachers College, North Sydney.
	ED	N.S.W. Department of Education.
	GX	Goulbourn College of Advanced Education.
	KX	Ku-ring-gai, College of Advanced Education, Lindfield.
	MAE	Truskett Library, Mitchell C.A.E.
	MQU	Macquarie University.
	RAE	Riverim C.A.E. Info. Resources Centre.
	ST	Sydney Technical College.
	TEAC	Sydney Teachers College.
	WU	University of Wollongong.
QUEENSLAND (Q)	U	University of Queensland.
	SL	State Library of Queensland.
	AET	Darling Downs. Inst. Advanced Ed. Resource Mat. Centre
	CX	Capricornia Institute Advanced Education Rockhampton.
	ED	Queensland Department of Education.
	JCU	James Cook University of North Queensland.
	MGX	Mount Gravatt, C.A.E.
SOUTH AUSTRALIA (S)	SL	State Library of South Australia.
	FU	Flinders University of S.A.
	U	Bass Smith Library, Univ. of Adelaide.
	AAE	Adelaide College of the Arts and Education-
	ED	S.A. Education Department, Education Library.
	SAE	Sturt College of Advanced Education.
TASMANIA (T)	CAE	College of Advanced Education.
	U	University of Tasmania.
	SL	State Library
VICTORIA (V)	SL	State Library of Victoria.
	CIT	Caulfield Institute of Technology.
	COTC	State College of Victoria, Coburg.
	ER	Australian Council for Educational Research.
	FSC	State College of Victoria - Frankston.
	IECD	Institute of Early Childhood Development.
	LU	La Trobe University.
	MOU	Monash University.
	TPD	Australian Dept. of Transport. Central Office Library.
	UED	Faculty Education Library - Melbourne University.
	ZBU	Burwood State College
	ZTO	State College of Vic. Toorak - Resource Centre.
WESTERN AUSTRALIA (W)	CHX	Churchlands College of Advanced Education.
	ED	W.J. Rooney Library, Education Department.
	IT	T.L. Robertson Library, W.A.I.T.
	MOU	Murdoch University.
	MLX	Mt. Lawley C.A.E.
	NX	Nedlands C.A.E.
	MV	Western Australian Musuem.
	LB	Library Board of W.A. State Bibliographical Centre.

Journal of Folktale Studies

Fabula Berlin, W. Germany, Text in German, English or French.

A NL  
 NU  
 N MQU  
 U  
 UNE  
 S U  
 V MOU

Folk Music and Folklore Calcutta. (Folk Music & Folklore Research Institute).

V MOU

Folklore Studies Tokyo (Society of the Divine word)  
 Text in English, French and German.

A NL  
 NU

Fol'klor kok iskusstvo slova. Moscow

N U

Folk life Cardiff, Wales (Society for Folk Life Studies)

A NL  
 NU  
 N SL  
 S U  
 W MU

Folk-liv Stockholm Supersedes: Folk. Superseded by Ethnologia Scandinavica.

S U  
 W U

Folk lore Calcutta (Indian Folklore Society)  
 Supersedes: Indian folk lore.

A NL  
 Q SL  
 S U

Folk-lore London (Folk-lore Society)  
 (Incs. Folk-lore Journal)

A	IAS	S	FU
	NL		SL
	NU		U
N	MQU	T	SL
	SL	V	MOU
	U		SL
	UNE		U
Q	U	W	CHX
			LB



Folklore Journals in Australian Libraries (continued)

Folklife Center news Washington D.C. (AM Folklife Center)

A NL

Bedloideas Dublin (Folklore of Ireland Society)

A NU  
N MQU  
SL  
U

New York Folklore Quarterly

A NL  
N U

Western Folklore Berkeley, California

A NL  
S U

Southern Folklore Quarterly

A NL  
N U  
Q U  
S SL

Journal of American Folklore Uni. Texas. Am. Folklore Society

A	NL	Q	SL
	NU		U
N	NCU	S	FU
	SL		U
	U	V	SL
	UNE		IECD
P	U	W	CHX
			U

Journal of Am. Folklore supplement Annual Report bibliography of folklore

A NL  
S U  
W U

Journal of Educational Research Washington D.C.

A	CAE	TEAC	V	CIT
	NL	WU		COTC
	NU	Q		ER
N	CTC			FSC
	EP			LU
	GX			MOU
	KX			TPD
	MAE			UED
	MQU	S		ZBU
	NCU			ZTO
	NX		W	CHX
	RAE			ED
	SL			IT
	ST			MOU
		T		MLX
				NX
				U

Compiled by  
Ronis Chapman

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AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE NEWSLETTER

2 issues per year

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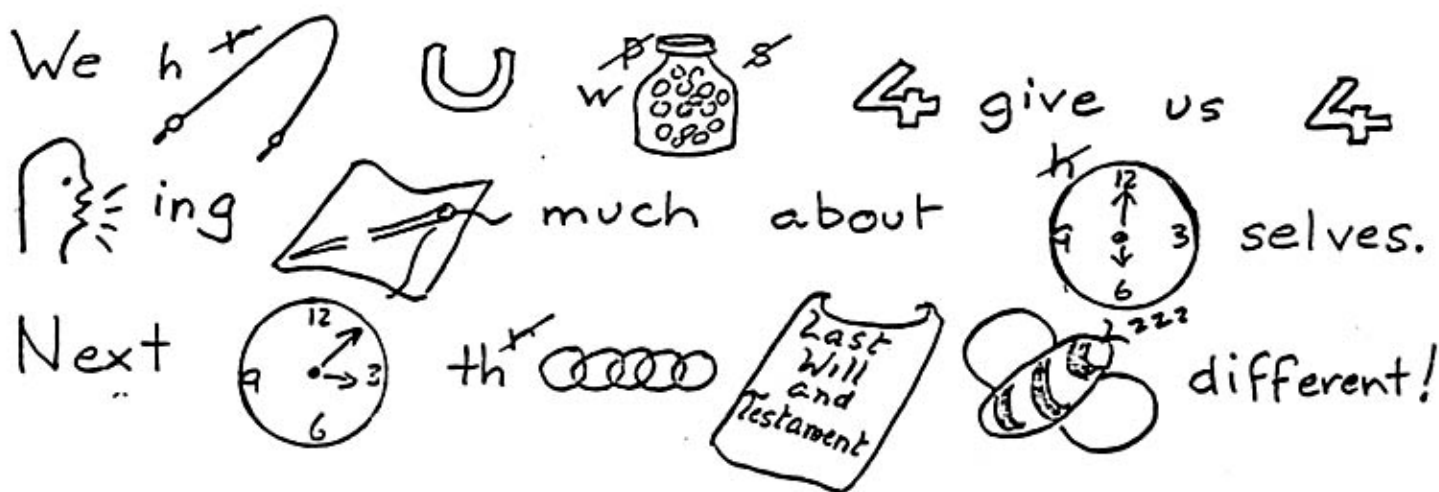
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KEW, 3101, VICTORIA.*

Comments, suggestions for subsequent issues, etc.

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TWELVE AND TWELVE ARE TWENTY-FOUR  
SHUT YOUR GOB AND DON'T SAY MORE!