

# AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE NEWSLETTER

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## NOTES AND NEWS

### THE DANGERS OF CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE:

#### (1) Attacks on Books

In the twelve years of publishing the *ACFN*, we have reported a variety of different views on aspects of children's lore and language. There has been debate on terminology, motivation, derivation, the reason for this or that tradition's alteration or disappearance. All good healthy intellectual discourse.

Occasionally, we have also mentioned attempts at censorship. One of the editors of the *ACFN*, June Factor, has become accustomed to the irregular eruptions of outrage of disgusted-mothers/fathers-of-seven, who declare to schools or newspapers that a rhyme in *Far Out Brussel Sprout!* or one of the other collections of Australian children's playlore is improper, impolite and generally beyond the pale.

Usually, such attempts at censorship fail. But not always. A recent book by two NSW academics, Claire Williams and Ken Dillon, documents a disturbing tendency in some Australian school systems to succumb to outside pressure and remove criticised books. Sometimes the censors exist within the school, disguised as teachers or principals.

In an appendix to *Brought to Book: Censorship and School Libraries in Australia* (ALIA Thorpe, Port Melb. 1993), the authors list books that have been most commonly challenged in the last five years in the Australian school libraries they surveyed. The collections of playground rhymes by June Factor top the list of books by Australians, and

are only exceeded overall by Judy Blume's novels.

Many of the challenges by would-be censors failed. None the less, the authors of *Brought to Book* conclude that "... the level of understanding of the concept of censorship (by librarians) is low, ... the phenomenon of self-censorship is prevalent, and ... the effectiveness of existing policies and practices is questionable." (p. ix)

Readers of the *ACFN* will not need us to elaborate on the paradox that collections of children's own verbal lore are regarded by a few fearful individuals as inappropriate for children. Some readers may remember the fracas over the first edition of *Cinderella Dressed in Yella*, compiled by the late Ian Turner and published in 1969. The book, an

uncensored collection of Australian children's rhymes and chants, so offended the manager of the Melbourne Post Office that it temporarily lost the then standard preferential book postage rate. The laughter and ribaldry which resulted when this decision became widely known led to a hasty turn-about within the Post Office, and *Cinderella* went on to become a much loved compilation, treasured in many homes. (But for years in some public libraries it could only be borrowed by people over 18!)

#### (2) Attacks on Researchers

Recently, an even more disturbing phenomenon has emerged in a major Australian city: a teacher has been charged on three counts of alleged 'indecent dealing' with a group of

female students. The basis of the charge: a photograph he took in his school playground of children performing one of the many action rhymes popular among primary school girls - 'Firecracker'. In case readers have forgotten, we reprint one of the well known versions of this rhyme, together with the appropriate actions:

*Firecracker, firecracker, boom boom boom!*  
*(kick up legs and clap hands)*  
*Bow to the king*  
*(Bow)*  
*Curtsy to the Queen*  
*(Curtsy)*  
*Show your knickers to the football team!*  
*(girls lift their skirts to show their pants)*

This action rhyme has been collected in various versions across the country, always with some kind of 'naughty' last line. Many of these versions, and accompanying photos, are held in the Australian Children's Folklore Collection at the University of Melbourne. Never before has it been suggested that researchers collecting such material from children are engaged in salacious or illegal activities.

The unfortunate teacher now awaits his preliminary hearing, suspended without pay from a vocation he has pursued for twenty-five years.

We will keep our readers informed of the developments in this case. We hope that it proves to be an isolated, aberrant - and short-lived - incident in a country which prides itself on its openness and fairness.

June Factor  
 Gwenda Beed Davey



## NOTES FROM EUGENE

Eugene, Oregon is the delightful small city chosen by the American Folklore Society for its 1993 conference, from October 28-31. Together with its twin town of Springfield, it has about 250,000 people - about the size of Canberra. I found it a pleasant change from the great metropolis settings of my two previous AFS conferences; Philadelphia and Oakland (San Francisco).

As usual, the Children's Folklore Section of the AFS had a substantial presence, not least of which was the Section's breakfast meeting at 7.15 am on Saturday 30th October. Devotion to duty (and a desire to see my children's folklore colleagues again!) got me there on time. I was disappointed to hear that the Opie Prize was not being awarded this year, through lack of suitable entries. Will we give them some Australian competition for the 1994 or 95 prizes? The Opie prize is awarded by the AFS for the best publication in children's folklore in the preceding year, and as many readers know, June Factor received the award in 1989 for *Captain Cook Chased a Chook: Children's Folklore in Australia* (Penguin, 1988).

Despite the lack of an Opie Prize, the Section was very pleased to announce that two books were co-winners of the new Aesop Prize (1992). The winners were *Days of Awe: Stories for Rosh hashanah and Yom Kippur* by Eric A Kimmel and illustrated by Erika Weihs (New York: Viking/Penguin, 1991), and *Aesop and Company with Scenes from his Legendary Life* by Barbara Bader and illustrated by Arthur Geisert (Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1991). The report on the Aesop Prize, presented by Co-Chairs Gary Alan Fine and Linda Morley, noted "... the delicious irony of our first Aesop Prize co-winner being a book on Aesop and his fables".

The Children's Folklore Section is anxious to have Australian entrants for the Aesop Prize (1994 award). The criteria are stringent, and since some readers of this newsletter may wish to apply, they are listed below. To be eligible, a book must:

1. Be a work for children published in English in either 1993 or 1994;
2. Contain folklore or be about folklore;
3. Treat the folklore material in such a fashion as to enhance its appreciation by the intended audience;

4. Provide suitable ethnographic data to situate the folklore and to portray it appropriately within its cultural context;
5. Contain illustrations suitable to the culture being portrayed if illustrations are included (not necessary);
6. Appeal visually and textually; and
7. Contain sufficient scholarly apparatus so as to provide source references and guides to pursue for further research.

I can't refrain from reflecting somewhat wryly that my two most recent books for children, *The Great Australian Pumpkin* and *Jack and Jill: A Book of Nursery Rhymes*, would be disqualified in terms of points 4 and 7. Not by my doing, I hasten to add! In both cases I wrote a discussion of my sources, research base, etc. which was dropped by the two different publishers, too late in the publishing process for me to object. Another nail in publishers' coffins!

The overall theme for the 1993 AFS meeting was *Folklore, Civil Rights and Social Justice*, and the organising committee described the response as 'fulsome and varied'. They commented that this overwhelming response from would-be presenters:

*"... probably ensures that everyone will be stymied repeatedly by decisions over which panels to attend. Far from having to struggle for coherence in the program, we found that we had 'runs' of topics which virtually formed themselves into 'mini-meetings' running throughout the three days, such as gay and lesbian and other gender related studies, public folklore and folklife topics, and Native American representations. Other shorter 'runs' include such topics as 'folklore and religion', and 'folklore and politics'."*

The committee could have included 'folklore and children' among the 'shorter runs'. A panel entitled *The Folklorist's Responsibility to the Child*, stated its purpose thus:

*"... As a profession it is our responsibility to collect the folklore of children, to do this in a non-intrusive way, and to assure that the playback of folklore to children is done sensitively and accurately. This panel explores collection from one's own child,*

*examination of the folklore of a nation's children, production of folklore collections by a juvenile author, and retelling of folktales to children by a professional storyteller."*

Unfortunately my desire to gain a good coverage of all the major topics discussed at the meeting meant that I couldn't attend this session. One of the speakers in the panel was Carole H Carpenter, from York University in Toronto, who spoke about *Developing an Appreciation for the Cultural Significance of Childlore*. It is hoped that Carole Carpenter will visit Melbourne in July 1994, as a keynote speaker for the Sixth National Folklife Conference.

Gwenda Beed Davey

## MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD PLAY

### *Four Julias:*

#### *One Hundred Years in York*

by Susan Ovens Groom

Chatham Road Publications, Midland, WA 1993.

*Four Julias is one of the increasing number of regional and local histories appearing in Australia. York is one of the oldest European settlements in WA, and this small book covers more than a century of rural life since 1844. We reprint a few items from the book dealing with children's play. Bess and Bill were the sister and brother of the third Julia, also known as Jule, born in 1911.*

### Peg Dolls

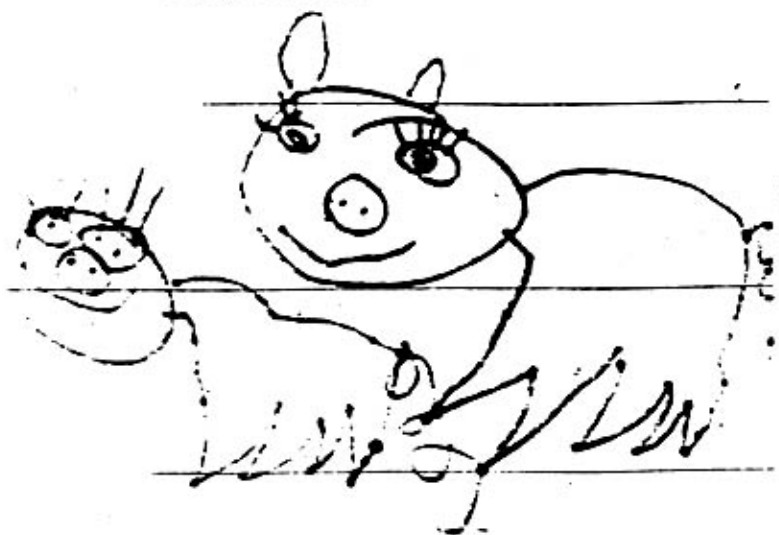
Sister Bess: In those days there was no money for toys but we made wonderful playhouses with pegs for dolls. On washing days we'd come home from school to find a little pile of clothes in the playhouse and our peg-dolls dancing naked on the clothes line. We didn't ever give them faces - that way we could imagine they were really beautiful.

Jule: Hats for the dolls were made out of strips of straw, sewn together and ringed with flowers. We used the bobbles off Maudie's curtains for babies.

Sister Bess: We also made toy farms. We used horseshoes for horses, pony shoes for cows, metal caps from working boots for



foals, she-oak nuts for sheep and the dried ones for pigs, and prickly-bush nuts for turkeys and hens.



### Farm Jobs

**Jule:** Our games always came to a sudden end when there were farm jobs to do. The farm had its own blacksmith's shop with an anvil and a grindstone. When Barney wanted to sharpen axes he'd call out, "Come and turn the grindstone!". I hated the damn thing.

**Brother Bill:** I used to dread seeing a new pair of shearing blades. It meant a full day at the grindstone to make them thin enough.

**Jule:** Cutting chaff was another of our jobs. We would put Daisy and Prince in the 'horse works' to drive the old chaff-cutter. The horses walked around in a circle while we sat in the middle. I'll always remember the day the chaff-cutter engine arrived - no more having to harness up horses.

*Another account, this time from Almondale in rural South Australia. These extracts from a longer memoir by Irmgard Kobelt were provided by Dr David Potts, an historian at La Trobe University in Melbourne.*

At home, Saturday was always cleaning day and getting ready for Sunday, and we children also had our regular jobs to do in the afternoon. There was the cleaning and polishing of all the family's Sunday and second best shoes, cutlery to clean and polish, mother's pot plants to water, and the bird's cage to clean out. Also forking out the pigsties (boy's job) and throwing in several armsful of fresh straw for their bedding. Doing the latter would be a good excuse for me to join the boys in a "I'm

the king of the castle", rough and tumble on an off the strawstack, as a diversion from whatever job I should have been doing.

Shoes in our days were leather and with a good shoe-polish and a rub would shine up nicely. Not so in mother's youth, when the 'tacky' boot-black would dry too fast in hot weather and take forever drying when it was cold, making it difficult to get a decent shine. Those days too, girls as well as boys wore knee-high lace-up boots.

Our everyday cutlery was not stainless steel but nickel silver and consequently tarnished very quickly, so out came the tin of "Brasso". Shake the tin well, a little liquid on a soft cloth, apply firmly to spoons and forks and then rub off vigorously with another soft cloth for a shine in which it was a delight to see your own reflection. Knives were rubbed with an old cork first dipped in water and then the brown cleaning-powder, before rubbing off to a shine, after which we washed all the cutlery in warm soapy water to get rid of every last bit of polish. One of us would apply the 'polish' the other rub it off, and the same with the shoes. Often to help pass the time, we'd start a guessing game of "Riddle me ree, tell me what I can see, starts with er- S and ends with G"...

[At playtimes] all us school children would play together, choosing teams for such games as Red Rover, Seven Men Come to Work, Sheep, Sheep Come Home, or Rats and Rabbits and Fruit Basket Upset. Or we'd pick leaders for Oranges and Lemons or form rings for Twos and Threes. Drop the Handkerchief, Cat and Mouse, or Farmer in the Dell. During the short afternoon recess break, we'd often have a quick game of Step on My Shadow, poking the shadow of our heads above the solid school building shadow for the child "he" to try and step upon.

At times the marble craze would hit the boys and they'd be off playing 'allys' for days or weeks on end, with round, smooth holes in the dirt and calls of 'Ebbs' or 'No Ebbs', 'Slips', 'Cribs' and the like and many a favourite marble would be won or lost in the course of a game. Meanwhile us girls might play hopscotch or knuckle-bones and spinning tops was also good fun.

But favourite of all, with everybody joining in, was the game we called 'Blackie'. Where this game originated, no-one seems to know - maybe it was a Pine Creek School creation. Certainly it was already a great favourite when

my older sisters, with their flair for imagination and play-acting, attending this school.

The two main characters in the game were Mother and the wicked, devious Blackie. Blackie had his domain within the four belfry posts and Mother and her tribe of children - the rest of us - 'lived' in the corner between church and vestry, facing the belfrey. (Both parties were at all time within full view of each other.) Every now and again, Mother would have to go to town to do some shopping and always before leaving, there would be detailed instructions on what the children were or were not allowed to do - above all "Do not have anything at all to do with that wicked Blackie". "Yes, Mama", "No, Mama", "We'll be good, Mama", "Bring us back some chocolates" (or lollies or ice-cream etc.), the children would chorus. And off Mother would hobble, one complete circuit around the church building.

But hardly had she left and Blackie was on the doorstep, coaxing, wheedling, promising every wonderful thing and before you knew it, he had grabbed two not altogether unwilling children and with them was back at his domain well before Mother turned the last corner for home. And then what a wailing and recrimination and laying of blame, as she found two of her brood missing. However, before long she'd need to go shopping again, and the same things would happen again until she came back to an empty house. Only then did she go and confront Blackie with "Have you seen my children?". Blackie, bold-faced liar that he was, flatly denied any knowledge of their whereabouts. "Maybe they've gone visiting so and so or are playing at such and such a place", he'd amiably suggest and Mother would go and look. (All this time all the children were in full view, even joining in with suggestions where she might find them.)

After much frustrated wild-goose chasing, Mother would suddenly demand of Blackie, "Let me taste your soup" and after sundry imaginary plats of this and that were served with exclamations of 'it tastes like this or that', she'd suddenly exclaim 'This tastes just like my children', which was the signal for the children to scatter with Mother after them, catching who she could and they in turn helping to catch the others, until all were caught. And that was the end of that game and time for somebody else to act as Blackie and Mother, until everybody had a turn at it. So the game would go on for days or even weeks, with endless scope for variations to spin out the story.



### FUNNY GAMES AT PRIMARY SCHOOL

*James Lambert, a regular contributor to the ACFN, has sent us some memories of playlore at a Sydney state school in the late 1970s.*

#### Thwackers and Game Evolution

by  
James Lambert

Once again it was time for our form to play brandings. Brandings, such an excellently thrilling, active and gutsy game, loved by all who played, playable by anybody, was always banned by the pedagogical class at our school. So every now and then someone would start up a game, and we would play it until some passing teacher noticed what we were playing and stop us. Which allowed usually a few days grace in which to enjoy the game.

One day when while we were embroiled in a furious game of brandings, one enterprising lad by the name of Chris Campbell, a lanky red-head we used to sometimes call "Ronald McDonald", hit upon a great idea. He had picked up from somewhere a really nice, manageable piece of tree branch, and so decided to use it as a defence. The branch was bent a little, about as thick as an arm, and solid. This Chris christened the THWACKER, and used it with amazing alacrity in fending off balls tossed at his personage at high speed.

The bell rang and we went off to maths and during the pre-lesson settling-down period, where the teacher had let us in the room, told us to get our books out and gone back to the staff room for something or other, we all gabbled about the game. Chris had his thwacker in the class and was loudly extolling

its virtues in a mock religious style - sort of deifying it with praise.

He took out a green texter from his pencil-case and wrote THWACKER on the side of it; then drew little flecks of green all over it - this was tennis-ball blood he said.

By lunch the next day our simple game of brandings was transformed - everybody had a thwacker of some sort. Some of us had even fashioned ones with crude hand grips in woodwork class out of scrap bits of 2x2 radiata pine, though most had just found rough pieces of wood such as tree branches.

This new game of thwacker / brandings was played for a couple of days. Inevitably some wide-awake teacher noticed what we were doing and promptly banned us from continuing.

So there we were, a bunch of year 10 students standing around in a playground holding thwackers limply at our sides. This of course did not last long. Our current 'area' was in the same place that our school assemblies were held and thus there were some faded white lines painted on the ground (where we were supposed to line up).

This was when 'THWACK-BALL' was invented.

One kid, I think his name was Adam, invented a game like volley-ball - the differences being that we used thwackers rather than hands, a tennis-ball rather than a volley-ball, and only had a hypothetical net. The similarities being that there were two teams (with similar positions to volley-ball), three hits were allowed for each team in order to get the ball back into the other side's court, you had to win serve before being able to win a point, and you rotated positions after each point.

There were two other major differences: (1) instead of saying 'rotate' when it was time for a team to rotate its positions, we said 'toe-rate'; (this inversion of syllables was also the brainchild of the aforementioned Adam); and (2) if a player were to commit the travesty of crossing the line where the hypothetical net existed the players of the other team were allowed to spit on them (Adam again!). Thwack-ball (i.e. THWACK(ER) + (VOLLEY)-BALL) only lasted a few weeks, if that. Though this was long enough for one kid, a David Roach, who of course was simply referred to as Roach, to construct, on the

weekend, a thwacker that consisted of a large flat white laminated board which had a kitchen-drawer handle attached to its middle and straps to fasten it to the forearm. Sort of like a huge oblong hand. This ill-conceived apparatus proved to be too unwieldy to be effective and was the cause for some ridicule.

This game only lasted for a week or so until some of the players started to get bored and not turn up for the game, finding better things to do. Eventually another more standard game such as soccer or football (i.e. on asphalt with tennis ball) was reverted to. The group I was in, which had migrated from our usual spot to play, originally, brandings, and then, thwack-ball, decided to go back to our area. We of course took the best of the thwackers that we had made in woodwork to use.

Back in our area we invented a new game involving the thwacker. This game, as far as I remember, had no name. It was basically a variant of a game common at my primary school where a line of kids stood along a wall and someone chucked a ball mercilessly at them from rather close range.

Our game was slightly more civilised, for we had a THWACKER. We drew a small square, about 4 x 4 ft, on the asphalt with a piece of chalk or a lump of sandstone. The person who was 'in' had to keep at least one foot in the square at all times while the other threw the ball at them. You were allowed to hit them on any part of the body except the head (this was because our area was quite small and thus we were always at too close range for head shots to be safe). The thwacker was used for defence. Rather like French Cricket, except that it moved faster, the target area was greater, and you didn't have to stand with your legs together.

We played this for ages before reverting back to our usual soccer or King Ping.





Here are some things I remember from my primary school days.

# FATTY & SKINNY

*Fatty and Skinny went to the zoo.  
Fatty got lost in the elephant's poo.  
Skinny went home to tell his mum,  
But all he got was a kick in the bum.*

# WHAT'S THE TIME?

*What's the time?  
Half past nine.  
Hang your bosoms on the line.  
If they tear, I don't care,  
You can buy another pair.*  
(This was often sung after someone had supplied the first line as a genuine question.)

# RETORTS

(against staring)  
*Stare, stare, like a bear. I can see your underwear.*

(against copying)  
*Copy-cat, dirty rat, sitting on a lump of fat.*

(for general taunting)  
*Ink, pink, you stink*

(against lying)  
*Liar, spier, pants on fire.*

(when someone sprayed spittle while talking)  
*Don't spray it, say it.  
I want conversation, not precipitation.  
The News, not the Weather.*  
(my friend Sonia says that she used to say this, but also added the line:  
*I want communication, not irrigation -*  
which she also claims to have made up herself)

Also, we used to say to someone "You're beautiful" (or some other compliment), and then add "Not you, the fly on your shoulder". A similar trick was to say "I love you (pause for a length of time, then add) *calyptus lollies*" (i.e. 'eucalyptus lollies').

There was always a differentiation between boys and girls. This often manifested itself in few different ways. For instance boys would sometimes claim that if one were touched by a girl, then one would get 'girl's germs'. The vice versa fact of 'boy's germs' of course equally existed. One could protect oneself from such germs with an *injection*. This was merely one's finger pointed into the arm accompanied by a statement such as 'Girl

*injection*', or 'A million girl injections' (to be on the safe side). The efficacy of **STATEMENT** was an undisputed piece of common knowledge.

Sometimes in kindie, boys used to gather in a group of about three or four, interlock arms over shoulders so as to form a line, and march around the playground chanting 'We want boys'. And more boys would join until the line became too unwieldy to continue. This was basically a rudimentary 'men's club' with no women allowed, albeit short-lived. Girls used to probably do the same thing, but I can't quite recollect.

We had a circular swimming pool when we were kids. One game we played was to jump around and make the biggest waves you possibly could, and then yell out, as though making an announcement in a medieval castle or fair, 'Make waves for the King! Make waves for the King!', a jocular reworking of 'Make way for the King!'.

Boiled eggs in our family were called 'skin eggs', since they still had their skin on.

A peanut butter and honey sandwich was called 'Peanut butter, honey, bread and butter'. This long-winded name was used invariably in our family, and was said with a particular rhythm.

# Theriomorphosis

When in infants, and before schooling, we sometimes pretended to be animals. This role-play usually endured for only a few seconds, just as long as it took to preform the metamorphosis. Once accomplished it was almost immediately undone.

**Rhino:** When at a rose bush, one could pull off a large thorn, lick the base of it and stick it on the nose, so that the point drove upwards to the heavens. Then you could pretend to be a rhinoceros.

**Croc:** When lying on a bed one could crawl off it by pulling oneself along the floor with the hands, the arms being kept straight, and the torso and legs trailing behind, until the feet finally plummeted to the floor. This was being a crocodile.

**Rooster:** When in the bath, one could lather up the hair with soap, form a coxcomb with the hair, and cock-a-doodle-doo. This was being a rooster.

# RHYMES FROM BRITAIN

*The following rhymes were sent to us by Dr and Mrs K A Rockett of Belconnen, ACT. Dr Rockett writes:*

All the rhymes as far as I am aware are British in origin. I'm English and I either heard them whilst at school (Gravesend, Kent), or from my father who learned them when he was at school. An approximate year is given as an indication as given of when I (or my father) first heard the rhymes. I was born in 1962 and I guess the first silly rhymes that I heard were at infants school (years 1 to 3). Some were just rhymes which were funny derivatives of nursery rhymes etc. Some were the chants used to select the people who were or were not 'it' in playground games. Most of the rhymes listed from 1974, 1976 are ones that were learned and sung as part of the 'on-the-back seat-of-the-bus-singers' group. My school friends and I belonged to a youth club from the ages of about 11 to 16. We used to go on camps at Easter and summer, and every Friday we would go swimming. The club's means of transport was a big old coach. We would while the journey away singing just as rugby clubs do.

The two rhymes included from my father were learned whilst he was at school in Leeds, Yorkshire. It was certainly before he was 13 as he moved down to London then. This would put the time he first heard them sometime during or immediately after the second world war.

## Kent, 1974

Mary had a little lamb,  
She thought it rather silly,  
So she threw it up in the air,  
And caught it by its...  
Willy was a bulldog,  
Sitting on the grass,  
Along came a bee and stung him on the...  
Ask no questions,  
Tell no lies,  
I saw a policeman doing up his...  
Flies are a nuisance,  
Fleas are worse,  
And that's the end of my silly little verse.

## Kent, 1976

"Hello little boy, would you like a sweetie?"  
"No, No, No, I'll tell the vicar!"  
"I am the vicar!"

## Kent, 1976

The bear climbed over the mountain,

The bear climbed over the mountain,  
The bear climbed over the mountain,  
And what do you think he saw?  
Well the other side of the mountain,  
The other side of the mountain,  
The other side of the mountain,  
And what do you think he did?  
Well the bear climbed over the mountain,  
etc., etc., etc.

## Kent, 1970

Happy Birthday to you,  
Squashed tomatoes and stew,  
Bread and butter in the gutter  
Happy Birthday to you.

## Kent, 1970

It's raining, it's pouring,  
The old man is snoring,  
He went to bed and bumped his head,  
And couldn't get up in the morning.

It's raining, it's pouring,  
The toilet needs sorting,  
The plumber came and pulled the chain,  
And out came a choo-choo train!

It's raining, it's pouring,  
The old man's hair needs shawning,  
He cut it long, He cut it short,  
He cut it with a knife and fork!

## Kent, 1970

Glory, glory, hallelujah!  
Teacher hit me with a ruler.  
The ruler snapped in half,  
And we all began to laugh,  
As the school bell rang, clang, clang!

## Kent, 1970

Heigh-Ho, Heigh-Ho, it's off to work we go,  
With a shovel and spade,  
And a hand-grenade, Heigh-Ho, Heigh-Ho.

## Kent, 1970

On top of spaghetti, all covered in cheese,  
I lost my poor meatball when somebody sneezed.  
It rolled off the table and onto the floor,  
and then my poor meatball rolled out of the door.  
It rolled down the garden and under a bush,  
And now my poor meatball is nothing but mush!

## Kent, 1976

Little Jack Horner sat in the corner,  
His mum told him to because he was naughty!



**Kent, 1976**

*Two one-liners regarding Bottom Burps:*  
The one who smelt it dealt it!  
The one who denied it supplied it!

**Kent, 1970**

Ip dip sky blue who's it not you.

**Kent, 1970**

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall,  
All the King's horses and all of the king's  
men  
Laughed!

**1970s**

*From Monty Python's Flying Circus, sung  
by Michael Palin*

I've got two legs from my hips to the  
ground,  
And when I move them they walk around,  
When I lift them they climb the stairs,  
And when I shave them they ain't got hairs!

**Kent, 1976**

Old Mother Hubbard,  
Went to the cupboard,  
To get the poor dog a bone,  
But when she got there,  
The cupboard was bare,  
So they both starved to death!

**Kent, 1976**

1st voice: Oh, you'll never get to heaven,  
2nd voice: Oh, you'll never get to heaven  
1st voice: In a jumbo jet,  
2nd voice: In a jumbo jet,  
1st voice: Cos heaven ain't got,  
2nd voice: Cos heaven ain't got,  
1st voice: No runways yet!  
2nd voice: No runways yet!

1st voice: Oh, you'll never get to heaven,  
2nd voice: Oh, you'll never get to heaven,  
1st voice: In a biscuit tin,  
2nd voice: In a biscuit tin,  
1st voice: Cost a biscuit tin,  
2nd voice: Cos a biscuit tin,  
1st voice: Has got biscuits in!  
2nd voice: Has got biscuits in!

1st voice: Oh, you'll never get to heaven,  
2nd voice: Oh, you'll never get to heaven,  
1st voice: In a padded bra,  
2nd voice: In a padded bra,  
1st voice: Cos a padded bra,  
2nd voice: Cos a padded bra,  
1st voice: Won't stretch that far!  
2nd voice: Won't stretch that far!

**Kent, 1976**

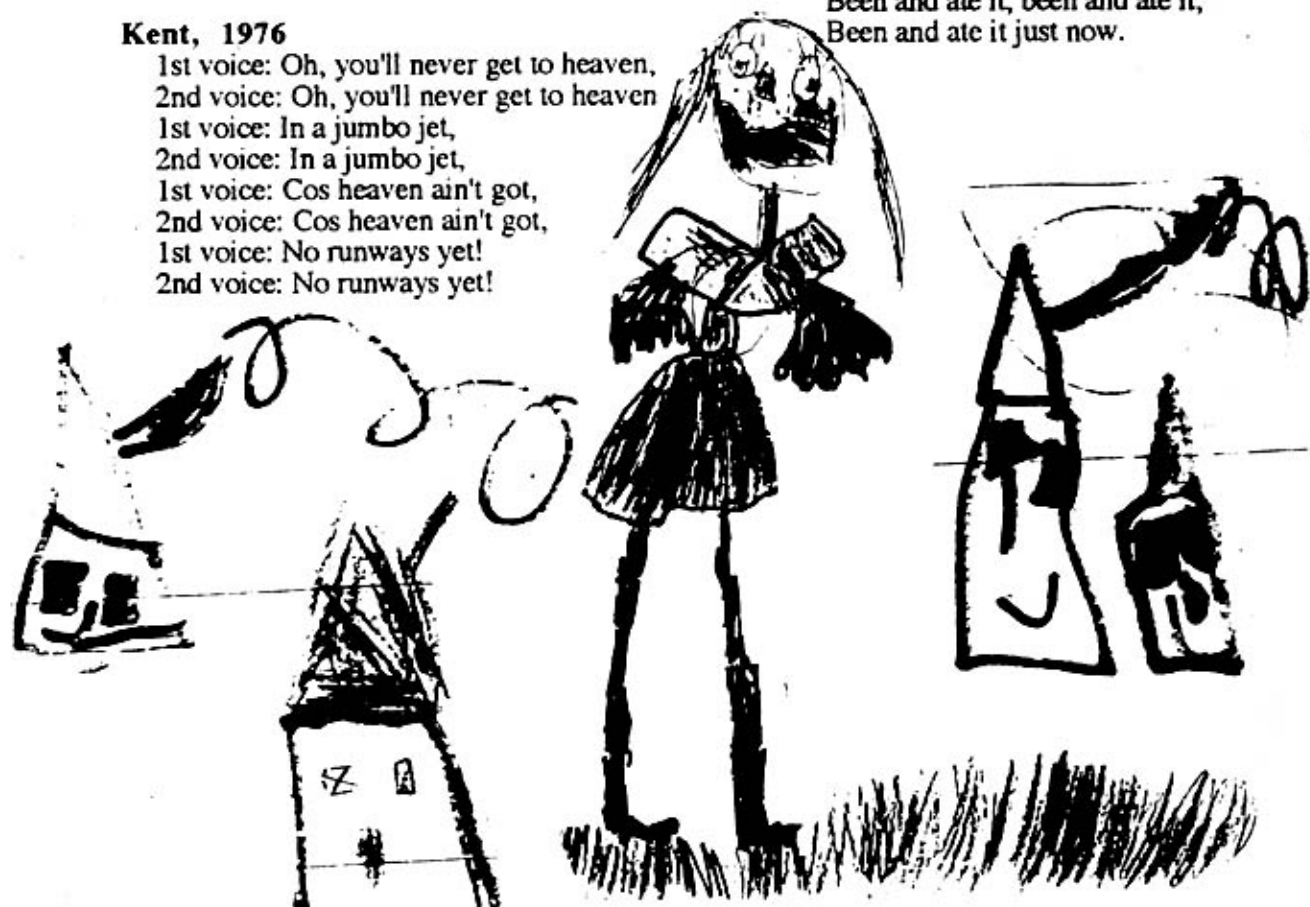
The boy stood on the burning deck,  
Playing a game of cricket,  
The ball rolled up his trouser leg,  
And stumped his middle wicket!

*(I believe that this one is from a record.  
However, I can't remember who did it, but I  
do know it was banned at the time. A friend  
of mine's elder brother had a copy!)*

**Kent, 1976**

Found a peanut, found a peanut  
Found a peanut just now.

Been and ate it, been and ate it,  
Been and ate it just now.



*Other verses:*

*(insert instruments of your choice and repeat this section as long as people will stand it)*

Got a belly ache  
Appendicitis  
Go to hospital  
See the surgeon  
Anaesthetic  
Cut him open  
Found the peanut  
Sew him up again  
Lost the scissors  
Cut him open  
Found the scissors  
Sew him up again  
Lost the ...  
Cut him open  
Found the ...  
Sew him up again  
Walking Down the road  
Turned the corner  
What have I found  
Found a peanut etc., etc.

**Yorkshire, 1930S / 40S**

With my hand on my head, what have I here?  
Tis my sweaty browser, oh my teacher dear,  
Sweaty browser,  
Nicky nacky noo,  
That's what they taught me when I went to school.

With my hand on my eye, what have I here?  
Tis my eye blinker, oh my teacher dear,  
Eye blinker,  
Sweaty browser,  
Nicky nacky noo,  
That's what they taught me when I went to school.

With my hand on my nose, what have I here?  
Tis my nose wiper, oh my teacher dear,  
Nose wiper,  
Eye blinker,  
Sweaty browser,  
Nicky nacky noo,  
That's what they taught me when I went to school.

With my hand on my mouth, what have I here?  
Tis my teeth biter, oh my teacher dear,  
Teeth biter,  
Nose wiper,  
Eye blinker,  
Sweaty browser,  
Nicky nacky noo,  
That's what they taught me when I went to school.

With my hand on my chin, what have I here?  
Tis my chin wagger, oh my teacher dear,  
Chin wagger,  
Teeth biter,  
Nose wiper,  
Eye blinker,  
Sweaty browser,  
Nicky nacky noo,  
That's what they taught me when I went to school.

With my hand on my chest, what have I here?  
Tis my chest heaver, oh my teacher dear,  
Chest heaver,  
Chin wagger,  
Teeth biter,  
Nose wiper,  
Eye blinker,  
Sweaty browser,



Nicky nacky noo,  
That's what they taught me when I went to school.

With my hand on my tum, what have I here?

Tis my belly bumper, oh my teacher dear,  
Belly bumper,  
Chest heaver,  
Chin wagger,  
Teeth biter,  
Nose wiper,  
Eye blinker,  
Sweaty browser,  
Nicky nacky noo,  
That's what they taught me when I went to school.

With my hand on my thigh, what have I here?

Tis my thigh thumper, oh my teacher dear,  
Thigh thumper,  
Belly bumper,  
Chest heaver,  
Chin wagger,  
Teeth biter,  
Nose wiper,  
Eye blinker,  
Sweaty browser,  
Nicky nacky noo,  
That's what they taught me when I went to school.

With my hand on my knee, what have I here?

Tis my knee knocker, oh my teacher dear,  
Knee knocker,  
Thigh thumper,  
Belly bumper,  
Chest heaver,  
Chin wagger,  
Teeth biter,  
Nose wiper,  
Eye blinker,  
Sweaty browser,  
Nicky nacky noo,  
That's what they taught me when I went to school.

With my hand on my shin, what have I here?

Tis my shin shanker, oh my teacher dear,  
Shin shanker,  
Knee knocker,  
Thigh thumper,  
Belly bumper,  
Chest heaver,  
Chin wagger,  
Teeth biter,  
Nose wiper,

Eye blinker,  
Sweaty browser,  
Nicky nacky noo,  
That's what they taught me when I went to school.

With my hand on my toe, what have I here?  
Tis my toe tipper, oh my teacher dear,

*(Pause, then as fast as possible)*

Toe Tipper,  
Shin shanker,  
Knee knocker,  
Thigh thumper,  
Belly bumper,  
Chest heaver,  
Chin wagger,  
Teeth biter,  
Nose wiper,  
Eye blinker,  
Sweaty browser,  
Nicky nacky noo,  
That's what they taught me when I went to school.



### ORIGIN OF ACTION RHYME: "FIRECRACKER"

P Burrows

*Phil Burrows is a teacher and researcher in Perth. he has recently written two short pieces on aspects of children's folklore, which we publish here.*

The origin of this particular rhyme, like so much of the material constituting the oral folklore of children, seems rather obscure.

Versions of the rhyme appear in the works of June Factor who has been mainly responsible for the popularisation of this element of children's folklore.



For example, a short version is recorded in *Cinderella dressed in Yella* (Turner, Factor and Lowenstein, 1969, p.94) which reads:

Fire cracker, fire cracker,  
boom, boom, boom;  
The girls go wee  
And the boys go woo.

Another version appears in Factor's *Far Out Brussel Sprout* (1983, P.89) which goes like this:

Firecracker, firecracker,  
Boom, boom, boom.  
Firecracker, firecracker,  
boom, boom, boom.  
The boys have got the muscles,  
The teacher's got the brains,  
But the girls have got the sexy legs  
So they win the game.

However, the version I recorded at Southlake Primary School in 1988 (although I'm not certain of the year) seems to be one that combines parts of other rhymes. For instance, in *Cinderella Dressed in Yella* (1969, p.33) there are marked similarities contained in the following skipping rhyme:

The King does a bow,  
The Queen does a curtsy,  
The boys go [kiss],  
The girls go wow.

(The skippers lift up their dresses on the last line)

This is the first reference to the girls lifting their skirts, and although this is the only action accompaniment which is recorded here, the version I recorded had actions for every line.

Lifting the skirt, incidentally, is a feature which complements the 'shock value' of the language of much of children's folklore, designed to poke fun at the 'prudishness' of adults. The particular character and function of this type of material is well documented by Turner (in *Cinderella Dressed in Yella*, 1969) where he comments, "...childish vulgarity is an unsophisticated act of rebellion" (p.158) and "...the laughter which greets these rhymes springs from the tension created by deciding to challenge the taboo" (p.159).

However, returning to the version I recorded, it seems also to be based (partially) on the widely-recorded rhyme *I'm a Little Dutch Girl*, recorded as a skipping rhyme in Factor's historical treatment of children's folklore, *Captain Cook Chased a Chook* (1988, p.188):

I'm a little Dutch girl dressed in blue,  
These are the things that I must do:  
Salute to the captain,  
Curtsy to the Queen,  
And show my knickers to the football team.

The version then that was recorded at Southlake Primary School seems both derivative and accumulative.

However, it is the contemporary variation, entitled *Flintstones* which I was particularly interested in, since I assumed that it was either a recent, or a localised hybrid based on the 'traditional' *Firecracker*.

The rhyme demonstrates children's infinite capacity to create language that is both ingenious and vibrant yet, at the same time, remains faithful to the rhyme and metric pattern of the original on which it is based.

Therefore, instead of:

Firecracker, firecracker,  
Boom, boom, boom

they re-create:

Flintstones, Flintstones,  
Yabba-dabba-do!

The source of this variation is the popular television cartoon, *The Flintstones* which works on the engaging premise of setting a contemporary 'sit-com' in prehistoric times, creating an historically impossible environment in which humans and dinosaurs can co-habit (this idea has now been realised in perhaps the ultimate expression, in *Jurassic Park*).

The rest of the rhyme mixes the elements already referred to, ending with Pebble (the little girl in the television series) having to 'curtsy to the Queen and show her knickers to the football team'.

Turner has noted the dynamic nature of children's folklore, with its constant emphasis on change and creativity. In *Cinderella Dressed in Yella* (1969, p.161) he writes:

...what is most interesting ... is precisely the interplay between those which have lasted and are widespread and those which are relatively new, perhaps local and ephemeral. All these rhymes are in some sense the product of childish inventiveness.

In Turner's summary, he identifies this constant inventiveness, resulting in the mixture of the traditional and the contemporary as dictating the need to monitor and record children's folklore, if it is to be preserved. He writes:

This collection is only a beginning of what should be done. We need:

1. a comprehensive study of all children's games and of the lore and language of Australian children
2. a study of the distribution of children's folklore as between regions, town and country, social classes, age groups

This somewhat brief and imperfect examination of but one example, namely the action rhyme *Flintstones*, is evidence that Turner is right and that what is needed is a constant effort to record an element of the child's world that is not only intrinsically valuable from a linguistic aspect, but which contributes to the knowledge of the social development of the child.

#### REFERENCES:

Factor, J. (1983). *Far out, brussel sprout*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Factor, J. (1988). *Captain Cook chased a chook*. Victoria: Penguin.

Turner, I., Factor, J. and Lowenstein, W. (1969). *Cinderella dressed in yella* Victoria: Heinemann.



### Children's Folklore: the Language of Children's Reality

P Burrows  
September 1993

The poems, chants, skipping games and action rhymes that children engage in have been practised for generations in streets and playgrounds in many parts of the world. It is a rich and inventive expression, whose language is usually ignored or disparaged by teachers and parents who assume the language of their own (adult) world to be superior.

Some adults, however, have shown interest in this oral folklore for some time now. Academics began to study it and to record the diversity of its forms. Linguists began to realise the vibrancy and ingenuity of the language while socio-linguists examined its functions or purposes.

Works such as *Cinderella Dressed in Yella* (1969) began to draw adults' attention to the major elements of this neglected field. This particular book documented over 1,000 items, categorising them according to their form of expression (e.g. skipping rhyme, action chant, etc.). It clearly established the vibrancy, ingenuity and creativeness of the language itself.

In addition, the book provided valuable information regarding the purposes of children's folklore. Turner, in his essay at the conclusion of the book, addresses both points.

Firstly, he validates the inventiveness of the language itself which (due to its oral nature) is constantly evolving, changing, building new forms on the old and updating according to contemporary popular elements (such as TV shows, advertisements, etc.).

Secondly, with regard to the functions of such folklore, he addresses the following:

1. The content of the language is meant to poke fun at adults in ways that are witty, incisive but ultimately affectionate. It parodies adult morality, prudishness and hypocrisy.
2. It is an expression of power in a world in which the child is still relatively powerless.
3. It demonstrates a growing awareness of the social fabric of the adult world into which the child is being rapidly enculturated. In some ways, this function is a linguistic

transition from the world of the child to that of the adult.

4. It celebrates the sheer pleasure of the rhythm and rhyme of words, complementing this with similarly enjoyable physical action (clapping, skipping, etc.).

Therefore, in accordance with the above functions (especially the first three) children's folklore is necessarily marked by elements of brashness. Without such brashness, children's folklore would be impotent.

The language of children's folklore, therefore, is clearly of a different nature to the language used by many adults to create their own impression of a child's world that is often sanitised, idealised and impalpably innocent.

To some extent, this discrepancy between the language that adults use for children and the language used by children accounts for the enormous popularity of authors such as Roald Dahl and Paul Jennings, who have caught something of the irreverence, wit and satire that characterises children's folklore.

Rather than 'sinking to a lower level' these writers who have shown that they have understood the child's perspective - the fears, the apprehensions, the perceptions of an adult world to which they will soon belong.

Their popularity is an expression of children's gratitude to a couple of adults who have not forgotten what it is like to be a child.

#### REFERENCE:

Turner, I., Factor, J. and Lowenstein, W. (1969). *Cinderella dressed in yella* Victoria: Heinemann.

## SEVEN LITTLE AUSTRALIANS & CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE

Danielle Wendt

*This short piece was written by a first year undergraduate student at the School of Early Childhood Studies in Melbourne, in 1992.*

*Seven Little Australians*, by Ethel Turner has believable characters, and I see no reason to doubt they are based on 'typical' children of the late nineteenth century in NSW.

Children's verbal lore is evident throughout the novel, especially play on words / meaning, nick-names and slang.

The following rhyme is an example of the play on words:

Oh that I was where I would be!  
Then I would be where I am not;  
But where I am I still must be,  
And where I would be I cannot.

Children today have many such rhymes, and nonsensical verse abounds.

The issue of nick-names is also interesting. Esther, the children's step-mother, is called Essie for short. And Judy - her real name being Helen - is constantly referred to as 'Ju'. The four year old girl is never called by her given name, but is instead known as 'Baby'. And as for the real baby of the family, he was christened Francis, but was never called that. He was 'The General'.

Slang is often used by the children. Some of it sounds old fashioned to us. Terms such as 'My golly' and 'My goodness' are still in use today, although 'My God' is now probably more common. It would seem people today are not as concerned about 'using the Lord's name in vain' as they once were. 'Horrid' has largely been replaced with 'horrible', and 'dab' is a word we certainly do not hear these days. Phrases such as 'I'm quite a dab at mowing' appear frequently in the book. 'Nick', as in "... nick down and have a run" is also popular.

Secret languages and the imitation (perhaps even mockery) of different accents has long been a part of children's folklore. In *Seven Little Australians* "...Judy affected an Irish brogue at intervals, for some occult reason of her own". Special baby-talk is also common. Judy, talking to 'The General', refers to



chickens as 'chuck-chuck' and a boy as 'boydie'. Then there are practical jokes. The children's father was taking his tea with a guest. While the children only had bread and butter, the father, his guest and Esther ate roast fowl. Judy, seizing the opportunity, told 'The General' there were lots of little chicks in the dining room. 'The General' therefore toddled in as they were eating, and went "... down promptly upon all fours to seek for the feathered darlings Judy had said were here".

Humour, a significant component of children's folklore, is not only expressed in practical jokes, but also in mockery. "...Well, Judy, you go and sew up those rents, and put some buttons on your frock.' Judy's eyes snapped and sparkled. 'Is that a dagger that I see before me, the handle to my hand? Come, let me grasp it,' she said saucily, snatching one of the pins from Esther's dress, fastening her own with it, and dropping a curtsy." (P.23).

*Seven Little Australians* suggests that there was a strong distinction between games for boys and games for girls. Judy's father said to her, "Why ever can't you go and play quietly with your doll...". Marbles was depicted as exclusively a male's pursuit. The boys would play on the side of the road. The catapult was also the male's domain. "You're only a girl, so I don't 'spect it would be very much good to you, would it?" (Bunt, six, to Meg).

As the story of the *Seven Little Australians* reveals, children's folklore was just as prevalent in the 1890s as it is today. It is interesting to consider what has changed, disappeared or continued over time.

#### REFERENCE:

Turner, E. (1894). *Seven Little Australians* Sydney: Lansdowne Press.

### FOLK GAMES OF INDIAN CHILDREN

*Dr Updesh Bevi, now an Associate at the School of Early Childhood Studies, University of Melbourne, was for some time a member of the Indian National Council of Educational Research and Training in New Delhi. In 1989 she presented a paper to the OMEP Asian Seminar in Osaka, Japan.*

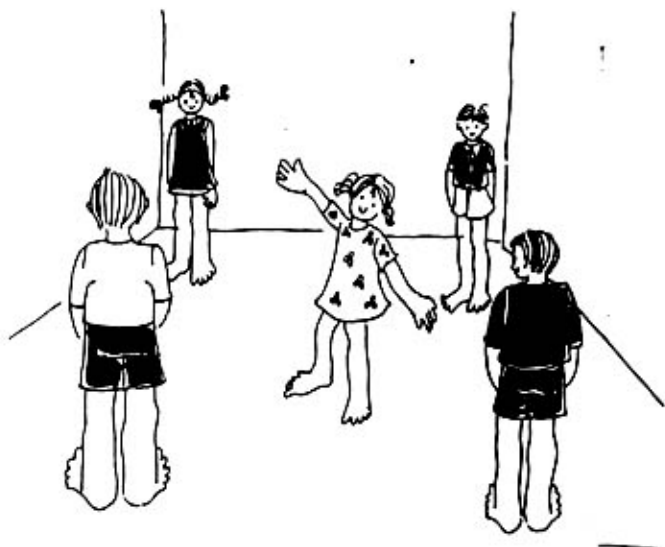
*We publish a few extracts from the paper to demonstrate the immortality of childhood play across continents and cultures.*

#### Pootch Pootch (Tail Tail)

This is a play for very small children and is played in a room. 'It' child stands in the middle of the room and four corners are occupied by the other four children. One of the children suddenly shouts 'Pootch' (tail) 'Pootch' (tail) and children in the corners try to exchange corners with each other. If any one is caught in the process, he becomes 'it'. Otherwise, the first 'it' keeps playing.

Age: three to six

Outcome: It enhances children's concentration and agility.



#### Ikri-Dukri (Hopscotch)

It is played with a broken piece of earthen pot, about an inch and a half in diameter, or a round flat stone called 'Thippi'. a rectangle about three yards long and two yards wide is drawn. This rectangle is divided into various compartments about a foot wide. The space of four feet square in the middle is subdivided into four triangles by a cross. Beyond these triangles are three more parallel lines.

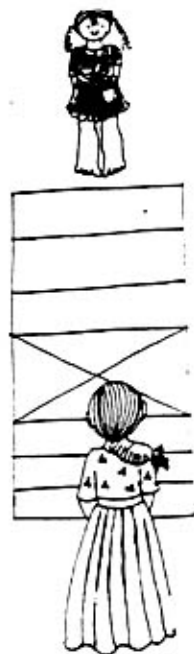
Standing on one foot one has to hop and push the thippi, mainly with the big toe, into the first three houses, one after another, then into the four triangles; and finally into the three houses

beyond the triangles. The thippi must pass neatly through the various compartments.

Whoever succeeds in going first through all the compartments, a symbolic map of the three worlds, four oceans, and three heavens, is the winner.

Age: five to 12

Outcome: This is a game of learning balance. Not only has the child to hop on foot, but at the same time push the thippi.



### Kotla Chapaki

It is a group game and any number of children can be involved in playing it.

This game can be played at any season. It has special attraction during summer months, played under the moonlit sky. A piece of cloth, one metre long, is twisted and doubled. It is used to punish the erring player.

All the children except for 'it' sit in a large circle. Now the 'it' child with twisted cloth hidden under his shirt goes around chanting:

Kotla Chapaki, come Friday night.

The children chant after him:

Whoever looks back will get the bite.

In this game no child must look back. The 'it' child has to place the cloth behind a child,

without letting him / her know. No other child should tell or gesture to let him / her know that it is placed behind it.

If any child is caught looking back or gesturing, he / she gets a 'hit' with the cloth.

The child behind whom the cloth is placed, should pick it up and run after 'it', and 'it' should run and come to the vacant place and sit there. The child with the cloth now takes a turn at being 'it'. If the child doesn't come to know that the cloth is placed behind him / her and in the meantime if the 'it' child comes back after taking a round, then the unwary child gets the punishment. He / she runs for his life with 'it' following round the circle, till he reaches his vacant spot and sits, and 'it' again goes round chanting and places the cloth behind another child. The game continues.

Age: three onwards

Outcome: The child's senses have to learn to be alert. Social development takes place. The child learns to play in a large group.



## Correspondence

*Katarina Steiner, of Cottesloe WA, has sent a counting out rhyme used by her daughter in Townsville, Qld in 1958.*

It is allegedly Danish and refers to the unwillingness to return home:

*Ikke backa,  
Ikke backa,  
Ikke backa bo,  
Ikke backa,  
Ikke backa,  
Out goes you.*

The spelling may not necessarily be correct.

*Can any reader identify its rhyme, and / or its source? Is it genuinely of Danish origin, or a typical example of local nonsense verse?*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Ms Factor

I am writing in the hope that what follows may be of some interest to you.

As you probably know, *Larkrise to Candleford* by Flora Thompson is the story of growing up in an isolated hamlet in England at the turn of the century. On page 214 is recorded a rhyme that the naughty boys of the village would shout after the carts taking the local Catholics to mass:

*Oh Dear Father I've come to confess.  
Well my child what have you done?  
Oh Dear Father I've killed the cat.  
Well my child what about that?  
Oh Dear Father what shall I do?  
You kiss me and I'll kiss you.*

My wife Isabel grew up in Cuenca, a small Spanish town, capital of the province of the same name during the thirties. She and other girl children would sing the following rhyme as accompaniment to a dance game. It was some sort of group game:

*Se fué a confesar  
Larán, larán, larito  
Se fué a confesar  
Con el Padre Benito.*

*Confíeseme, Usted, Padre  
Larán etc.  
Confíeseme, Usted Padre  
Que he matado al gatito.  
De penitencia te echo  
Larán etc.  
De penitencia te echo  
Que me des un besito.*

There are further verses and it finishes with the couplet:

*El beso se lo dió  
Y este cuento se acabó*

It translates more or less as:

*She went to confess herself  
Larán etc.  
She went to confession  
With Father Benito  
Larán etc.  
Confess me Father  
Confess me Father  
Because I have killed the little cat  
I will give you as penance  
Larán etc.  
I will give you as penance  
That you will give me a little kiss.*

Other verses, then:

*She gave him the kiss  
And this tale is finished.*

J R O'Donoghue

[Any Australian versions? {Eds}]

\*\*\*\*\*



## Mary Had a Canary

On a visit to Sydney in October 1993, I asked children from Nicholson Street Public School, Balmain, for the words of the song they were singing on the bus going to, and returning from, daily swimming lessons.

Mary had a canary,  
She also had a duck,  
She took it to the kitchen,  
And taught it how to  
Fry fish for dinner,  
Fry fish for tea,  
The more you eat,  
The more you drink,  
The more you want to  
Peter had a boat,  
He took it out to sea,  
Then Jaws came up behind him,  
And bit off his  
Cocktail - ginger ale,  
Forty cents a glass,  
If you don't like it,  
Shove it up your  
Ask no questions  
Tell no lies,  
I saw a policeman  
Doing up his  
Flies are bad,  
Mosquitoes are worse,  
And this is the end  
Of my dirty little verse.

Edel Wignell

\*\*\*\*\*

An international research team based in France, comprised of linguists, ethnomusicologists, children's folklorists and psychologists, is preparing a cross-disciplinary study of the hand clapping song *When Suzy was a Baby*. The text depicts various stages in the life of Suzy (e.g. toddler, teenager, granny, dying) and is usually accompanied by mimics as well as clapping patterns. We are particularly interested in the international diffusion of this song and have documented versions of it in the UK, Ireland, the US, Australia, France, Spain, Cyprus, Israel and South Africa. We would appreciate receiving additional versions or references. I and P Opie's *The Singing Game* and J Factor's *Captain Cook Chased a Chook* have already been consulted.

Please send information to:

Andy Arleo, 32 Chemin du Bignon Baguet,  
44600 SAINT-NAZAIRE, FRANCE

## BOOK REVIEW

### The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore

by Graham Seal & Gwenda Beed Davey

'Something for everyone' might be one way to sum up this book by Graham Seal and Gwenda Beed Davey. Written for, about and by Australians, it gives us a glimpse of a wonderful range of characters and events that are part of our folklore.

As the authors quite correctly point out in the Preface to the book, there has been an almost total disregard for the collection, preservation, study and general recognition of Australian folklore. They have set out 'to draw together the various threads of what is known and to present these to the reader in an informed and accessible manner'. They have done a fine job.

One of the challenges in a book such as this, which covers such a broad range of topic areas, is to avoid being so superficial that it trivialises what are significant parts of our folk heritage. I think they have managed very nicely to be comprehensive yet detailed. Having said that, it is not the sort of book you pick up and read like a novel from cover to cover, but rather one which you read according to interest. It is over 380 pages long, with excellent photos which break up the text. It is set out in alphabetical order and begins, rather appropriately, with a discussion of Aboriginal folklife. For the newcomer to studies of folklore there is a brief introduction which provides a background and context for the book.

In the words of the authors, the book 'tracks the history of the development of folklore studies in this country, identifying significant individuals, institutions, events and movements that have both shaped and been shaped by involvement - whether scholarly, performing, conserving or simply consuming - within the broad field of Australian folklore'. It is difficult to convey the breadth of topics and information contained in the book - but just to give you some idea, under the letter 'F' alone there are 77 pages of fascinating detail about festivals, folk art, folk music, folk medicine, folk poetry, folk speech, folk tales, and so the list goes on.

One of the many parts I found interesting was the discussion about the role and place of local halls in community life, particularly in early

rural Australia. As one who grew up in a small rural Victorian town, I found myself reliving the picture shows, the dances, the public meetings and the occasional wedding celebrations that took place in the local hall. It was the communal meeting place and, next to the hotel, was the most popular place in town. Seal and Davey point out, however, that the advent of home entertainment (TV, Videos, Computer games) has changed for all time the importance of the local hall in the community's sense of identity.

There is very similar situation taking place now with the closure of small rural schools. Communities are angry for many reasons not the least of which is the loss of an important part of their history and culture. This is precisely why books such as this are important. They remind us of what we have lost and what we should struggle to hold on to.

This book is an important contribution to our all too small library of information about Australian folklore. I can see it being a valuable reference to students in Anthropology, History, Australian Studies, English Literature, and so on. It is very readable and should serve as a resource for students in upper grade primary right through to the university graduate. I thoroughly recommend it.

John Evans  
Faculty of Education  
Deakin University



## NOTICES

### CHILDHOOD REFLECTIONS: A STUDY OF THE FOLKLORE OF CHILDREN'S PLAY

The *Childhood Reflections Project* is an attempt to recall the play experiences of people during their childhood years. As one phase of this project we are asking individuals to provide information and anecdotes about their own play from earliest recollections up to about the age of twelve years. Questions have been suggested by friends in the fields of play leadership, child development, and early childhood education. We hope these questions will evoke vivid images about play from people's past. The intent of our project is to determine how the play of children has changed over the generations.

Stories of childhood by children have been largely overlooked in the folk history of western countries. We would like to help remedy this and begin to fill in some of the gaps in our history and our understanding about children's play. Findings will be used to facilitate better play opportunities for children in schools and communities. We hope that you will help us in this 'playful task'. Results of the study will be made available to interested parties.

Please think back to your childhood and tell us about your playtime experiences and the feelings you had as a young girl or boy. Answer questions as candidly and fully as possible. We have found thinking about our childhood a very pleasant experience and trust you will as well.

A unique feature of this study is that we are asking friends and colleagues to help us in extending our network of contacts in order to gather data. We are particularly interested to gather childhood reflections on play from people in the same family. A number of people who have done this already have found the experience of sharing their recollections of early childhood to be very rewarding. We hope that you will not only complete a questionnaire yourself, but that you will also consider asking friends and family members to take part in our study as a piece of family history.

QUESTIONNAIRES ARE AVAILABLE FROM  
(Postage Paid within Australia):

Reply Paid PP5008  
Richard McConaghy, Playgrounds Unit  
Recreation SA  
Department of Recreation and Sport  
GPO Box 1876  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

We would appreciate the return of the forms at your earliest convenience.

If you would like extra copies of the CHILDHOOD REFLECTIONS questionnaire for family or friends, please contact the above address indicating the number of forms you require and a mailing address; alternatively contact Richard McConaghy on 08) 226 7357 during working hours.

We sincerely thank you  
for your help.



### A Reminder to Australian Readers

Material for the dictionary of Australian children's vernacular is flowing in - but time is running out for the first edition.

If you know any words or expressions used by children in Australia - past or present - please send them to June Factor at the address below, or write to her for copies of the *KIDSPEAK* Collection Sheet.

**REMEMBER:** Words for different marbles; expressions of pleasure and disgust; nick names; insults; codes and spells; secret languages; names for moves in a game, etc.

Please send all and more of the above to:

Dr June Factor  
Australian Centre  
University of Melbourne  
PARKVILLE VIC 3052

### To our Readers:

**All Good Wishes for the  
New Year!**

*This issue of the Australian Children's Folklore Newsletter has been typed by Catherine Ward in the office of the Victorian Folklife Association, and Designed by Donald Oliver.*

# The Victorian Folklife Association Inc.

PO Box 1765 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Telephone (03) 417 4684

## 6th national folklife conference

Melbourne, 8-10 July 1994

### TRADITIONS AND TOURISM: the good, the bad and the ugly

presented by the Australian Folk Trust and the Victorian Folklife Association

#### First Call for Papers and Expressions of Interest

Tourism is now, without a doubt, one of Australia's most economically significant industries.

The flora and fauna and the abundant natural resources for which Australia is internationally renowned, are complemented by rich cultural traditions that include Koorie art, a pastoral and convict heritage and the many community based cultures that flourish in contemporary Australia.

In 1984, the Australian Government published the deliberations of a Working Party on the Protection of Aboriginal Folklore, and in 1989, UNESCO recommended that traditional cultures and folklore should be protected and conserved, as well as disseminated, by all its member states.

Yet the relationship between tradition and tourism is a complex one.

**Traditions and Tourism: the good, the bad and the ugly**  
will explore the impact of tourism on traditions.

Papers are now being called for in the following 3 streams:

- o the nature of tradition in Australia
- o current issues and programs in tourism in Australia
- o the relationship between tradition and tourism

*Please complete and return the form below to the Victorian Folklife Association  
at the above address by Friday 11 February, 1994.*

**6th National Folklife Conference**  
**TRADITIONS AND TOURISM:**  
**the good, the bad and the ugly**

**Melbourne, 8-10 July 1994**

I am interested in: presenting a paper    yes / no    on: \_\_\_\_\_  
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A study of the friendships and play patterns of children at  
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Video tape of traditional games, songs and rhymes for young  
children in English, Turkish and Vietnamese.

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by Gwenda Davey (first published 1979)  
Cassettes of stories, poems and songs, traditional and  
contemporary, in English (2), Greek (4), Italian (4),  
Macedonian (2), Arabic (2), Serbo-Croatian (4),  
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