



AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE NEWSLETTER

Editors: June Factor & Gwenda Davey

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From the Editors

Tops, Tales, and Granny's False Teeth this was the title of an exhibition of traditional children's play held from April 2 to 27 at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, organised by the Australian Centre at Melbourne University, and the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation. The exhibition included playthings donated or lent by several foreign embassies in Canberra, and proved such a success that we hear moves are afoot to keep the exhibition going. Both patients and visitors took part in the event, the first of its type to be held in an Australian hospital. A longer article on TTGFT is included in this Newsletter.

Australian interest in matters folkloric continues to grow, particularly in museum and publishing circles, although as yet there is no major breakthrough in academia. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's 'living treasure' - the radio programme *Australia All Over* - continues to explore folklife across

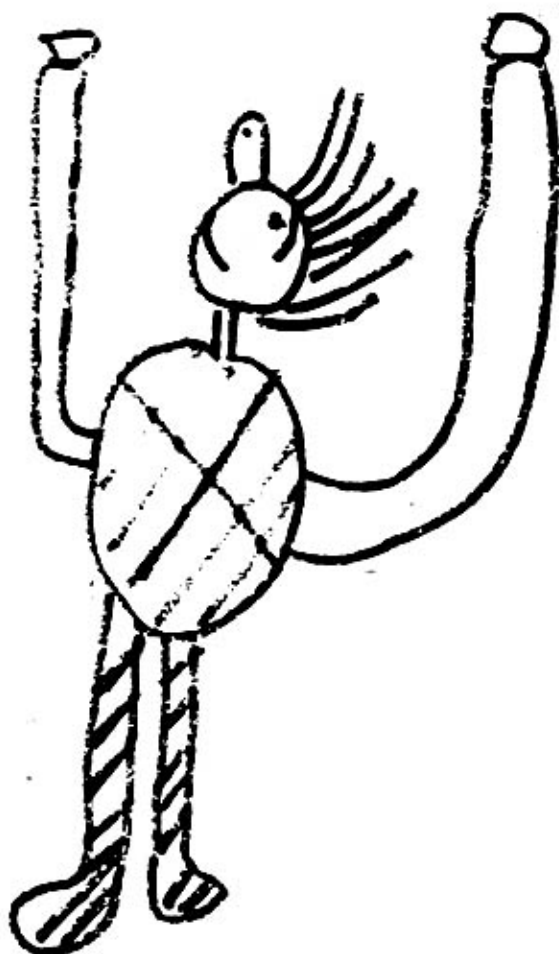
the continent, particularly in the outback, and commercial television presents suburban hobbies and pastimes in *Burke's Backyard*. In this Newsletter we introduce for the first time some of the work of ABC radio's comic folklorists-in-spite-of-themselves, *The Coodabeen Champions*. We are sure you will enjoy some of their listeners' letters about homemade games and other extempore activities.

Our international connections provide both pleasure and erudition. We 'dip our lid' to Dr. Dorothy Howard's beautiful study *Pedro of Tonalà*, a detailed account of one Mexican boy's life and participation in play, work and festive occasions. (see pp.2&3) We also thank a Danish reader of the ACFN, Erik Kaas Nielsen, for sending us information about children's folklore studies in that country. We include his English translation of a leaflet on this subject, and welcome such material from readers in other countries.

Australian folklife itself continues on its merry way. Recently one of the editors was somewhat confused by a

taxi driver talking about injuring his 'Warwick Farm'. Not being a Queenslander, it took the editor a few seconds longer than usual to decipher the rhyming slang reference to his broken arm. Warwick Farm is a popular horse-racing track in Brisbane An annoyed parent can still tell a troublesome child that 'If you don't be good, I'll drop ya - like a sparrer in the Yarra' (or a 'mizzie on Mount Kozzie', if you come from New South Wales). For our overseas readers, the Yarra River in Melbourne is noted for 'flowing upside down' (it is no Blue Danube, we are afraid) and Mt. Kosciusko is Australia's highest mountain. Slang which incorporates regional place names is a subject of great interest. Readers, please send examples!

Gwenda Davey
June Factor



PEDRO OF TONALÁ

by Dorothy Howard
(Hall-Poorbaugh Press, Roswell, New Mexico, 1989)

This book provides a rare study of a young boy's life in a Mexican village. Based on research begun in 1962, the noted U.S. children's folklorist, Dr Dorothy Howard, has presented a detailed account of the daily activities of one Mexican child: home life, school, fiestas and holidays, games and work - all are interwoven in this small, engrossing book as they are in life.

PEDRO OF TONALÁ will be of value to anyone interested in the development of a child within a family and community. It is especially worthwhile as a model of one kind of participative research, in which the researcher does not pretend to be invisible but records her part in initiating and encouraging activities and events. Howard is also conscious of the relative poverty of her young informants, and rewards each child who writes down descriptions of games with a peso:

After brief introductory remarks, the headmaster called on the pupils, one by one, to come to the front of the room to read their compositions. It was a solemn, dignified performance. Each pupil bowed to me, then to the headmaster, turned to the class and read; some read with hands and paper shaking. Then each turned to me again, bowed and handed me

the paper. I stood, and the entire class stood, while I made a little acceptance speech and handed the reader a peso.

The first peso sent a murmur of surprise rippling across the room, and the pupils turned to each other and smiled. More than an hour later I had heard and received all their compositions. The dozen extra pesos I had in my handbag I handed to the headmaster saying that those who wished to write descriptions of other games could be rewarded for each paper. Thenceforth on each visit until my last one, I received one, two or three written game descriptions. (p.34)

The games Dorothy Howard records are themselves worth the price of the book (US\$13.00 plus postage). The photos catch something of the life of these poor yet dignified people. A book worth owning.

June Factor



"TOPS, TALES, AND GRANNY'S FALSE TEETH": CHILDREN'S TRADITIONAL PLAY IN A PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL.

JUDY MCKINTY and DOROTHY RICKARDS were co-ordinators of the innovative children's play and story-telling exhibition at the Royal Melbourne Children's Hospital in April this year. Here Judy Mckinty describe how the exhibition was structured and how it worked.

The sights and sounds of children at play are familiar to everyone. Yet for children in hospital it is difficult to maintain contact with the play traditions of their friends in the schoolyard. They have no part in the latest marbles craze, the current "in" joke or riddle, or the construction of a clapping rhyme based on a television commercial. They are isolated from their friends (and sometimes their families) in an environment which is clinical and designed for adult use. This is particularly significant in the case of long-term patients.

Despite these difficulties, there is evidence to suggest that children in hospital continue to participate in their own sub-culture. There are nicknames for various procedures and hospital equipment, jokes about the hospital staff and the food, and tricks which are used to "initiate" new nurses. This participation is of enormous importance for the children's well-being, and only the very sickest children exclude themselves from it.

"Tops, Tales & Granny's False Teeth" was an exhibition of children's traditional play, incorporating games such as marbles, tops, string and jacks games, paper and pencil games

and storytelling, as well as a display of toys and games from various countries. It was based at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, for four weeks during April 1990. Some of the display materials were artefacts from the Australian Children's Folklore Collection, others were provided by various foreign embassies, and some belonged to individuals, including members of the hospital staff. The traditional games were provided with the help of the Children's Museum of Victoria, and many children's books were donated by publishers.

The purpose of the exhibition was to provide an interesting and informative experience for patients, visitors and staff at the hospital. It was also a way of introducing traditional games and story-telling as a bridge between the lives of the children inside and outside the hospital, and as a link between the children, their parents and the hospital staff. As such it was particularly successful.

It was a participatory exhibition with two main elements. The first was an exhibition centre in which patients, visitors and staff were welcome to play games, listen to stories, talk, read, share experiences or sit and relax while watching others. It was designed to be informal, inviting, comfortable and non-clinical, with furniture which could easily be moved to accommodate a number of visitors in wheelchairs or on trolleys. Patients were brought down to the centre as often as possible by the hospital play specialists, parents, teachers and nurses. This proved to be a positive and refreshing experience, and provided a respite from the clinical environment of the

wards. There was an exhibition staff member present to play, teach and learn games or read stories, to supervise and guide, or simply to listen.

The second element was an outreach programme which was developed in consultation with the Play Specialists Department at the hospital. Baskets containing the traditional games were provided for play specialists to use on the wards with non-ambulant children, and an "explainer" taught the children string figures and played games with them, using the materials in the baskets. For children who could not or did not wish to participate in the games, there were people to read or tell stories - either to individual children in bed, or to groups in the playrooms or exhibition centre. These volunteer storytellers were members of the Storytelling Guild of Victoria, the Country Women's Association, students at tertiary institutions and private individuals with an interest in the welfare of children.

Because the games were traditional, it was easy for people to identify with them. They provided a link between generations and cultures, and encouraged interaction in a way that is not normally found in a hospital. Parents and grandparents showed children (and each other) how they played the games, strangers shared childhood memories, people from other countries recorded their traditional games for the Australian Children's Folklore Collection, and marbles tournaments were organised between visiting medical students and others.

The games materials had a versatility of use, and were able to be used by

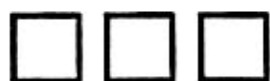
children of widely varying ages and physical capabilities. A patient who was in a weakened condition gained pleasure from using a pump-action musical top, and the jacks games and finger tops were made accessible to wheelchair patients by using a mobile trolley of suitable height. A marbles bridge was used on the floor or on a table. One of the most-used games was O-Tedama, a Japanese jacks game which is played with small bean bags. Because they are so easy to handle, the bean bags were ideal for very young children to use, as well as children who had reduced movement in their hands or arms. They were thrown, caught, shaken, piled up, put in boxes and rows or just carried around. The tactile nature of all the materials encouraged people to use them freely, either to play the traditional games or invent their own, and they provided an interesting and subtle way to improve physical skills.

It was also discovered that the activities provided a way of reaching children who were withdrawn or traumatised by their hospital experience. Because there is something so fundamental and yet so simple about the traditional games and storytelling, they can be introduced at a very accessible level. With the gaining of new skills, the children's self-esteem was raised, and the variety of activities available enabled them to make their own choices. This was important, because in a hospital the opportunity to make their own choices is severely limited. There was also an excellent medium for self-expression in the making and use of "beautifully rebellious" fortune-tellers, in which the children could say what they liked.

The significance of the "Tops, Tales & Granny's False Teeth" exhibition was that it was a non-clinical space within the hospital, and that it provided activities which are essential to children's well-being. It was an indirect approach to treating the child, which dealt with the whole child and the family, and as such could be considered to have real therapeutic value. The exhibition has also aroused favourable comment from people both inside and outside hospitals. It is felt that other hospitals, in country areas as well as cities, would benefit from the introduction of a similar programme.

The baskets of games which were used on the wards have remained in the hospital and have become part of the play specialists' programme, and the books which were donated by publishers have become part of the children's library. The baskets, books, and the expertise gained by the staff will ensure the continuation of children's traditional games within the Royal Children's Hospital.

Judy McKinty



UNDER THE STARFRUIT TREE:
FOLKTALES FROM VIETNAM

told by Alice M. Terada
Kolowalu Books, University of Hawaii
Press, Honolulu, 1989.

Under The Starfruit Tree is an illuminating introduction to Vietnamese traditions and folklore for young readers and adults. Through a broad range of stories one is introduced to traditional ways of life and death in traditional Vietnam.

Like many folktales, the stories in this collection deal with the universal and timeless question of why the unjust prosper. In a variety of ways the stories enact the ancient wisdom of the Hermit in a story called "The Heavenly Tea Server", who declares, "Although punishments are slow to come, they are inevitable."

The folkstories would provide an excellent teaching resource for upper primary and lower secondary students. The stories are rich in symbolism and moral dilemmas - excellent starting-points for class discussion and individual writing.

The traditional Vietnamese belief in animism is reflected in many of the tales. A junior art class, having heard the description of the Thunder God as "a fiercely muscular, barrel-chested being ... with nostrils streaking flashes of lightning ..." would surely be inspired!

In a variety of ways the tales in this collection warn of the sin of Hubris.

Man's place in the universe is perceived of as small and powerless compared to that of the gods and the natural world. The stories reflect Vietnam's rural past in their emphasis on man's need to care for and respect the natural world and all its creatures. Many readers may regard this ancient wisdom as a timely and important message for the 1990s.

Under The Starfruit Tree is not a collection of sombre moralistic lessons. There are the usual assortment of evil step-mothers, silly young wives, jealous husbands and presumptuous old men woven together to entertain whilst revealing to the reader the rituals of life and death in traditional Vietnam.

Anne Soccio



Why couldn't
the skeleton
go to the
dance?
He had no
body to go
with.

SNUG AS A BUG!

Scenes from family life

Collected by Gwenda Beed Davey

Illustrated by Peter Viska.

Snug as a Bug! is a collection of family sayings and rhymes which loving and exasperated adults use with their children. All the sayings have been collected in Australia, and most are in widespread use today.

Snug as a Bug! has been prepared as a companion volume to *June Factor's Far Out, Brussels Sprout! All Right, Vegemite! and Unreal, Banana Peel!* and Heather Russell's collection of children's playground games *Carmen Out to Play!*. As with these books, the original material for *Snug as a Bug!* is now housed in the Australian Children's Folklore Collection at the University of Melbourne.

Some of the items in *Snug as a Bug!*, like the magical 'wigwam for a goose's bridle', are centuries old, and are part of our strong British heritage. Others have come from languages other than English, as spoken in Australia. The battle of wits between adults and children and the love of a good joke or witty turn of phrase seem to know no ethnic boundaries. The index at the back of this book shows which language each item comes from: all are from English unless otherwise indicated.

Oxford University Press \$12.95

NEWS FROM DENMARK

ERIK KAAS NIELSEN has generously supplied us with information about the work of the Committee for Danish Children's Folklore. Readers interested in making contact with the committee may write to Mr Nielson at the address given at the end of this article.

The committee for Danish Children's Folklore was founded in 1978 on the initiative of the author and psychologist, Jens Sigsgaard. The committee consists of social anthropologists, folklorists, educationalists, psychologists and others with a knowledge of children's folklore (children's traditional culture), and the committee has the following aims:

- to promote knowledge about Danish children's folklore.
- to inspire and if possible assist collecting, research, exhibitions, meetings, etc. concerning children's folklore.
- to co-operate with interested persons and organizations at home and abroad.

Since its foundation, the committee has procured materials for a UNESCO exhibition on traditional games and primitive (handmade) toys. Some of the members of the committee have also assisted with the preparation of an annotated bibliography, *History of Civilisation of the Child in the North*, (Denmark, Finland, The Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) published in 1980 and a supplement published in 1985.

In co-operation with The Open University, the committee has arranged five public lectures on children's traditional culture.

In many ways children still have their own culture, which is handed down from one generation of children to the next. The girls have their singing games, in which boys seldom participate, but today the girls often prefer the new clapping songs with complicated clapping movements at a rapid pace. Both boys and girls know rude songs and rebellious ditties, and they tell stories, jokes and 'chillers' (ghost stories), which resemble the repertoire of storytellers of old. Above all children still have exciting games, which give them a sense of community and worthwhile experiences.

Nonetheless the conditions in this field are not as positive as they used to be. In many countries well-informed research workers believe that this varied, humane and valuable culture is under siege.

The reasons are numerous. Today, children's lives are organized and planned. Sports have acquired enormous prestige through television, and football especially occupies leisure time for tens of thousands of boys.

Further information on the committee for Danish Children's Folklore

Jens Sigsgaard, the founder of the committee, has written a number of books, some of them based on children's rhymes, some of them fictional. The most famous, Palle Alone in the World, has been translated into most European

languages and into Chinese and Japanese as well.

In 1988 the committee arranged a course of lectures on the following subjects:

1. Danish Children's Folklore in an International Perspective.
2. Traditional Songs Among Children.
3. The Joke on Jokes (On Children's Jokes and Riddles).
4. Children's Play (Games) and Toys in a Historical Perspective.
5. Children's Pictures.

All lectures took place at The Danish Teacher's Highschool - a kind of teachers' university.

The committee has of late edited a booklet written by its members:

Brnekultur i jenhjide, Ni synspunkter fra Udvalget for dansk brne-folklore (Children's Culture at Eye Level, Nine Points of View from The Committee for Danish Children's Folklore). The content of the little book is as follows:

1. Children's Culture, Children's Folklore and Children's Psychology.
2. Children's Tales.
3. When Children Write and Draw.
4. Children and Singing.
5. Reflections on Play.
6. Secret Places of Play.
7. The Heaps of Toys are Growing.
8. Conditions of children's Culture - Worse or Better?
9. Children's Own Culture.

The book is illustrated by the eminent

artist Ib Spang Olsen, partly with drawings inspired by his own childhood.

In October 1989, the committee arranged a seminar on children's tales and jokes at the Danish Teachers' Highschool with litterateurs, psychologists, folklorists and educators. We hope to be able to arrange a similar conference on children's singing.

Passive entertainment and media culture increasingly fill the lives of children. Play has low prestige even among children! To sing and play yourself is no longer something quite natural, and the group games where you quite simply need and 'use' one another are not so common as they used to be. But nonetheless the games are still important, not least to the development of the child.

What grown-ups can do is primarily to give children the possibility to play and the time to play.

We know something of our children's own culture, but not enough. We can at least offer a number of lectures with pictures (slides) and sound (tapes) on different subjects. We would like to organise further research, collection and other on-going activities.

We are willing to participate in discussions and seminars on subjects concerning children's folklore and children's culture as a whole. We also wish to co-operate with others to assist with ideas for play-days, festivals and similar activities, but we do not at present possess the economic means to put all these plans into effect. This should however not prevent any one interested in these

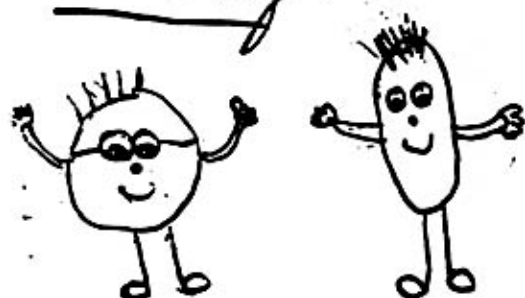
ideas from contacting us.

Erik Kaas Nielsen,
Rypevanget 16,
DK 2600 Glostrup
(Chairman of the Committee)



Here is a joke.
Q: Why did the
jellybean go to
School?

A: Because he
wanted to be a
Smarty.



GAMES WE PLAYED AS KIDS

Children's Folklore on the Coodabeen Champions Show (ABC)

It is 7.10 p.m. on a Sunday night. An 'M.M.' (Magic Moment). Time to get out the ironing and switch on to the Coodabeen Champions (C.Cs), 3LO. Every Sunday night Tony Leonards, Geoff Richardson, Ian Cover and Greg Champion chat among themselves for three hours on National Radio. They chat about footy, cricket, films, cars, pop music, more footy, more cricket and the hours just roll by. The show is a kind of boys' club, an after-the-match gossip session which includes a number of themes, not only sport. The Coodabeens presenters are experts on trivia. They love a bit of nostalgia particularly when it comes to pop music of the 50s, 60s, 70s, old awful cars, T.V. advertisements both good and bad and as luck would have it, the games they played as kids.

Last year, the Coodabeens ran a segment called 'Games We Played As Kids'. They invited listeners to write in describing their favourite games remembered from childhood. Cane-toad hockey, car snooker, dice cricket, and many variations of backyard and street cricket were just a few of the games recalled by listeners. 'Spinning my little sister in a bucket from the Hills-Hoist' was perhaps one of the funniest (and most dangerous) games they received.

I thought ACFN readers might be interested to read some of the games that were described in these letters.

The first letter is quoted in full because it's a great example of the style of language, repartee and taunting that identifies the subculture surrounding the Coodabeen Champions Show. Listeners are just as good at serving up this kind of humour and conversational style as the Coodabeens are at dishing it out. This style is, I am told, a parody on serious football and cricket commentating.

Mick from Mt. Gambier

I don't know, you get invited out to dinner on consecutive Sunday nights and return to the radio to find that 'Games we played as kids' has been 'given the flick'. Shades of Footscray Tony! And to think that one of the missed weeks was due to the long trek to Arden Street to catch the Brownlow Count. What happened to Loyalty?

It's not that I haven't had a Sunbird or a Backyard Modified 1964 VW Sedan to forever curse, it's just that it took this long to find recycled paper to write on, Champs!

I would have won too (unless I got Tony, 'The Hanging Judge' Leonard to adjudicate as he did with my Cricket Games earlier this year!)

I would have won because the definitive game should have been folkloric, particular to an era, that cannot be now repeated (eg. the 'Hills Hoist Centripetal Force Experiment'), and must receive posthumous recognition in competitions like 'Games we played as kids'.

The game Free Milk For Schools
Bottle Top Shelter Shed Goal
Shooting (FMFSBTSSGS).

The era WDFNHISG (When Dairy
Farmers Never Had It So Good).

The equipment needed was the thin
silver bottle top off the Third Pint
(not metric) milk bottles given free to
primary school kids in the '60s. The
area was the shelter shed, with the
goals being the hanging leather
satchels (no vinyl rubbish) on the
hooks at either end.

Different competitions could be
run, such as:-

- a) distance 'kicking'
- b) accuracy shots 'from the angle',
and even,
- c) 5-a-side 'footy' (I'm not sure if
more could play, but we only
had 10 boys in Grades 5 and 6
at State School Number 1035!).

Players in goal shooting competitions
could do whatever they liked to their
'footy', 'top' or 'taw'; but most
modifications were along the lines of,
holes strategically placed by
fingernails or the original paper
straws and, pushing the plane of the
top up or down (a 'humpy' or a
'dipper' respectively). There was no
patent on designs, but copying a
winning individual's top would bring
cries of the heinous 'copycat' and a
subsequent melée of jumper-pulling
and wrestling that would bring the
crates of now topless milk crashing to
the floor stinking the place out for
days!

Finally the shooting action for those
'Year 12 Steven Waugh Come Latelys'
who haven't seen anything packaged

in glass, let alone Free Milk and their
bottle tops!

The lip of the top is held between the
tips of fore and second fingers and
flicked with subtle alterations of
power and angle that would make
frisbee throwers green with envy.

Speaking of green, perhaps your next
competition could be to find the
record-holder for 'skulling' those
warm Free Milks. (Tony, your
physique indicates a distinct dabble
in the dairy!). There could be two
categories:

- 1) For the Poor Kids
- WITHOUT FLAVOURING
- 2) For the Rich Kids
- WITH STRAWBERRY QUIK
- WITH CHOCOLATE QUIK

I could get the bottle rolling as I
believe that I hold the Dartmoor State
School Boys Record: 13 Third Pint
bottles (warm, unflavoured) during
recess!

Good Luck players!

Here's a traditional game sent in by
'Mark' from Carnegie. This game is
also known as 'Countries':

I also have a game we used to play in
our youth. I come from a big family
in the Western District of Victoria, in
fact from Camperdown which
features in one of Greg's songs. We
played a game called "Land". It was
played in the backyard of our home.
Equal areas of the driveway were
scratched out in the dust. You would
then claim one area and write the
name of your selected country on it.
Sort of a 'land-grab' without the

covered wagons! One person, usually my elder brother, because he was the biggest, would throw a ball into the area and call out the name of the country. The person who owned that country would endeavour to catch the ball while everyone else scattered to all points of the backyard. If you caught the ball you could throw it up and call another country. If the ball bounced you called 'stand' as soon as you had it. Everyone would have to freeze. You would then take 3 steps towards anyone nearest you and then take a shot at them with the ball.

If you hit them you got to swing an arc of land from their border and incorporate it into your state. If the person caught the ball on the full or you missed them the process was reversed. The winner of course was the person who ended up with all the land. A few tricks. I would always call myself Venezuela because the length of the name prevented whoever called my country from getting away. It also was always easier to win land from your sisters rather than your brother.

The skills learnt in this game also helped me in later life to deal with Real Estate agents.

Keep up the good work.



Here's a description of a rather dangerous-sounding game of Chasey

Dear Coodabeens,

I would like to share a game played by the incumbents of the Greenock P.S. in the Barossa Valley in my childhood. It was called Fish in the Net and the playing space was the asphalt playground bordered by the old red brick school house, the compulsory government issue wire fence, the weather-board prep's room with the little shed for the bottles of government issue milk which was the milk monitor's awesome task to transfer to the fridge in case it went sour, the huge drain, the oval and finally the bike cum lunch shed. In this area the game would be played at recess and lunchtime.

The object of the game was basically the same as chasey but when the person was toggged instead of tagged over as the chaser, they joined hands and kept on chasing the rest of the players. When a third person was caught, they also joined hands. However, when a fourth person was caught, they would take off with one of the other persons tagged and the two pairs would continue the game until everyone had been caught. This game had many disadvantages, some of which were:-

- i) the inability to decide who to chase which often left the person in the middle with severely wrenched arms when the other two split in different directions after a possible victim.
- ii) the mismatching of people - tall Grade 7s and short Grade 1s do not chase large groups of

screaming kiddies very efficiently.

- iii) placing a very short prep on the end of the line because inevitably they would be dragged along the ground or flung off the end of the quene and have to be extracted from the nether reaches of the bike shed (usually bawling!).
- iv) the asphalt was not the best surface on which to play because a fall inevitably resulted in gravel rashes of momentous proportions and which could only be pacified with a large smear of mercurochrome.

The game was usually put into mothballs when the preps complained and we moved onto rounders or French cricket!

Another game I was subjected to with my brother was called Knuckles. This involved holding out a fist kunckles up and having my brother hit them with his fist as hard as he could. I was not allowed to pull my fist back unless he took a swipe. If he just twitched his wrist and I, in sheer fear, retracted my fist, he was allowed a free swipe. I usually retreated battered and bruised to do something exciting like wiping the dishes or doing my homework.

Heather Russell



LU REES ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

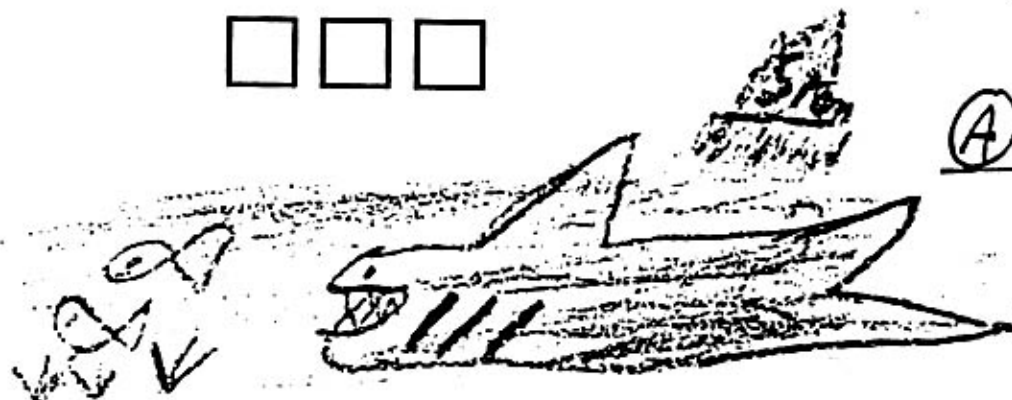
The Lu Rees Archives: Notes, Books and Authors is published once annually by the Archives. The subscription is \$5.00 which includes postage and handling.

The Lu Rees Archives journal publishes articles of historical, bibliographical and research interest and reviews of material about Australian children's literature. The journal also documents activities of the Archives, reports on its growth and acknowledges donations.

University of Canberra, P. O.
Box 1, Belconnen, ACT 2616

@ What children
live in the
sea?

(A) Buoy:



THE COLLECTIONS OF SYDNEY SCHOOLBOYS

by Dr. Percival R. Cole

In 1910, on July 20, the Sydney Mail published a long article by the then Vice Principal of the Sydney Teachers College. The subject of this article, and of a second, published on October 19, was the collecting habits of Sydney boys and girls.

Dr. Cole prepared a ten-point questionnaire which he distributed 'at random' to boys and girls aged 9 - 13 years at a school 'in a rather poor but not squalid section of Sydney'. He believed that collecting was an 'instinct' and he set out to trace its development.

The Sydney Mail referred to Dr. Cole as a 'brilliant authority on educational subjects'. Whilst we would no longer accept many of the theories which underpin his research, the study remains a fascinating exploration of an aspect of children's lives rarely studied or even recognised as having significance. It raises questions about both the motivation and the functions of children's collecting habits, and refers (however conventionally) to differences between the preferences of boys and girls which remain of interest.

The article, 'The Collections of Sydney School Girls' will be published in the next issue of ACFN.

The study of the nature of children is the most fascinating pursuit of the world. With a certain reverence and amazement, a teacher may watch the development of the instincts of school children, often, so to speak, in a serial order, according as fear and affection,

curiosity and reason, hope and anger, imitation and rivalry, love and jealousy, ambition and acquisitiveness, rise and fall in the soul of the individual child, or come to attach themselves in turn to this or that object in experience. The writer at present offers to parents and teachers the results of a study of a single definite instinct, or phase of an instinct, in school children—that of collecting. These results are based upon answers received to a questionnaire, which ran as follows:-

- (1) What is your full name?
- (2) What is your age (last birthday)?
- (3) What things have you ever collected?
- (4) What things do you still collect?
- (5) What other things would you like to collect if you could?
- (6) Which of your collections do you like the most?
- (7) Why do you collect?
- (8) How do you collect?
- (9) Which is your largest collection?
- (10) How many articles have you in your largest collection?

Keeping entirely to answers received from boys, one has for data 25 answers from 9-year-olds, 33 from 10-year-olds, 38 from 11-year-olds, 53 from 12-year-olds, and 28 from 13-year-olds; in all, 177 boys of the ages of 9 to 13 inclusive. All the boys attended school in a rather poor but not squalid section of Sydney; certainly not an environment particularly favourable to making schoolboy collections. The questionnaire was answered at home, and 86 per cent. of the papers distributed were faithfully filled and returned within two days. The

answers are therefore representative, and, while it is true that the papers not returned must be held to represent children having a minimum of collections, this factor is about counterbalanced by the inevitable forgetfulness of certain collections by certain boys. A very few words were said to the boys at school before the papers were distributed, and these of an explanatory rather than hortatory kind. No definition of "collection" was offered; hence a few subjects, such as books and marbles, were included by some in their answers, but doubtless not thought of by others. The general defect of the questionnaire - method that it presupposes a power of self-examination beyond that which the pupil possesses - does not affect the topic of collections as seriously as others to which it has been applied. The numbers of objects in the larger collection, however, as given in answer to question 10, at times represents no more than a rough estimate, although such numbers are never incredible or inconsistent. The answers given to question 7, "Why do you collect?" must be taken for what they are worth, which, if not quite equivalent to the true reason for collecting, is at least a reason which the pupil is capable of propounding to himself once the question has been raised.

What seem to be the valuable results of the investigation cannot be fairly stated, apart from the more detailed presentation which follows, but the more important of them may be anticipated for the sake of the general reader. In the first place, almost all boys make collections; and the average boy has collected at least 5.8 different kinds of articles by the time he reaches his fourteenth year.

Secondly, the collecting instinct is found to be remarkably steady and persistent throughout boyhood. Thirdly, the more strictly educational aims and ends in making collections begin to appeal to a boy at 10 years, although they never generally displace the motive of pleasure and interest. Aesthetic and social considerations only come into evidence very gradually; but an intuitive perception of worth is shown by boys of every age in answering the question, "Which of your collections do you like the most?" The older boys have more homogeneous and rational collections than the younger. Fourthly, certain collections stand out as typical, notably cigarette cards, which have been collected by 75 per cent. of the boys of 13; postcards, collected by 60 per cent.; stamps, by 50 per cent.; marbles, mentioned by 64 per cent.; and birds' eggs and shells each by 25 per cent. The revelation of the seriousness of the cigarette card craze, in the light of its associations and the questionable methods of begging and soliciting from strangers which it involves, may stand perhaps in the light of a fifth result. Sixthly, one finds that collection of minerals, plants, etc., appeal to the interests of boys at least from 11 years upwards, a fact which suggests that a little guidance might make such tastes into valuable allies of healthful interests and outdoor pursuits. Seventhly, it appears that certain collections, as of tops, reach their meridian (in the case of tops at 12 years), and then decline; while others, such as postcards, are more permanent objects of interest. The more permanent collections coincide closely with the more cultural. Eighthly, the replies to certain questions indicate a rapid acceleration in power of reasoning

and logical association of about 13 years. Ninthly, the social and sympathetic motive seems to come into free play only at 11 years. Tenthly, and lastly, a high standard of collecting taste is developed by the age of 13, to such an extent that to curb or hinder a boy in his efforts to collect this or that article may involve an injury to one of the deepest and purest of his native activities.



25 BOYS 9 YEARS OLD

Of 25 boys of 9 years, only three claimed to collect articles for educational or useful purposes, while 22 collected for pleasure. Collecting for pleasure, however, means many different things at this age. Thus, several collect "because they like it," one "to see how many things I can get," one "to play with," one "to pass away the time," one "because it's nice," one "to look up in my spare time," one "to save up," one "for fun," one "for a prize." Among the things they have at some time or other collected, 14 mention cigarette cards, which easily come first. To these should be added four others, who mention simply "cards." Marbles are next, mentioned by 8; postcards, by 7; school papers and stamps, each by 6; shells, eggs, and books, each by 5. Probably marbles, school papers, and books are collected by a larger

number, but have not been viewed in the light of collections. Ten of the 14 still collect cigarette cards; 5 mention simply "cards"; 6 still collect marbles; none have ceased to collect postcards or books; 4 still collect school papers; 3 still collect stamps, and 3 shells. Eggs have been totally abandoned, apparently because the five boys who formerly collected them now have the misfortune to live in the city.

Most instructive, as usual, are the largest collections. Of cigarette cards, boys have respectively "about" 150, 120, 192, 597, 54, 250, 28, 100, "about" 100; of marbles, 83, 146, 100, 110, 1000; of books, 27, 10; of brass tubes, 34; of postcards, 87, 41, 12; of shells, 200, 295, 200. The round numbers of course, are very suspicious; and the "1000 marbles" of a boy of 9 may be no more than a wild guess or a mere synonym for a very large number. The popularity of the cigarette cards is partly due to their accessibility to city children; and, though usually collected for the beauty of the picture or to get "sets" of the flags of different nations, etc., they are sometimes saved for the purpose of being ultimately fashioned into an ornamental screen.

Some of the boys make interesting comments upon the way they collect. Such are: "I go round picking up things;" "I climb trees for them" (locusts, beetles); "I save them up and put in a box;" "I play for my collection;" "I get them off boys;" "I ask my friends for them;" "I play for my marbles and buy some things;" "I asked men for them;" "by exchanging;" "by asking and searching." One comment especially is a stroke of psychological genius: "A person finds a thing, they say I will make a collection."



33 BOYS 10 YEARS OLD

Whereas only 12 per cent. of the 9-year-old boys claimed to have collected for ends other than pleasure, among the boys of 10 one finds 19 out of 33, or 57.5 per cent., affirming useful or educational ends. There appears to be a rather sudden leap to seriousness at this age, so sudden, indeed, that one almost suspects the influence of some school lesson or exhortation on a majority of the boys of 10. The impression is strengthened by the fact that only 47.6 per cent. of boys of 11 give other aims than pleasure. There is little doubt, however, that the gap between boys of 9 and 10 is greater than that between boys of 10 and 11 in respect of the seriousness with which life is viewed; indeed, it is not impossible that the sense of responsibility among children reaches a culminating point at 10 and diminishes through the ages of 11, 12, and 13, as my own figures seem to indicate. The boys of 11, however, seem to read their own motives a little better than those of 10; one collects "for information," one "for interest," one "for curiosity." One collects postcards "to learn what all the cities of the world are like, and then I find them in my Atlas," another chooses cigarette cards "to

learn all about the soldiers and flags, etc., of the world;" another, minerals, "to learn about them;" another, stamps, "to learn all about other countries and what kind of stamps they use;" another, postcards, books, stamps, and cards, "so as my history and geography of the world will be better."

Among things collected at some time by the 33 10-year-olds, cigarette cards occur 21 times, stamps 14 times, postcards 11 times, marbles 7 times, shells and beetles each 6 times, and bird's eggs 5 times.

There has been a significant increase in the proportion of boys who have collected stamps, from 24 per cent. among 9-year-olds to 42 per cent. of 10-year-olds. One is chiefly interested in the articles which are still being collected. Among the 25 9-year-olds, 6 had collected stamps at some time, but only 3 were still doing so; among the 33 10-year-olds, 14 had collected and 9 were still collecting stamps. The instance of beetles is not uninteresting. Six of the 10-year-olds had at one time collected beetles; only one still did so. Similarly two of the nine-year-olds had formerly collected beetles, but both had abandoned the pursuit. Beetles seem to be a temporary craze of boyhood, perhaps influenced by the nature study lesson. They represent a type of collection easily abused; but the parent or teacher will not do ill to encourage the more typical collections of the 10-year-old cards, postcards, stamps, and marbles.

The largest collections of the 10-year-olds are stated by them to include cigarette-cards to the respective numbers of 400, 1000, 28, 120, 50, 250, 125, 1002, 280, 3000, "about" 200, 91,

406, 120, 480, 100; marbles, 49, 90, 520; postcards, 72, 42; stamps, 400, 260, 600, "some hundreds," 24; shells, 400, 260, "hundreds," 40, 350; butterflies, 8; books, 40. The prodigious numbers of cigarette-cards begin to be almost incredible; and one may repeat the reservation about round numbers with redoubled emphasis. On the other hand, the numbers given are on the whole very consistent; and it is to be recollected that some boys obtain a sufficiently large collection by begging and trading cards to make a screen for home furnishing. It may be well to point out in this place that the practice of Sydney boys to collect cigarette-cards is partly based upon an artificial plan of advertisement; and that the encouragement of a begging attitude in children and the ultimate enrichment of the cigarette trade constitute a serious price to pay for fire-screens, or even for an exacter knowledge of the flags of nations and other information which the cards may well represent.

A high level of natural taste is represented by the answers of both 9 year-old and 10-year-old boys to the question, "Which of your collections do you like the most?" The answers of boys of 9 years are books (3), boats (1), birds' eggs (2), cigarette-cards and "cards" (7), coins (1), flowers (1), marbles (4), postcards (5), stamps (2), shells (2), stuffed birds (1), Sunday school texts (1). The answers of boys of 10 years are birds' eggs (1), books (2), beetles (1), butterflies (1), cigarette-cards (5), Carrington toffee cards (1), cards (1), goldfish (1), insects (1), marbles (6), minerals (1), money (1), postcards (5), stereoscope-cards (1), stamps (6) shells (1), stones (1), tobacco tins (1), wild flowers (1). It is difficult to show from these

figures any definite advance in aesthetic or intellectual tastes among the 10-year-olds, but there are decidedly promising features in the increase of appreciation for stamp collections and the introduction of collections of minerals and wild flowers.



38 BOYS 11 YEARS OLD

Of 38 boys of eleven, 18 claim to make collections for educational or useful ends, while 20 collect for pleasure. One collects postcards "to give me an idea of some of the places of the world;" another shells and grubs, a queer combination of tastes characteristic of boyhood, "for information"; another sea-shells and caterpillars, apparently the same combination as above, "in order to learn about nature"; another caterpillars and butterflies, "to find all I can about them"; another curios, "to find out and learn all I can"; another shells, "to learn the different kinds and colours"; another postcards, "to get more knowledge of the surrounding world"; another birds' eggs, "in order to learn all I can about nature." It will probably occur to one engaged in child study that the boys who give these reasons do so because they think some such reason is expected of them. Few would imagine that any of the answers represent conscious hypocrisy -

honi soit. But it is at least clear that the boys of 10 and 11 are capable of representing to themselves aims of utility and culture. They may not do so spontaneously, but they do so upon an almost imperceptible stimulus. Personally, we think that at least one-third of Sydney schoolboys of 10 and 11, if not one-half, as our figures would appear to indicate, represent these ends to themselves spontaneously. However that may be, there is certainly now for the first time clear indication of a dawning sense of conscious appreciation of the beautiful.

The boys of 9 and 10 have had nothing to say of the beauty of their collections. This is not to be taken to mean that the aesthetic sense only appears normally at 11; but that aesthetic appreciation is not usually represented to the self as such in boys until that age. Now, one boy collects cigarette-cards "because they are pretty"; another plants "because they are beautiful and to watch their growth"; another birds' eggs, shells, and old coins "because I like to see the different kinds of things." Together with this conscious aesthetic appreciation there is a growing sense of community with others. Now for the first time one finds a boy who makes collections "for pleasure and to show them to anybody who would like to see them"; while another expresses his purpose in the words, "I collect different things for amusement when I have nothing else to do, or to show visitors when they come." In addition to these new evidences of aesthetic and sympathetic taste, another evidence of development in the 11-year-olds is the greater length and continuity of their answers.

The influence of the nature study

lesson in school appears by no means for the first time among the 11-year-olds; but it is distinctly in evidence. Of the 38 boys, one is at present collecting ants, two butterflies, five birds' eggs, one beetles, one cats (!), two caterpillars, one plants, seven sea shells, one seeds, and one worms. School children whose collections in the field of natural history are deliberately and systematically stimulated by the teacher can probably show a wider and fuller range of activity in this direction than is manifested by these figures.

The representative collections of Sydney schoolboys are well illustrated by the statements of the 28 11-year-olds as to articles which they have at some time collected. Cigarette-cards are first with 17 devotees; postcards second with 13; stamps have had 12; birds' eggs and cigarette boxes each 11; marbles and sea shells each 10. Some boys, not considering marbles as a collection, omit them. Cigarette cards and boxes begin to get on one's nerves. Is not this a fair opportunity for Sunday school crusades? Or, rather, does not the popularity of the cigarette card suggest that Sunday-school attendance might become more regular and popular with young children if the cards for attendance could be printed in a form as varied and attractive as that of their popular competitor? But this is by the way.

By what is probably more than a fortunate coincidence, the collections of greatest educational value tend also to be the most permanent. Particularly the child who begins to collect postcards never seems to become weary of them. By some unimportant misrepresentation of one of the questions, only 13 of the 11-

year-olds mention postcards among articles which they have at some time collected, while 14 "still" collect them; but the trifling error only serves to accentuate the permanency of children's interest in postcards. Only six of the 38 boys mention cigarette-cards as the collection which they like best; seven prefer postcards, seven birds' eggs, six marbles, five shells, four stamps, and three coins. Nobody mentions cigarette-cards in the list of additional articles which he would like to collect if he could; but eight mention birds' eggs, six coins, five birds, four animals, four butterflies, four stamps, three metals, three curios, two native birds, two pigeons, two marbles, two minerals, two New Guinea butterflies, and two birds' nests. The interest in nature, particularly in birds and animals, but also inanimate nature, appears to be at its height at 11 years. One cannot fail to be struck by the consideration that the development of boys hardly receives fair treatment at this age unless facilities are in some way given for at least one such interest to be fed and realised.

The statements of the number of articles included in each boy's largest collection is of greater value and interest in the case of the 11 than the 9 or 10 year olds. While the numbers given are in many cases sufficiently impressive, they display rather less of the fabulous character which belongs to the good round "thousand" so characteristic of the younger boys. The largest collections are given as cigarette-cards, 200, 150, 200, 200, 103, 50, 120, 700, 250, 89 and 200; postcards, 44, 200, 12, 20, 648, "about" 120, 65; shells, 200, 100, 150, "some hundreds," 3, 1860, 307; birds' eggs, 100, 65, 10, 19, 78; marbles, 220, 45, 75; bonan a fronts, 150; stamps, 167;

and pigeons, 21. It will be borne in mind that these are to be regarded as the ordinary, not extraordinary.



53 BOYS 12 YEARS OLD

The replies of 53 boys of 12 furnish an extensive field of data, some of which are quite novel. Foremost is the mention of books by 10 as having been at some time collected and by eight as a current collection. Doubtless, younger children also must have owned and valued books, but they do not possess the breadth of conceptual thinking which is requisite to enable them to classify books among articles collected. Next, one finds that tops, which have hitherto been barely mentioned, have been collected by 10 of the 12-year-olds, and are still being collected by five. Twelve appears to be the model age for tops; and one may reflect that the vogue of this collection is so far from accidental that it depends upon the possession of a certain strength of wrist and dexterity of movement, which is now for the first time on the average fully reached. The decline of tops among the collections of older boys cannot indicate a diminution of dexterity or strength, but should be the consequence of an increased sense of the dignity of youth and the seriousness of life, which begins to be noticeable in thirteen and fourteen year olds. Other collections of a more or less new character are scraps (from newspapers), mentioned by five as

having been collected, and by three as still being collected; cigar-bands, mentioned by six as having been collected, and by four as of current interest; and tram tickets, mentioned by five, but only as objects of interest at some former time. The cigar-bands, made for use in ornamentation, represent a certain increase in artistic ambition; but the newspaper scraps furnish a more convincing indication of growing maturity. One 12-year-old boy collects autographs.

The 53 boys of 12 years have been, and actually are, great collectors. Of 34 who at some time have collected the inevitable cigarette card, 33 still continue to offer their indirect support of what many are beginning to regard almost as a nefarious trade. Of 32 who at some time have collected marbles, 30 do so still. Of 33 who have collected, postcards, only four have grown weary of the pursuit. For some unexplained reason, it is stamps that have been generally dropped. No fewer than 26, or 50 per cent., of the 12-year-olds formerly collected stamps; now only 2 or 3 per cent. do so. This is a remarkable decline, not by any means typical, for we shall find that of the 13-year-olds also there were 50 per cent. who at some time collected stamps, while no fewer than 33 per cent. still find satisfaction in the pursuit. But it is clear that there are many boys who begin to collect stamps, only to very soon reach a limit beyond which it is impossible for them to accumulate new varieties.

The 53 12-year-olds drift a little further forwards hedonism than the boys of 10 and 11, either accidentally or perhaps because 12 is a peculiarly spontaneous and irresponsible age.

Twenty assert useful ends; the remaining 33 collect for pleasure. Individual replies of the 12-year-olds show an advance on any of the 11-year-olds except two in the power of associative thinking. One boy collects only plants and ferns, "because plants and ferns are beautiful, and I can watch them growing." Another discriminates his aims and classifies his collections in the sentence, "I collect butterflies, birds' eggs, bees, and flowers in order to learn all I can about nature; and cigarette-cards and stamps to find out all I can about the other countries of the world." Several use the words "pastime" and "hobby," neither of which is employed by the younger boys. A slightly increasing proportion is found to appreciate the aesthetic side of the collections.

When asked what other things they would like to collect if they could, the boys of 12 generally display a becoming moderation. One, it is true, suggests brown bears; but that is either his little joke or more probably the result of a forced interpretation of the word "collect." It is to be said to the credit of the schoolboys that they do not attempt anything facetious in their replies. The characteristic objects of their ambition as collectors at this age are bird's eggs (13), silkworms (12), stamps (9), birds (8), books (4), insects (4), species of wood (3), and butterflies (3). It is clear that these desiderata indicate a higher level of thought, and one may almost say a more cultural attitude than is suggested by the list of the would-be-collections of the younger boys. Doubtless the psychological background includes a greater number and variety of aesthetic and conceptual states of consciousness. The most popular of the actual collections, however, can scarcely be

said to have varied during the culminating year or two of age, except that postcards are more firmly entrenched in favour, and scraps from paper silkworms, plants magazines, flowers, and coins are each mentioned by two as the collections most liked. Postcards and marbles are first in popularity, each being collected by 14; next cigarette-cards, collected by eight; then stamps by six; and finally books, birds, and eggs each by three.



The largest collections of each boy of 12 are interesting and instructive. In some cases the largest collection of the individual boy is quite small. e.g. 12 postcards, a number hardly worthy to be called a collection. In other and more frequent cases the collection is quite large. The boys of 12 have developed a far better consciousness of the importance of accuracy than belonged to the boys of 11. Five qualify the numbers given by the words "approximately," "odd," "about," or "close on." and two mention that the numbers represent not individual objects but kinds. The largest collections are given as cigarette-cards. 610, 700, 460, 350, 305, 450, 150 300, 900, 600, 100, "about 1000," "close on 400," 2250, 250, 125, 1006; cigar-bands, 309, 140; post-cards, 1275, 200, 231, 20, 100, 26, "approximately 70," 200, "about 100," 107, 100; match-box tops, 1000;

marbles, 318, 124 (?) 150, 109, 183, 100, 80, 256, 260, 296; shells, 165, "20 different kinds," 95, stamps, 24, 39, 1611, "679 different stamps," 1500, "2000 odd"; seeds, 30; birds, 15, 40 (pigeons); books, 127; ferns, 60.

The numbers offered by the 12-year-olds seem to be more reliable than those given by their juniors, and while it may be true that round numbers are still suspiciously frequent, it is also to be remembered that many children collect with great eagerness to attain a certain number, such as one hundred or two hundred, and having attained it, rest satisfied for the time in the idea that they have now a well-rounded collection.

28 BOYS 13 YEARS OLD

Of 28 boys of 13 years 12 claim to collect for educational or useful purposes, and 16 for pleasure only. The majority give much the same reasons for collecting as are offered by the younger boys - to pass the time away, for pleasure, to learn something, to show friends, to see how many one can get, or to learn about other countries. On the other hand, greater ingenuity is revealed in some of the answers of 13-year-olds than in any of the answers of their juniors. One says he collects "because it is a grand pastime; it makes you think; it is an education in itself." Another "because it gives me pleasure in seeing my collection increase;" a third (whose hobby is stamps) "so that when I go to another country I could exchange them." The boys who make such answers as these have not been taken aback by an unexpected question. It rather seems probable that they have already asked

themselves the question why, and answered it to their individual satisfaction. Thus there seems to be on the average a decided acceleration in the growth of introspective power at 13. This conclusion is confirmed by an examination of the methods by which the collections are stated to have been formed. The greater number collect by "finding" or asking for the articles, getting them from relatives or in some cases buying them. But one says, "My uncle travels a good deal, and I get coins from him. By communicating with people in other countries I get postcards and foreign stamps." Another declares he collects by "having some given, picking up some, buying some, exchanging things for others." Another says equally explicitly, "I get together my collections in various ways, sometimes by buying them and very often I exchange things for some curio I would like to possess."

The list of articles mentioned by the 28 boys of 13 brings into clear relief the typical collections of boyhood. No fewer than 21 have collected cigarette cards, and 22 claim to be now doing so. One gathers that 75 per cent. of Sydney boys, at least in certain districts, at some time in their life collect cigarette cards. Marbles are mentioned by 18, and retain their attraction for 15. Collectors of postcards number 17, all of whom are still actively interested in these articles. Stamps have been collected by 14 and nine still collect them. One gathers from these figures and those already presented that 50 per cent. of Sydney boys collect stamps at some time in their lives; but their interest in stamps is more fitful and variable than in postcards or marbles. Eight have collected shells, and five still do

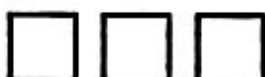
so; seven have collected birds' eggs, but only three still indulge in this pursuit. Five have collected tops, 5 matchbox lids, 5 silkworms, 4 mention books, 3 scraps, 3 birds, 3 cigar bands, 3 magazines, 3 timbers, 2 beetles, 2 butterflies, 2 buttons, 2 coins, 2 moths, 2 school papers, 2 tramtickets, and 1 each cards, cartridges, caterpillars, cigarette slides for rotoscope, cocoons, curios, eggs of silkworms, furs of Australian animals, fairy-tale books, flower seed, fowls, games, gold, labels, lids of matchboxes, locusts, metals, minerals, models, money-boxes, novelties, puzzles pictures, stones, tin, tin-tags, tools, tobacco tags, and tobacco tins. The list of present collections gives clear indication of a tendency to the more useful and educational level. For example, five claim to be now collecting books, though only four mention them among their earlier collections; while the interest in scraps, magazines, coins, woods and school papers does not show the abatement that is found in the case of matchbox lids (from 5 to 1), or that of tops (from 5 to 2).

Probably the answers to question 5, "What other things would you like to collect if you could?" are of greater significance still. Not a single article suggested, unless it be footballs (1), new cigarette cards (1), or marbles (1), is at all unworthy of the best energies of an adult mind. The leading interests are coins (7), silkworms (7), stamps (6), birds' eggs (5), minerals (5), shells (4), birds (3), wood (3), seeds (2), beetles (2), magazines (2), insects (2), and animals' skins (2). The other articles which the 13-year-olds would have wished to collect are grasshoppers, precious stones, different parts of animals and birds, money (which

should doubtless be placed with coins), books from other countries, moths, flowers scrapbooks, gold and silver fish, stones, leather, furs, pictures, antique guns and weapons. Pompeii curios, sea specimens, worms, postcards, birds' nests, small models of steam engines, curios new cigarette cards, and marbles.

It is pleasing to find that the collections most liked are the postcards, which are preferred by 11 of the 28 13-year-olds. Seven prefer their cigarette cards to their other collections, 7 marbles, 6 stamps, 4 books, and 2 shells; while cigar bands, and tools are each preferred by one. It seems clear that the standard of taste shown by 13-year-olds in making collections is sufficiently high to repay teachers and parents for any reasonable efforts which they may be disposed to make to cultivate and encourage it.

Please send us your memories of collecting and collectibles.



BAR & BARLEY

Bill Scott from Queensland, well known as writer and folklorist, comments on some expressions used in the playground.

'Bar' was a truce word, commonly used in the playground at the old Caboolture State School in the 30s. It was used to disassociate oneself from the actual game when one wanted to register a protest about some character who was breaking the established rules, and usually



"GOT ANY CIGARETTE CARDS, MISTER?"

guaranteed a hearing and then a ruling by the other players. I questioned my wife Mavis about its use at Milton State School in Brisbane where she was a pupil and she tells me that it was commonly used there also but added that a specific area (railing, fence, bench) could be designated as 'bar' and that while one was in physical contact with same then one was, so to speak, untouchable and uncatchable by pursuers. Much the same as 'home' in hide and seek, which was normally called 'hideygoosek' (one word!) or 'hidey'.

As it appears that we contracted the word 'barley(s)' into 'bar', so it would seem that down there in the antarctic South you blokes contracted 'mockers' into 'moz' (understandable if one says the word quickly enough!). Example of 'mockers': if one was attempting a difficult task, threading a needle or coaxing a reluctant nut on to a bolt on a billycart and someone came to watch the fumbling, it was legal to ask, "Go away, you're putting the mockers on!" as if the presence of the observer cast a spell of difficulty over the success of the intended operation. I have also heard this used by adults, though not in the past 15 years.

The Opies did an extensive survey of 'barley', 'fainites' etc as truce words in England (see THE LORE AND LANGUAGE OF SCHOOL-CHILDREN), so I had always assumed that our Caboolture 'bar' was a contraction of the British term which had emigrated but remained potent. I still think so.

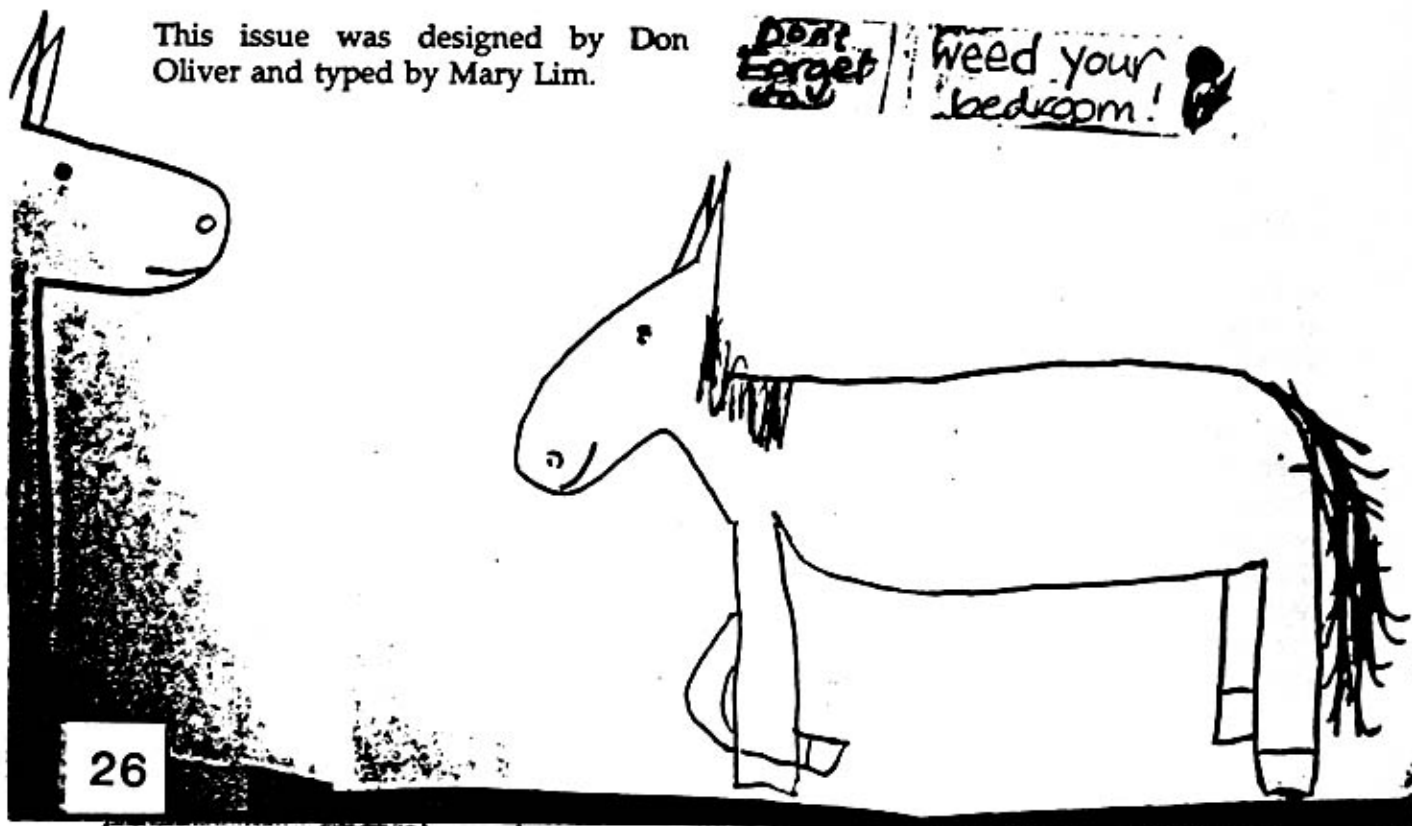
Readers' comments welcome.



The jokes and some of the illustrations in this issue were contributed by Victorian school children to 'Explore' and 'Challenge', published by the Department of Education, Victoria.

This issue was designed by Don Oliver and typed by Mary Lim.

Don't forget to weed your bedroom!



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