

AGE TO AGE
IN STORIES AND SONGS

BRACKNELL BERKS
2008 - 2010

BIRCH HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL
ST.MARGARET CLITHEROW RC PRIMARY SCHOOL
HARMANSWATER PRIMARY SCHOOL
CROWTHORNE C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL
WILDMOOR HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL
SANDY LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL
MEADOWVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

LADYBANK RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME
DOWNSIDE RESOURCES CENTRE
CROWTHORNE REMINISCENCE GROUP
BIRDSGROVE NURSING HOME
EDMONDS COURT SHELTERED HOUSING PROJECT

ROGER WATSON &
JANET DOWLING



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AGE-TO-AGE ... Memories into Songs

This inter-generational project, carried out in four series between 2008 and 2010 involved primary school pupils (KS2) and users of older peoples' day centres/residential care homes/reminiscence groups in the same areas of Bracknell Forest Borough in Berkshire. Reminiscences gathered from the older people were worked into the form of songs by the school pupils, and then sung to the people whose stories inspired them.

The project used two artists: singer/songwriter, Roger Watson and storyteller/ reminiscence worker, Janet Dowling who worked both independently and together at various stages of the workshop series.

The first stage of each project consisted of visits by Janet to the older persons' group(s), to gather stories and reminiscences from the residents or members.

In the second stage, Janet introduced the reminiscences to the primary school group. The pupils then built each into song form, guided by Roger. The songwriting was carried out on a whole group basis and the melodies were largely derived or adapted from English folk songs. The sessions were carried out in lunchtime or after-school periods

An initial session with both artists, introduced the themes to the students using story-telling practices and workshop leaders then encouraged the group(s) to select themes for expansion. This session also included an exercise in basic song writing techniques.

The next six sessions were with Roger alone. These introduced each group and teacher/leader to the group songwriting method, mapped out possible directions for development of each theme, completed two songs and rehearsed the singing of all songs by both school groups. (A description of the song writing process can be found at the end of this book.)

A final full day session with both artists completed a recording and one or more performances for other pupils/staff/parents & carers/friends of the schools and, most importantly, the story-givers and others from the older persons' group.

The Age to Age scheme was devised by Roger Watson when he was Artistic Director of Traditional Arts Projects (TAPS) and two project series had previously been carried out in Basingstoke, with help from Age Concern and support from Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and Kingfisher Housing. The Bracknell projects were funded by Bracknell Forest Borough Council through their Arts and Heritage and Extended Services Departments.

A Dog is a Man's Best Friend

Alan was not a tall man - he was teased at school for being so small and people would make fun of him. But he was a determined young man, and wanted to get the best out of everything. When he left school, he trained as an aircraft fitter. Small enough to fit into the nooks and crannies.

When he was called up for the war he went into the Army. He was teased then for being so small - until he saw a notice for dispatch riders. Being small was ideal for that - less height and weight meant that the bikes could go further on the petrol!

After war he ended up in civvy street with a demob suit and his name on the reserve list - just in case he was needed to fight for his country again. He got his old job back as an aircraft fitter. But he really wanted to be in uniform again.

One day he noticed an advertisement for the police force. He'd wanted to join before the war - but he wasn't tall enough. He was about to throw the paper away when he realised that they had lowered the height limit - and he was just tall enough!

He was very proud to join the police force, and was on foot patrol in Staines. He noticed a request for police officers to use motor bikes – but they had to have experience of riding bikes. That was no problem for Alan. After all - he had spent the war being a dispatch rider! He was successful and given a big patch to patrol.

One day he was asked to watch out for gang who were selling bad meat. While patrolling on his bike, Alan spotted a man carrying a big ham on his shoulder. When the gangster saw Alan - he jumped on his bike and sped off. Alan followed in hot pursuit, soon overtook him and arrested him. After all - the gangster was on a pedal-bicycle!

Even then he was looking for something new to try. He noticed (again!) a sign that said "Dog handler wanted" He applied - and was accepted on to the course. He was given a very small dog called "Boy" - and a very large kennel to put him in. Alan's wife said that Boy the dog had to be left outside. She thought as it was a police dog it would be very dangerous and she didn't want it anywhere near their small son. And so the two never met. Until the day, Alan's wife could not find their son. She looked everywhere in the house - and realised the back door was open. She and Alan searched all over the garden, while the dog snored in the kennel. They couldn't find their son anywhere - until Alan looked in the kennel and saw the boy his son and Boy the dog snuggled together at the back of the kennel. After that, Boy the dog spent a lot of time in the house with the boy who was the son! Sadly - when Boy came to do his training as a police dog, while he was very good at chasing burglars - he was equally good at chasing cats. So he had to go back to his original owners.

Alan was given a second dog called Mac. This time Mac stayed in the kennel in the garden. He was a very good dog, and Alan and Mac worked well as a team - sometimes patrolling Buckingham Palace and the looking after the Queen.

Alan was always looking for another opportunity. He eventually left the police force and went back into industry - as an aircraft fitter! This time he was able to use his experience to write the manuals for the aircraft fitters - and took every opportunity that came his way to eventually get himself to a job as the head of the technical department.

When he looks back on his life he is so proud of how he came from nowhere to be that top manager. He may have been small but he was determined to get what he wanted. He believes that if you don't like something you can always change it - and look out for the opportunities that come along.

*Alan (91), resident of Ladybank Care Home
As retold by Janet Dowling*

A Dog is a man's Best Friend

The musical score is written on three staves in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The lyrics are: 'I'm not the tall - est man, I'm sure, Here, boy! Down, Boy! I'm not the tall - est man I'm sure But I joined the ar - my in the war Lots of jobs in my life but a dog is a man's best friend'.

I'm not the tallest man, I'm sure

Here, Boy! Down, Boy!

I'm not the tallest man, I'm sure

But I joined the army in the war

Lots of jobs in my life,

But a dog is a man's best friend

They sent a kennel from the Force

Here, Boy! Down, Boy!

They sent a kennel from the Force

Big enough to fit a horse

Lots of jobs in my life,

But a dog is a man's best friend

When the war was over and we got peace

Here, Boy! Down, Boy!

When the war was over and we got peace

They lowered the height to join the police

Lots of jobs in my life,

But a dog is a man's best friend

One day, the door was open wide

Here, Boy! Down, Boy!

One day, the door was open wide

And then my wife was terrified

Lots of jobs in my life,

But a dog is a man's best friend

I served on foot and motor bikes

Here, Boy! Down, Boy!

I served on foot and motor bikes

But training dogs was what I liked

Lots of jobs in my life,

But a dog is a man's best friend

We searched the garden all around

Here, Boy! Down, Boy!

We searched the garden all around

But nowhere could that child be found

Lots of jobs in my life,

But a dog is a man's best friend

Boy was the first that came along

Here, Boy! Down, Boy!

Boy was the first that came along

Only a pup but big and strong

Lots of jobs in my life,

But a dog is a man's best friend

I looked in the kennel and there I spied

Here, Boy! Down, Boy!

I looked in the kennel and there I spied

Boy and the boy curled up inside

Lots of jobs in my life,

But a dog is a man's best friend

My wife she said: 'What must be done

Here, Boy! Down, Boy!

My wife she said: 'What must be done

Is to keep him away from our little son'

Lots of jobs in my life,

But a dog is a man's best friend

Soft and gentle as a mouse

Here, Boy! Down, Boy!

Soft and gentle as a mouse

From that day on he lived in the house!

Lots of jobs in my life,

But a dog is a man's best friend

Tune: The Berkshire Tragedy (trad.)

Lyrics: Yr 5 pupils, Birch Hill Primary School, Bracknell

Still Got the Scars

Every time that "Dancing on Ice" comes onto the TV - Winifred has to watch it! It reminds her so much of when she was young. She had only just learned to ice skate when her friends said to her - someone has dropped out of the women's ice hockey team - why don't you come along?"

She didn't think she would be any good, but she soon developed a taste for it. She soon found that they may be girls, but they played rough! None of them were gentle - you had to be careful or someone would get their hockey stick and trip you up, so that you would go crashing to the ground. Winifred discovered that to her cost - and has the scars to prove it.

The team would travel to places like Brighton, and put on a match with the local team. They would just get tea and cake afterwards - but it raised money for charity.

When she and the girls went skating for fun, they got up to all sorts of mischief. If one of them bumped into another adult - they would call out "Timber" if they fell over. When they saw a nice young man - there was a competition between them - who was going to pretend to fall on the ice and be picked up by him?

One rule was for certain - no knocking over children on the ice! And that was the rule that was Winifred's downfall. She was avoiding a child on the rink, when someone else came from behind and knocked her over. When she came to, she was in the office of the ice rink. Her leg was broken, and she had a nasty wound over her knee. It took a long time for it to heal, and when she went back on the ice rink, she was very nervous - clinging to the barrier. It still hurts her now and that was the end of her ice skating career.

Soon after the Second World War started, she was walking down the street with a friend. On the other side of the road were two young men in uniform. They both looked very dishy, and Winifred and her friend were discussing how to "bump" into them, without being obvious, when to their surprise the two young men were "bumping" into them instead. Winifred and her friend became attached to these two young men, and waved goodbye to them as they went back to the war. Her young man told her "I can't tell you where I am going, but I will see you on my next leave."

She was very happy to get a card from him and realised she was very fond of him. Unfortunately the next thing she heard was that he had been killed in the war. It was a very sad time for her "but it was not meant to be."

Winifred never forgot him, and never thought about marrying anyone else. However she was pleased when her friend married her young man. Winifred has many memories of her youth, with the ice skating and all the fun they got up to. When the music comes on for "Dancing on Ice" she says to her cat

"Your mummy used to do that - but not any more!"

*Winifred (92), resident of Ladybank Care Home
As retold by Janet Dowling*

Still Got the Scars

5 When Dan - cing On Ice ap - pears on the screen And the
 11 skat - ers go whirl - ing a - round She smiles from the heart, she
 17 won't move a - way They - all know where she can be found She re -
 21 mem - bers the time she spent on the ice, Where
 25 she and her friends used to meet And
 29 how they so sly - ly pre - ten - ded to fall So the
 36 boys helped them back on their feet The days and the years, the hopes and the
 42 fears, The ups and the downs and the laugh - ter and tears A long time a -
 go but her mem - o - ry's clear And to prove it she's still got the scars

When Dancing on Ice appears on the screen
 And the skaters go whirling around
 She smiles from the heart; she won't move
 away
 They all know where she can be found
 She remembers the time she spent on the ice
 Where she and her friends used to meet
 And how they so slyly pretended to fall
 So the boys helped them up on their feet.

*The days and the years, the hopes and the
 fears
 The ups and the downs and the laughter and
 tears
 A long time ago but her memory's clear
 And to prove it, she's still got the scars*

The scar on her leg reminds her of when
 She crashed with a man on the rink
 And that meant no skating for her any more
 But she grins and she gives you a wink

When she thinks of each game in the ice
 hockey team
 When she wouldn't let anyone through
 She tackled and blocked, she tripped them:
 they dropped
 Perhaps she left scars on them too!

The days and the years, etc...

There was one special boy, who went off to
 war
 Who went off and never came home
 She went out with others but none were like
 him
 So she lived all her life on her own
 Others got married and she wished them well
 Though deep in her heart she felt sore
 The scar on her leg, she'll never forget
 But the scar on her heart hurts her more

The days and the years, etc...

*Tune; the man in the Moon (trad. adapted)
 Lyrics: Yr 5 pupils, St Margaret Clitherow R.C. Primary School, Bracknell*

Married on Christmas Day!

Boys have all the fun. That's what Clara was told, and that's what Clara could see. But she decided she wasn't having any of that - and when she was young she decided she could be as naughty as the boys! So she was climbing trees with the boys. And going down the train tunnels. It was very dangerous. They would lie down next to the rail and feel the trains rushing by. It was very scary - but she would show the boys! When the boys went swimming, Clara was there with them - jumping from any height, even the top diving board of the swimming pool. But she wasn't an elegant diver, she just jumped into the water, as she did at the river. Never afraid - she enjoyed her life as if she was a boy!

Even tomboys grow up and become young women.

She met a man, fell in love and married . It was 1938 - Christmas Day on a Sunday. It was the last time that people were allowed to get married on that day - and she was very proud to have done that. When she came out of the church there was snow all over the ground. Some local boys were having a snowball fight - and one came whizzing her way. She looked at her husband - and all the tomboy came flooding back! She won't say whether she threw a snowball back!

Clara and her husband's first son was born on the night that the Second World War was declared. The nurse told her that she has to choose a name - NOW! Clara was so confused that the only name she could remember was Dennis, after Dennis Compton the cricket player. Her husband was away for all of the war, and she had to put her small son into a nursery while she went to work. Times were hard - and there wasn't always enough to eat. Neighbours would help each other out as best they could. She was so pleased to see her husband when he came back after the war - and they soon had another son.

She loved being a wife and a mother, and remembers the naughty things that she used to get up to as a girl. Boys do have a lot of fun - and girls can have fun too! Through all her time she went swimming at least once a week, right up until she was 80 years old.

She says she has enjoyed her life, all her family loved her, and it comes from the heart.

*Clara (95), resident of Ladybank Care Home
As retold by Janet Dowling*

Married on Christmas Day

When she was a lit - tle girl A naugh - ty girl was she She
 5 jumped in ev - ery riv - er and she climbed up ev - ery
 8 tree She climbed up ev - ery tree She climbed up ev - ery tree She
 13 jumped in ev - ery riv - er and she climbed up ev - ery tree

When she was a little girl
 A naughty girl was she
 She jumped in every river
 And she climbed up every tree
She climbed up every tree
She climbed up every tree
She jumped in every river
And she climbed up every tree

She went to the swimming pool
 To the highest board she climbed
 She didn't dive in gracefully
 She bombed in every time!
She bombed in every time, etc...

At last she met a man
 She hoped that he would stay
 And they were the last for a very long time
 To be married on Christmas Day
To be married on Christmas Day, etc...

There was her in her posh dress
 Him in his suit and tie
 When someone threw a snowball
 And it hit her in the eye
It hit her in the eye, etc...

Some boys in the churchyard there
 Were having a snowball fight
 Did she throw a snowball back?
 We think perhaps she might!
We think perhaps she might! etc...

Not only Christmas Day
 But it was Sunday, too
 And the snow was lying all around
 When they both said: I do
When they both said: I do, etc...

And then the church bells rang
 And when they came outside
 Lots of people crowded round
 To see the groom and bride
To see the groom and bride, etc...

Tune: King Arthur's Servants (trad.)
Lyrics; Yr 5 pupils, Birch Hill Primary School, Bracknell,

Every Morning Brings a Brand New Day

Clifford was just 14 when he ran away to join the Royal Navy. He served in the West Indies for two years, and then returned to Portsmouth while his ship was being refitted. He was on the beach when he saw a girl with a bicycle sunning herself. Her name was Connie and was exhausted as she'd just cycled from South London. Clifford discovered that she lived near his aunty in the Old Kent Road, and soon his aunt was surprised to get a visit from him when he started courting Connie. They married - but he stayed in the Royal Navy and was soon shipped off to Malta while his wife stayed at home.

Cyprus, Crete, Turkey, Rhodes. Back to the West Indies and then back to the Mediterranean. His ship took him to many ports - although he spent much of the time below decks as a stoker mechanic.

When he had served his time in the Royal Navy, he wanted to join the Merchant Navy - but his wife told him - "Its time to stay ashore with me!"

He worked in the docks for a while, in a warehouse where they kept whisky, gin and rum before the tax was paid. At first people were suspicious of him - thinking he was a police plant checking to see that they were following the rules, but then they decided he was alright. One night, in the pub, a customs officer challenged him to fight for "Two Bob " (ten pence in current money) – but the locals held the man back, and told Clifford to scarper while they dealt with him!

He and his wife eventually moved north and he had several jobs - ambulance driver, security man and worked as a caretaker. He was always looking for a new opportunities and new experiences. And he was so restless - he had enjoyed being at sea and finding what each new day had brought him.

He bought a motorbike. Each weekend he and his wife would ride out to see different places. It could be quite cold at times - but he never got ill. In those days you didn't have to wear a helmet, and the wind would run through his hair - but not quite like it did on the ships. They were together for 54 years. Sadly his wife died, and he moved into a care home. But every now and then he has a drop of whisky and lemonade - after all he is a navy man!

*Clifford (90), resident of Ladybank Care Home
As retold by Janet Dowling*

Clifford passed away in 2010 and Roger Watson, who had been his neighbour before he moved into Ladybank, was asked to sing this song at his funeral service

Every Morning Brings a Brand New Day

Lis - ten to the tale I tell Ev - ery morn-ing brings a brand new day
 8 Four teen years was e nough 'or me

Mum anc I did - n't get on well Ev - ery morn-ing brings a brand new day
 16 Joind the Na - vy and I went to sea

Brand new day, Oh ___ Brand new day! Ev - ery morn-ing brings a brand new day

Listen to the tale I tell
Every morning brings a brand new day
 Mum and I didn't get on well
Every morning brings a brand new day
 Fourteen years was enough for me
Every morning brings a brand new day
 Joined the Navy and I went to sea
Every morning brings a brand new day
Brand new day – oh! – Brand new day
Every morning brings a brand new day

Before too long we two got wed
Every morning brings a brand new day
 But I had to sail off to the Med
Every morning brings a brand new day
 My Navy service it was done
Every morning brings a brand new day
 Back again on the homeward run
Every morning brings a brand new day
Brand new day – oh! – Brand new day
Every morning brings a brand new day

To the West Indies away we sailed
Every morning brings a brand new day
 I could tell you lots of tales!
Every morning brings a brand new day
 Then for home we sailed once more
Every morning brings a brand new day
 Had to spend some time on shore
Every morning brings a brand new day
Brand new day – oh! – Brand new day
Every morning brings a brand new day

Thought I might go back to sea
Every morning brings a brand new day
 My wife said: No, stay home with me
Every morning brings a brand new day
 But still I had the urge to roam
Every morning brings a brand new day
 Did lots of jobs, had lots of homes
Every morning brings a brand new day
Brand new day – oh! – Brand new day
Every morning brings a brand new day

Met this girl down by the sea
Every morning brings a brand new day
 Knew she was the one for me
Every morning brings a brand new day
 Told me that she'd cycled down
Every morning brings a brand new day
 All the way from London Town
Every morning brings a brand new day
Brand new day – oh! – Brand new day
Every morning brings a brand new day

Doncaster and London Town
Every morning brings a brand new day
 Then in Bracknell settled down
Every morning brings a brand new day
 Now Ladybank's my port of call
Every morning brings a brand new day
 And maybe, it's the best of all
Every morning brings a brand new day
Brand new day – oh! – Brand new day
Every morning brings a brand new day

Tune: John Kanaka (trad.)
Lyrics: Yr 5 pupils, St Margaret Clitherow R.C. Primary School, Bracknell

Daisy Proved Them Wrong

When Daisy was born, her mother and father had a shock! There was some problem with her gut, and she couldn't take the milk her mother gave her. The tiny little baby was starving to death, and her tummy was swelling up! They managed to operate on the baby to try and make her better!. They found that she had a tear in her gut. Fortunately they were able to make a tiny repair. Everything seemed to be alright, and Daisy learned to walk and talk, run and play just like any other little girl. Her elder brother used to tease her, but she didn't mind

When she was 11, she stated to have terrible pains in her stomach. At first they thought it was appendicitis, and they took her into hospital. She was back on the operating table. The doctors opened her up - but then they realised that it wasn't the appendix - it was her gut. The tiny repair had stretched, and stretched, and now it was broken. There wasn't time to think what they were going to do - they had to act fast before Daisy died!

The surgeons took some skin from her leg. They had to cut down quite deep, and it would leave a scar - but the gut would be repaired. But the doctors told Daisy and her parents that she might never walk again. To Daisy that was terrible. She would never walk, skip or run again!

She went to a convalescent home for sick children. One day, a nurse took her out into the gardens in the sunshine, pushing Daisy in a wheelchair. Suddenly the skies opened, and it poured with rain. The nurse tried to wheel Daisy back inside to stop her getting wet - but the wheels of the chair got stuck in the dirt. Another Nurse came, and between the two of them, they supported Daisy to get back into the home. But Daisy thought to herself - "If I can walk with their help - then I am sure I could walk by myself".

She started practising - and by the time she went home she could just about walk. But her mother and father were very worried about how she would manage. They tried to get her into a special school for invalid children. They were told that she should try a mainstream school. Her parents had moved to a ground floor flat to make it easier for her. There was a young girl in the flat upstairs - but Daisy wasn't allowed to play with her because it would mean that Daisy would have to climb the stairs.

Daisy went to one school and her brother went to another. At school Daisy pushed herself, and pushed herself, and eventually she won prizes for the long jump and high jump. But she never told her mother and father.

Until one day, as she was coming home from school, she started skipping with some friends. And her brother saw her. He ran straight home and told his mother and father. They were furious!! They told her that she must be careful. They took her to the doctor, expecting him to tell Daisy off. But he didn't. He gave Daisy a long look, then turned to her parents and said - "If she wants to do it - let her. It's her life!"

After that, her parents let her go anywhere - upstairs, downstairs, high jump and long jump. And when she was older she would cycle for miles, and always bring her mother some flowers.

Now she is 92 years old. And never uses a walking stick!

*Daisy (92) group member at Downside Resources Centre
As retold by Janet Dowling*

Daisy Proved Them Wrong!

When Dai - sy was a ba - by some - thing was - n't right She
 when she was e - le - ven she felt a sud - den pain And the

5 had a punc - ture in her gut, they had to sew it tight Then
 doc - tors found that litt - le hole had o - pened up a - gain

10 Three cheers for Dai - sy! She was brave and strong! They

14 said she'd ne - ver walk a - gain But Dai - sy proved them wrong!

When Daisy was a baby,
 something wasn't right
 She had a puncture in her gut;
 they had to sew it tight
 Then when she was eleven,
 she felt a sudden pain
 And the doctors found that little hole
 had opened up again

They needed skin to mend it,
 so from her leg they carved
 A piece of skin so long and deep
 which left a painful scar
 They sent her in a wheelchair
 to a convalescent home
 But Daisy was determined
 to regain the life she'd known

*Three cheers for Daisy!
 She was brave and strong
 They said she'd never walk again
 But Daisy proved them wrong*

One stormy day, her wheelchair
 got stuck fast in the mud
 So with a nurse each side of her,
 she walked and that felt good!
 She practised hard at walking
 and, when they sent her home
 She didn't need the wheelchair;
 she could do it on her own.

Three cheers for Daisy!, etc...

Her parents were so anxious;
 you know how parents are!
 They wouldn't let her go upstairs
 or run or walk too far.
 But Daisy always pushed herself
 and so her strength it grew
 She won athletics prizes, but
 her parents never knew.

Three cheers for Daisy!, etc...

Her brother saw her skipping;
 he went and told the tale
 Her parents they were horrified;
 they both turned deadly pale
 They took her to the doctor's
 expecting him to say:
 'You must be more careful,
 when you go out to play!'

Three cheers for Daisy!, etc...

The doctor took a look at her;
 her parents heard him say:
 'Let her do just what she wants;
 it's her life anyway'
 She ran and skipped and cycled,
 picked flowers, red and blue,
 She's never used a walking stick
 and now she's ninety-two!

*Three cheers for Daisy!
 She was brave and strong
 They said she'd never walk again
 But Daisy proved them wrong*

*Tune; New York Girls (trad. adapted)
 Lyrics; Yr. 5 pupils, Harmanswater Primary School, Bracknell*

On the Bank of the Old Canal

What's your favourite game? What would you do if you didn't have any gadgets, or electricity or batteries?

Jesse's favourite game was to go down the canal with her brother and sister. They would lie on the towpath, and put their hands down into the water, and then try to find the tiddlers. Tiny little fish that live in the water. They would cup their hands, and try to catch some of them in the palm. If they were lucky, they might find an old jar, and then they could take some of the tiddlers home. They would be alright for a day or two. But the tiddlers would die. So Jesse and her sister and brother went back again - to find some more!

Which was great fun - until the Sunday that Jesse's sister, leaned over the canal edge, just to catch that shiny tiddler. She stretched, and she stretched. Then she snatched her hand in the water---SPLASH! Jesse's sister went tumbling in. She screamed and screamed. Jesse's brother shouted and shouted. Jesse looked about for something that she could use to throw out to her sister. There was nothing. Nothing but the dress she had on! Without thinking, she pulled it over her head, and she stood in her vest and knickers. Holding on tight to the dress at one end, she threw the other end out to her sister, who caught it, and Jesse pulled her to the canal edge. But now Jesse was so tired, all she could do was hold onto her sister's arms until someone came to help. Her brother did his best to help, and all her sister could do was kick and splash like a huge tiddler.

A neighbour saw them. He helped the sister out of the water and carried her home. Her mother was furious, and gave Jesse a whacking because she was supposed to be looking after the young ones. Her dress was ruined, and all three were filthy with mud! Her mother didn't know whether to laugh or cry. They would all have to have a bath. But it wasn't as simple as going into have a shower or a bath like today. The house where Jesse lived had three floors. Jesse and her family (all 9 children and her parents) lived in two rooms at the top of the house - a bedroom and a living room. There was one toilet for everyone... and one tin bath that hang on the back of the door that everyone in the house used. It was Jesse's family's turn to have the tin bath in the living room on Saturday night. Her mother would go down to the basement with a bucket. She would fill it up with hot water, and then carry it back up two flights of stairs, until she had filled the bath. Then everyone took turns having a bath in the same water.

And they had all had their weekly baths the day before. Her poor mother had to stagger up and down those stairs all over again. But as there were only three of them having baths - for the first time Jesse had a bath when the water was clean and hot! And when her mum wasn't looking, Jesse turned over in the tin bath and pretended to be a tiddler in the canal. Her brother and sister were laughing, but her mother was furious. After that - Jesse always had to wait until the last for a bath - and they were never allowed to go down the canal again.

And Jesse's dress was ruined. She only had the one dress and there was no money to get another. Jesse's mother went down to the Salvation Army where they sold second-hand clothes. At the end of the day, they bundled up the left over clothes and sold them as rags for a penny. Jesse's mother got one of the bundles of rags and brought it home. She watched her mother sort through the clothes looking for something to fit her. There was a flash of bright green, and something silvery. It was a turquoise silk dress in the bundle of rags. Jesse thought this was the most beautiful dress she had ever seen - but knew that it could never be hers, because she had been so naughty. But her mother held it up to Jesse - it was going to be a bit long but it would do. She pulled it on over her head and stood there trying to see herself in a little hand mirror. She felt like a princess. Then her mother put her arms around her and said "Thank you for holding onto your sister". No more was said.

Jesse had a picture taken when she had that turquoise dress on. She has the photo still, and when she looks at it she remembers how poor they were, but how much fun they had.

*Jesse (90) group member at Downside Resources Centre
As retold by Janet Dowling*

On the Bank of the Old Canal

1 There were nine of them in a 2-roomed flat With their fa-ther and their mo-ther, The-

5 two best friends that Jess-e had Were her litt-le sis-ter and her bro-ther. It

9 was a long, long time a-go, But still the mem-o-ry ling-ers Of-

13 how they had no rods or nets, But they caught the tidd-lers with their fing-ers.

17 They were wish-ing They were fish-ing On the bank of the old can-al.

21 They were wish-ing They were fish-ing On the bank of the old can-al.

There were nine of them in a two-roomed flat
 With their father and their mother
 The two best friends that Jesse had
 Were her little sister and her brother
 It was a long, long time ago
 But still the memory lingers
 Of how they had no rods or nets
 But they caught the tiddlers with their fingers.
 They were wishing
 They were fishing
 On the bank of the old canal
They were wishing
They were fishing
On the bank of the old canal

The little sister reached out too far
 For that shiny fish in the water
 They heard a scream and they heard a splash
 As in fell the youngest daughter
 The little girl was flailing about
 In that dirty man-made river
 And Jesse thought that she would drown
 And she began to shiver
 She was wishing
 She'd not gone fishing
 On the bank of the old canal, etc

She pulled her dress off over her head
 And her sister held on to it
 They tried very hard to pull her out
 But they found they could not do it

Luckily a neighbour was walking by
 And Jesse cried: 'Hey mister!
 Can you come and help us please
 And save our little sister
 Now we're wishing
 We'd not come fishing
 On the bank of the old canal' etc

When they got home they were soaking wet
 And Jesse's dress was a disaster
 And all three children from head to toe
 With stinking mud were plastered
 The girls and boy were soon cleaned up
 With lots of soap and water
 But Jesse's mum had no money left
 To buy a dress for her daughter
 She was wishing
 They'd not gone fishing
 On the bank of the old canal, etc...

In a penny bundle of jumble rags
 There was something sparkling clearly
 A dress of shiny turquoise silk
 That fitted Jessie nearly
 And Jesse looked like a fine princess
 Her mother smiled and kissed her
 'You can have that lovely dress
 And thank you for saving your sister
 But no more wishing
 That you were fishing
 On the bank of the old canal!', etc...

*Tune: Just as the Tide was Flowing/The Old Triangle (trad. Adapted);
 Lyrics: Yr 5pupils, Harmanswater Primary School, Bracknell*

Until the Cows Come Home.

“Tulip, Violet, Primrose”

Imagine yourself at about age 5 years. You get up every morning, every single day at 6am. That's every single day, Monday through to Sunday! You get dressed.

“Tulip, Violet, Primrose”

You are there with you father, all of your elder brothers and sisters, and your little sister. She is 4. Today is the day you are going to show her how to do her job.

“Tulip, Violet, Primrose”

Because the job that everyone in the family does, is bringing in the cows for the early morning milking. You go out in the yard, and find yourself a long stick. You use the stick to just tap the cow on the side if she goes in the wrong direction.

“Tulip, Violet, Primrose”

Those are the names of the cows. Every cow is named after a flower, and there are 30 cows.

Your father milks the cows. You help wash the cows down, help wash out the stalls. Then the milk goes into churns, and are put on the back of a pony and cart and taken down to the station where they are put on a train.

And that's when you go into school with the rest of the class, who have just woken up.

Eileen did this every day since she could remember until she was about 11. It was all she knew and never knew anything different. The only time she had off was on Sunday evenings, when they went visiting other relatives that were all farmers too.

Eileen and her sister would swing on the gate when they had a moment or two. It was the best time, swinging backwards and forwards, feeling the wind in her hair. But then someone would be calling her, and the two girls would be running onto their next job.

Living on a farm, there wasn't any time to be naughty!

Not unless - well don't tell anyone. When it was haymaking time, Eileen would be out in the fields with her brothers and sisters, pitching the hay into haystacks. When all the grownups had gone, Eileen and her sister would climb up the ladder on the side. Then they would slide down the side of the haystack, and then faced with a drop of 6 feet they would just let go and fall to the ground. Eileen said - “it was very dangerous. At any time the haystack could collapse with us under it. We could have suffocated if that had happened. But we didn't realise that - it was a chance to have some fun.” Working on the farm was very hard and difficult, and it taught Eileen to appreciate where things come from, like the milk on the table or the bread for your sandwich,

When she had children, one of her sons became a pilot, and he was able to fly around the world. Calcutta. Hawaii. New York. She was able to get cheap tickets to see all of these. Wherever she flew to - she enjoyed the glamour and the excitement, but she always made sure that she went out to the places where people lived, to see what life was like for them.

One place she went to was Florida. There she watched the space shuttle blast off into space. It roared over her head, and the ground was shaking. She watched it and then gasped - the space shuttle had gone straight up in the air, and now it was falling down. Eileen couched down on the ground, fearing that there was going to be an explosion. An American asked if she was alright - and she pointed and said, “it's falling!” The American laughed, and told her that as the space shuttle was going around the earth it was following the curve of the sky - the earth was round!

Eileen laughed. She was thrilled that here she was, that little girl from a farm who had worked so hard all her life, now travelling around the world, and seeing the mighty space shuttle take off into space. She wonders if she might go into space one day. She can dream can't she?

*Eileen (92), group member at Downside Resources Centre
As retold by Janet Dowling*

Until the Cows Come Home

Chorus

Tu lip! Vi o let! Prim rose! Eve ry mor ning she'd call
 9 Thir - ty flow - ers for thir - ty cows Ei - leen re - mem - bers them all
 17 Li - ly! Butt - er - cup! Fox glove! All round the world she has flown
 25 She'll be re - call - ing her child - hood days Un - til the cows come home
 33 **Verse**
 Five years old on a Wilt - shire farm So much to do eve - ry day
 41 Ear - ly mor - ning and af - ter school Ne - ver much time to play
 49 Slide down a hay - stack or swing on a gate Fee - ling the wind in her hair
 57 Just a few mo - ments of plea - sure to take Be - fore she was nee - ded some where

*Tulip! Violet! Primrose!
 Every morning she'd call
 Thirty flowers for thirty cows
 Eileen remembers them all.
 Lily! Buttercup! Foxglove!
 All round the World she has flown
 She'll be recalling her childhood days
 Until the cows come home.*

Five years old on a Wiltshire farm
 So much to do every day
 Early morning and after school
 Never much time to play
 Slide down a haystack or swing on a
 gate
 Feeling the wind in her hair
 Just a few moments of pleasure to take
 Before she was needed somewhere

*Tulip! Violet! Primrose!
 Every morning she'd call
 Thirty flowers for thirty cows
 Eileen remembers them all.*

*Lily! Buttercup! Foxglove!
 All round the World she has flown
 She'll be recalling her childhood days
 Until the cows come home.*

Now Eileen looks back on a different life
 Thanks to her high-flying son
 She's travelled the World: North, South,
 East and West
 Seen how people's living is done
 She's watched the Space Shuttle blast
 off from Earth
 Terrified that it might fall
 And she'd like to go into Space if she
 could ...
 There's no harm in dreams, after all

*Tulip! Violet! Primrose!
 Every morning she'd call
 Thirty flowers for thirty cows
 Eileen remembers them all.
 Lily! Buttercup! Foxglove!
 All round the World she has flown
 She'll be recalling her childhood days
 Until the cows come home.*

Tune: Roger Watson

Lyrics: Yr. 5 pupils, Harmanswater Primary School, Bracknell

Swinging Round the Lamppost

Evelyn grew up in Battersea, quite close to the river Thames. She had heard of people going to the seaside, but didn't know why they did that. Her favourite game was dipping her feet in the Thames, and running up and down the little bits of beach on the river. Sometimes you could find some treasure there. A few coins that someone had dropped - or even a silver spoon. Mostly it was bits of old rubbish but any of the old jam jars would bring a halfpenny at the shop, and then she could buy some sweets.

When her family moved to Edgware, they were in a flat with a proper bathroom. All theirs. No one to share it with. They could draw water from a copper boiler - clean and hot. Evelyn felt like a princess when she lay in the bath. She put her head under the water and imagined herself as a mermaid in her kingdom. Her mother's sisters and their families, who still lived in Battersea, would still visit every weekend - to take their turns having a bath! But Evelyn wasn't satisfied with being a mermaid. The flat they lived in was on the ground floor. Outside the flat was a lamppost. Evelyn wanted to fly around the lamppost like a fairy princess. She had seen that the costermonger had some orange boxes that were tied up with old rope. When no one was looking, she snuck in and "borrowed" some of the rope. She knew that she would never be allowed to swing on the lamppost during the day. But at night there wouldn't be anyone around...

Evelyn's bedroom was at the front. She shared it with her sister - but her sister slept so soundly that she never woke up. Evelyn slipped out of the window when it was dark, but there was a faint glow from the lamppost so she could just see. She made the rope into a lasso and swung it around the arms at the top of the lamppost - pulled it tight - and she was away. Swinging around and around. She imagined she was a bird, or a plane, or a girl who could fly! Definitely the fairy queen. Each night was a new adventure.

Until the night PC Clayton turned the corner. "Here," he said, "What are you up to!" Evelyn tried to get away by letting go the rope - but she was still in full flight. She fell to the ground, but landed badly, and turned over on her ankle. She sat in the road in tears, unable to get to her feet. PC Clayton came over to her - and picked her up. He knew immediately who she was, and carried her over to her family's flat. He banged on the door, and Evelyn's father answered the door. He stood there blinking. It was 3 o'clock in the morning. He was not all pleased, and dragged her in by the ear. Her window was nailed shut, and that was the last time Evelyn swung on her lamppost.

But no matter how naughty Evelyn was as a young girl, when she went out to work she knew that she wanted to help people. She trained as a nurse assistant, looking after people, and she had some very difficult jobs nursing people with burns during the war. She went on to look after children in hospitals, and helped set up services for older people.

Now she is 88 and cannot walk. She uses a wheelchair and lives alone in a house. She has good carers, who look after her, and she says, "I loved looking after people, and now I am being paid back."

And every now and then she thinks back to the times she was a mermaid princess and a fairy queen - and smiles!

*Evelyn (88), group member at Downside Resources Centre
As retold by Janet Dowling*

Swinging Round the Lamp Post

A Batt-er-sea flat was what she'd known Edg-ware was their brand new home
fore_ she went to sleep each night Eve - lyn saw that_ dim gas-light

5 With a bath-room of their own and a - cross the street a lamp post. Be -
Hop - ing that one day she might swing a-round the lamp post.

10 She wished that she could fly Soar - ing up so_ ve - ry high

14 Like a fair - y in the sky Swing - ing round the lamp post

A Battersea flat was what she'd known
Edgware was their brand new home
With a bathroom of their own
And across the street a lamp post
Before she went to sleep each night
Evelyn saw that dim gaslight
Hoping that one day she might
Swing around the lamp post

*She wished that she could fly
Soaring up so very high
Like a fairy in the sky
Swinging round the lamp post*

Little sister fast asleep
Making sure she didn't peep
Out the window Evelyn sneaked
Making for that lamp post
The rope she had was by her side
In one end a knot she tied
Once or twice or more she tried
To throw it over the lamp post

She wished that she could fly, etc...

She ran so fast until she found
She was swept right off the ground Flying
round and round and round
And round and round the lamp post
Round the corner someone came
PC Clayton was his name
He soon stopped her little game
And she fell off the lamp post

She wished that she could fly, etc...

Took her home and woke her dad
You can guess that he was mad
Told the tale of how she had
Swung around the lamp post
Her father said, 'Here's what I'll do'
Took some nails and a hammer too
Made quite sure she'd not get through
Her window to the lamp post!

*She wished that she could fly
Soaring up so very high
Like a fairy in the sky
Swinging round and round and round
And round and round
And round and round
And round and round the lamp post*

*Tune: Donkey Riding (trad.adapted)
Lyrics: Yr 5 pupils, Harmanswater Primary School, Bracknell*

What Shall We Do About Doreen?

When Doreen was young , her mother died, and her father decided to bring up his three daughters by himself. The youngest was Doreen. The older two girls were very good, and helped their father - but Doreen!!

Doreen was always late for school. She would dawdle with a friend, or spend time in a sweet shop working out how she was going to spend her pocket money. The teachers would try to tell her off, but she would look at them and say - but my mother's dead", and they would feel sorry for her. In the classroom, she would sit at the front so the teachers could keep an eye on her. She would sit there blowing her fringe. Puff. Puff. Puff. Eventually, one teacher got so annoyed; she tied Doreen's hair down so that she couldn't do it.

One day, Doreen was making the class laugh. The teacher was even more annoyed with Doreen. She told Doreen to stand in the corner, and she put the blackboard in front of her so that the other children couldn't see her. But Doreen sang at the top of her voice "I'll tell my dad". Suddenly all the children could see the top of Doreen's head as she tried to jump up to peek over the blackboard. The teacher had had enough! Doreen was sent home to her father who shook his head and said, "What shall we do about Doreen!"

The next term, a new teacher came into the class. She asked, "Who is Doreen". Doreen put her hand up. "Right" said the teacher, "I have heard all about you. We will have no more of that nonsense!" Doreen would have risen to the challenge and would probably have continued to be naughty. But something happened that changed everything.

Doreen lived in a flat in a building. There were no gardens. But what Doreen liked most was flowers. She was out with her sisters, when she spotted some flowers - just bindweed - on a building site. She liked the look of them, and told her sisters to wait for her, as she climbed over the fence. Getting over the fence was easy, but as she crossed over the derelict building she slipped, and fell on to some sharp metal, sticking up in the air. The metal sliced through her leg, almost to the bone. She screamed for her sisters who were watching over the fence. They in turn screamed because they did not know what to do. Just passing by was a young man with a tennis racket. The sisters couldn't say anything; the words just wouldn't come out of their mouths. He took a look over the fence, and saw Doreen bleeding there and worked out what must have happened. He didn't bother climbing over the fence - he just pulled the panel to pieces, to get to Doreen. He scooped her up in his arms and took her to the nearest place - a chemist. The sisters run behind him with his tennis racket. The chemist took one look at Doreen's wound and went white. He put a bandage around Doreen's leg, and told the young man to take Doreen back to her father, and tell him to take Doreen to hospital. The young man did that, and Doreen was taken to hospital. It took a long time for that leg to heal, and for a long time Doreen could not run around like the other children.

One day she was walking home, when an old lady asked her to get some shopping for her, and when she had done it well, the old lady asked Doreen if she would do it every week. Doreen agreed, and for the first time she felt grown up. In school, when she was 13, she was asked to help some of the younger children with their reading. One girl put her hand up to go to the toilet - and then they all wanted to go! Doreen was so cross that she started to shout at them. The teacher in the next class came in to classroom and asked, "Are you alright?" - But Doreen knew that she really meant, "Now you know what you were like!"

Doreen always suffered with her leg - she has the scars to show you. But she will tell you that when they used to say "What shall we do about Doreen?" Then she would say - "I couldn't mend my leg, but I could mend my ways!"

*Doreen (82), group member at Downside Resources Centre
As retold by Janet Dowling*

What Shall We Do About Doreen?

When she was a girl her father said: What shall we do a-bout Dor - een? There was

5 al - ways mis - chief in her head What shall we do a-bout Dor - een?

9 Dor - een oh! Dor - een oh! What shall we do a-bout Dor - een?

When she was a girl her father said
What shall we do about Doreen?
 There was always mischief in her head
What shall we do about Doreen?
Doreen, oh! Doreen, oh!
What shall we do about Doreen?

She always sat at the front of the class
What shall we do about Doreen?
 Blowing her fringe just to make them
 laugh
What shall we do about Doreen?
Doreen, oh! Doreen, oh!
What shall we do about Doreen?

Her reputation grew and grew
What shall we do about Doreen?
 New teachers said: 'I've heard about
 you!'
What shall we do about Doreen?
Doreen, oh! Doreen, oh!
What shall we do about Doreen?

Stealing flowers on a building site
What shall we do about Doreen?
 She tumbled over and screamed in fright
What shall we do about Doreen?
Doreen, oh! Doreen, oh!
What shall we do about Doreen?

A razor-sharp spike beneath a stone
What shall we do about Doreen?
 It cut her leg right to the bone
What shall we do about Doreen?
Doreen, oh! Doreen, oh!
What shall we do about Doreen?

A man with a tennis racket carried her
 home
What shall we do about Doreen?
 She felt so hurt and all alone
What shall we do about Doreen?
Doreen, oh! Doreen, oh!
What shall we do about Doreen?

For a very long time her leg was sore
What shall we do about Doreen?
 She couldn't do the things that she did
 before
What shall we do about Doreen?
Doreen, oh! Doreen, oh!
What shall we do about Doreen?

She was put in charge of the younger
 ones
What shall we do about Doreen?
 They drove her mad, the whole day long
What shall we do about Doreen?
Doreen, oh! Doreen, oh!
What shall we do about Doreen?

The teacher next door heard the children
 squeal
What shall we do about Doreen?
 And said: 'Now you know how it feels'
What shall we do about Doreen?
Doreen, oh! Doreen, oh!
What shall we do about Doreen?

She'll tell you now in her older days
What shall we do about Doreen?
 'I couldn't mend my leg, but I could
 mend my ways'
What shall we do about Doreen?
Doreen, oh! Doreen, oh!
What shall we do about Doreen?
Doreen, oh! Doreen, oh!
What shall we do about Doreen?

Tune: Essequibo River (trad. adapted)
Lyrics; Yr. 5 pupils, Harmanswater Primary School, Bracknell

Playing in the Ice and Snow

Arthur was a rugged boy. And he loved the winter. When the snows came he would be out on the streets, starting snowball fights, and making slides of ice on the pavement. When he was seven, it was a very cold winter. He and his mates were out down the lakes at Wellington. With his mates, they would step on to the ice. If it held them, they would take another step, and then another step. Trying to see who could get the furthest out into the lake until their courage failed them, or the ice broke under their feet. Arthur and his mate Bert were always the ones who stepped out furthest. And they always got wet feet when the ice broke – but it was all right, it was only a few inches deep. One day, Arthur was furthest out he had ever been. He held his breath and took one more step, then CRACK! The ice broke. This time it wasn't just a couple of inches deep. He disappeared into the icy water. There was a silence from all the other children as they waited to see what happened.

A bird sang from a branch on a tree by the lake. Nothing else moved. The children around the ice looked at each other. What should they do?

"Gasp!" Arthur's head appeared out of the gaping hole in the ice. "Hang on Arthur" his friend Bert called. "I'll get you out" "Don't worry", replied Arthur, "I can do it myself". And he stood up, with the freezing ice water lapping around his knees. "I just slipped" he laughed. It was a cold windy day, and by the time he got home he was almost blue with cold. He was frightened by what his mother would say. She was not in, but the lodger was. "Please don't tell my mum," asked Arthur as his teeth chattered non-stop. The lodger shook her head, and wrapped him in a blanket. She gave him a hot drink, and then made him get into a warm bath. Did the lodger tell his mum? He never knew, and she never said anything.

None of this stopped Arthur. Next day he was back again and the next, and the next with the other boys, sliding on the ice with an old pair of socks over his shoes to give him a better grip.

One Saturday before Christmas Arthur and Bert found an old bed on a dump. It was the old fashioned kind, with wooden struts where the mattress lay. They pulled the bed frame off the dump, and then very carefully pulled all the wooden struts off. They got enough wood to make a sledge, and used the wooden struts as the runner for the sledge.

On Boxing Day, the whole of Napier Road was covered in snow. The boys planned to run the sledge from the top of the road, all the way down to the bottom. They couldn't decide who would go first, so one would lie down on the sledge, and the other would sit on top. They would call out – "Mind out the way!" and the other children would scatter as they came hurtling down. One girl didn't move. Maybe she didn't hear them. Maybe she wasn't going to do anything a boy said. She just didn't move. The boys were screaming at her to get out of the way. They couldn't change direction; they just didn't have any way of controlling the sledge. Thwack! They crashed straight into her, and the two boys, the girl and the sledge went tumbling. There was now a red mark on the snow. There was a silence from all the other children as they waited to see what happened. The girl was just lying in the snow. Had they killed her? Then an almighty scream came from the mouth of the girl. The two boys looked at each other. She was alive! Before anyone could say anything, the two of them scarpared as quick as a flash. And no one could remember afterwards who were the two boys on the sledge. The sledge runner had gone over her leg, and torn her stockings. There was the white flesh, framed by the black stocking, and a large red gash that seemed to be getting bigger.

Arthur and Bert were much shaken, and very scared that they would be found out. What would their punishment be? They went home, and decided to wait and see. Finally Arthur's dad came home. He saw the two boys sitting in the darkness in the kitchen, and went and stood in the doorway. He said, "I don't want you two boys going sledging again." The boys cringed; they must be for it now.

"There's been a really bad accident down at Napier Road. Some poor girl got knocked over by a couple of mad kids. They just run off and left her, the heartless hooligans. I don't want you anywhere near there, do you understand."

Arthur and Bert nodded their heads, hardly able to breathe. They never let on that it was them, and they never sledged there again.

*Arthur (76), member of Crowthorne Reminiscence Group
As retold by Janet Dowling*

Playing in the Ice and Snow

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is simple and rhythmic. The second staff begins with a measure rest labeled '7'. The third staff begins with a measure rest labeled '12'. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Bert and I were the best of mates *Play-ing in the ice and snow* We had no skis and we had no skates
Play-ing in the ice and snow Sli-ding out on the fro-zen lake How ma-nysteps do you
dare to take? Go too far and the ice might break *Play-ing in the ice and snow*

Bert and I were best of mates
Playing in the ice and snow
 We had no skis and we had no skates
Playing in the ice and snow
 Sliding out on the frozen lake
 How many steps do you dare to take?
 Go too far and the ice might break
Playing in the ice and snow

Then one day I fell right in
Playing in the ice and snow
 Freezing water to my chin
Playing in the ice and snow
 The lodger knew just what to do
 Dried my clothes and warmed me through
 If she told them I never knew
Playing in the ice and snow

What we wanted when it snowed
Playing in the ice and snow
 Was to sledge down Napier Road
Playing in the ice and snow
 Found an old bed made of wood
 Worked it out and so we could
 Build a sledge and build it good
Playing in the ice and snow

One lay down and one on top
Playing in the ice and snow
 We couldn't steer and we couldn't stop
Playing in the ice and snow
 'Clear the way!' we both did call
 One girl didn't move at all
 We knew she'd have a nasty fall
Playing in the ice and snow

The blood was red and the snow was
 white
Playing in the ice and snow
 People said, 'What a dreadful sight!'
Playing in the ice and snow
 We heard a scream and we heard a
 shout
 Bert and I didn't hang about
 Scared that we would get found out
Playing in the ice and snow

Dad came home from the club that night
Playing in the ice and snow
 We shook with fear and we shivered in
 fright
Playing in the ice and snow
 'Some girl broke her leg today
 The boys who did it ran away
 Heartless hooligans, I would say'
Playing in the ice and snow

Since that day whenever it snowed
Playing in the ice and snow
 We stayed away from Napier Road
Playing in the ice and snow
 Crowthorne people still recall
 The day that girl had her nasty fall
 But I never told anyone at all
Playing in the ice and snow
 No, I never told anyone at all ...
 ... shhh!

Tune: Astley's Ride (trad.)

Lyrics: Yr. 5 and 6 pupils, Wildmoor Heath Primary School, Crowthorne

When you're the Eldest

Jenny was the eldest of four children. And when you are the eldest - you know what happens! You get told to look after the younger ones - keep them out of trouble! Huh!

It all started when her sister was born. Jenny was sent away to stay with her aunt.

Jenny didn't like that. She was only young and wanted to be with her mother, so when she got back home she rushed into see her - but Oh! There was a baby in her mother's arms. "Look" said her mum, "It's your baby sister, Elizabeth."

Jenny didn't like that. How dare the baby take her mother from her! Jenny decided to have little goes at the baby in the pram. She thought that if the baby was too much bother, they might send the baby away. But it didn't work. All that happened was that her mother asked her to keep an eye on the baby.

And she did. And the next baby came. And the next baby. Two little sisters and a brother. Huh! And that's when she learned about being the older sister.

Jenny always knew when Christmas was coming. First of all the birds arrived. Not the birds in the trees you understand. The chickens for Christmas dinner. The postman would bring them in a big package. Her mother would open them and there would be two plump chickens. With all their feathers on. The first thing they had to do was pluck the feathers from the bird. Her mother would always do this, but as Jenny was the eldest of 4 children - she would get to help. One year the birds didn't arrive until Christmas Eve. When her mother opened the parcel there was such a smell they had to open all the doors and windows. Poor Father had to go out on Christmas Eve and go around all the butchers looking for chickens for the dinner table for Christmas day. He got the last two chickens!

Father would bring home the Christmas tree and put it in the big front room, in the bay window. They would decorate it with glass baubles and lametta - strands of metal that hang like silver on the tree. They had to peel the lametta carefully out of the packet. Then they put the fairy on top of the tree. Except - there were four children and four fairies. One fairy had a long dress, one had a tutu with wings, and another was an angel with wings. Even her brother had a fairy. They argued so much about whose fairy went on the top of the tree, that they had a rota to take turns every year.

On Christmas Day, the children would wake up to find some small presents on their beds. There were other presents by the tree, but they were not allowed to open them until after dinner. The morning was very quiet while mummy was cooking. They had the chickens for Christmas dinner with roast potatoes, and carrots. The children would wait until the washing up had been done. As the eldest, Jenny had to keep the others back, even when they knew what they had. Her mother went and changed in to her Christmas dress, the same one every year, and *that's* when they knew they could open the presents. As eldest, Jenny could open the first present. Her mother had pen and paper and would write down who sent it and what it was. The next eldest sister could then open a present. All the presents were opened - one by one.

Mother had a list of all the thank you letters that they would write after Christmas. One year they were busy writing their thank you letters in the bedroom. Her brother was being irritating, and Jenny could not concentrate on what she was doing. She grabbed hold of her brother, and pushed him in the wardrobe in his bedroom - and told him to stay there! She even locked the wardrobe. Mother called out to come down to dinner. She and her sisters went to wash their hands, and sat down at the dinner table. Her mother asked her where her brother was. Her two sisters looked straight at Jenny, and Jenny went bright red. She ran up the stairs, into his bedroom, unlocked the wardrobe door. There in the corner was her brother - trying not to cry. "I thought you forgot me" he said. "That'll teach you to be naughty," she said, "let this teach you a lesson" She was very worried what he might say to their mother. He told her that he had gone in the wardrobe to play, and the lock had been dodgy, and that Jenny had heard him calling.

Jenny was relieved that he was all right, and that she didn't get into trouble.

But whenever her mother told her "you are the eldest, you must set a good example" she always wondered what a good example would be.

*Jenny (66,) member of Crowthorne Reminiscence Group.
As retold by Janet Dowling*

When You're the Eldest

When I was a lit - tle girl we were a ha - ppy fa - mi - ly There were just my mo - ther and my dad and me,

5 Then when I got ol - der a - long came the ba - bies Not on - ly one, not on - ly two but three!

9 "When you're the eld - est you've got to be re - spon - si - ble!" That's what mo ther al ways said to me

13 "Jen - ny, you're the el - dest, set a good ex - am - ple!" Still I al ways won - dered what that might be...

*When you're the eldest, you've got to be responsible'
That's what Mother always said to me
'Jenny, you're the eldest, set a good example!'
Still I always wondered what that might be*

When I was a little girl we were a happy family
There were just my mother and my dad and me
Then when I was older along came the babies
Not only one, not only two, but three!

'When you're the eldest, etc...

Father brought the Christmas tree and put it in the window
Then we decorated it carefully
Pretty glassy baubles and strips of bright lametta
Then we started arguing: whose fairy should it be?

When you're the eldest, etc...

One was an angel, another wore a long dress
The third had a tutu and wings as well
Even my brother, he had made a fairy
We had to make a rota so that we could tell

'When you're the eldest, etc...

Then after dinner, Mum put on her Christmas dress
Time to get the presents underneath the tree
Because I was the eldest, I got the first choice
Sometimes being the eldest turned out good for me
When you're the eldest, etc...

Christmas was over; we had to write our thank-yous
Up in the bedroom, we were there all four
And my little brother he kept on annoying me
Shoved him in the wardrobe and I locked the door

When you're the eldest, etc...

We sat down for supper, but one chair was empty
Suddenly remembered what I'd done with him
Rushed up the stairs and opened up the wardrobe
He never told my mother that I'd locked him in.

*'When you're the eldest, you've got to be responsible'
That's what Mother always said to me
'Jenny, you're the eldest, set a good example!'
Still I always wondered what that might be*

Tune: Roger Watson
Lyrics: Yr 5 and 6 pupils, Crowthorne C of E Primary School

Home on Christmas Day

It was Friday 22nd December 1939. The day was cold and wet. The snow was on the ground, and you had to be careful as you walked along the road because the ice was slippery and dark.

But Iris didn't mind. She was 14 years old. Today was her last day at school. Tomorrow she would be starting a job in the next town as a house-help. Her job was to look after the little boy in the house, and to help the housekeeper. Tonight would be the last night she had at home as a school girl - tomorrow she would be grown up.

Iris was one of 9 children. She slept with two of her sisters in a big old iron bed with brass knobs on, in one bedroom. Her three older brothers slept in another bed, and her three younger sisters slept in another. Her parents slept downstairs. It was a very small house with 11 people.

For Christmas they always decorated the house with paper chains. Every year they bought the coloured paper strips from the shop, made the chains with homemade glue, and then draped them around the house – from picture rail to picture rail and back again. On Christmas Eve her father would bring home the Christmas tree, and they would make paper decorations to hang on the tree. Iris loved Christmas with her family. When she was 5 she had a Christmas stocking with an orange, an apple, a comic and then, in the top, maybe a dolly as a present. She would wake up her sisters and they would play together until their parents called out "Back to sleep - it's Christmas day!"

There would be a small piece of pork for Christmas dinner, and maybe some fruitcake for tea. There were no more presents - just what was in the stockings - only what her parents provided. The boys had mouth organs, and her father had a beautiful deep tone of voice. They would spend the afternoon singing carols.

That night, before she went to bed, her mother had called her over, and pressed into her hand a small packet. "Keep this for Christmas day" she said. "Oh" said Iris, "but I'll be back on Christmas day." Her mother nodded, sighed, and then said - "Well, open it when you wake on Christmas Day."

The next day was the 23rd December. Iris and her father got up very early and walked to the next town. They knocked at the back door of very big house, and the housekeeper opened it. She looked down her nose at Iris, and her father said "Here she is, come to be the house help." Iris and her father were taken into the kitchen. The housekeeper explained all the duties, looking after the small boy, and helping with the housework. "Plus" she said "you will be expected to help the cook on days when there are guests, like this Christmas Day."

Iris was shocked. She had thought that she would be at home with her family on Christmas Day. Then she realised what being grown up meant. Her money was needed to help the family, and if that meant working on Christmas Day, then that is what she must do. She waved goodbye to her father. That night she slept in a bed by herself for the first time. It was very lonely. On Christmas Day, when she woke up she fiddled about in the bed to see if Father Christmas had given her anything. And then she remembered. And she started to cry. And then she remembered again, and got out the small packet her mother had given her. She opened it up, and there was a cotton handkerchief. And she cried again. All day long she thought about her family. The big house was all full of Toffs who had come to spend Christmas in the country. They had lots to drink, and sat around the Christmas tree going chit chit chat chat, and laughing at their own jokes. The tree was glistening with glass decorations - nothing like the ones she had made of paper. They had electric lights on the tree that sparkled and shone. The dinner table was groaning with food. Iris seemed to spend hours going back and forth carrying trays of food.

At the end of the day - Iris was exhausted. The Toffs went on talking and drinking all night. Down in the kitchen the other servants were eating the leftover food. Iris had never seen so much. She looked at the other servants - they were all quite plump. She looked at her self, all skin and bone. She wondered if she would become like them. As she ate turkey for the first time in her life she was sure of one thing - "Next year, I don't care about what job I am doing, or how much food I might get to eat. I am going to be home for Christmas!"

*Iris (86), member of Crowthorne Reminiscence Group.
As retold by Janet Dowling*

Home on Christmas Day

De - cem-ber days were win - try and Christ-mas com-ing soon, We'd all been mak-ing
6 pa-per chains to hang a-round the room And we'd be sing-ing ca-rols a-round the Christ-mas tree, My
13 bro-thers and my sis-ters and my mum and dad and me. I need-ed to be wor-king to
19 earn some de-cent pay, But what I reall-y wan-ted was to be home on Christ-mas Day!

December days were wintry and
 Christmas coming soon
 We'd all been making paper chains to hang
 around the room
 And we'd be singing carols around the
 Christmas tree
 My brothers and my sisters and my mum
 and dad and me

*I needed to be working, to earn some
 decent pay
 But what I really wanted was to be
 home on Christmas Day*

But this year it was different, my schooldays
 they were past
 Tomorrow I'd be working and feel grown up
 at last
 In a mansion in the next town, I'd take care
 of their son
 And then I'd help the housekeeper until
 my work was done

I needed to be working, etc...

On Christmas Eve I said to them
 'Tomorrow I'll be home
 Sitting with my family I will not be alone'
 The housekeeper said, 'Iris, you'll have no
 chance to rest
 You must be here on Christmas Day to
 serve their dinner guests'

I needed to be working, etc...

On Christmas Day I woke up so full of
 misery
 And cried into the handkerchief my
 mother gave to me
 Downstairs the guests were laughing and
 drinking lots of wine
 A very merry Christmas, but alas! It
 wasn't mine

I needed to be working, etc...

At breakfast and at dinner, how much
 they had to eat!
 With trays of food I trudged around on
 my poor aching feet
 Then all the servants gobbled up the
 guests' left-over food
 No wonder they were all so plump; would
 I get like them too?

I needed to be working, etc...

And so I made my mind up, by Christmas
 time next year
 I'd try to find another job not far away
 from here
 No matter what the work was, no matter
 how much pay
 What I really wanted was to be home on
 Christmas Day

*I needed to be working, to earn some
 decent pay
 But what I really wanted was to be
 home on Christmas Day*

Tune: The Charge of the Light Brigade (trad.)

Lyrics: Yr 5 and 6 pupils, Wildmoor Heath Primary School, Crowthorne

Stir-up Sunday

Winifred was born in 1921, and grew up in the 1920's. Winifred really liked her food. She would help her mother make all kinds of puddings. Plum Duff. Spotted Dick, Apple Pudding, Bacon Roll, Steak pudding. She would make up the pastry, roll it out, and then would take a basin and line it with the pastry. After she put the filling in, the pudding was put on the gas ring to cook. She would go out to school for 8.30am and by the time she came back for lunch at noon the pudding was just about cooked. The pastry really filled you up, so you didn't feel hungry.

On Sunday they would have a roast. Her mother knew what the cheap cuts of meat were - so it depended on how much money they had. Sometimes it was a spare rib of pork. Sometimes the shoulder of a lamb. If there was enough money, they might have leg of lamb. Sometimes, if money was very short, they just had a soft-boiled egg on mashed potatoes. But whatever was put on her plate - she would eat it. Money was so tight; there was no choice to say, "I don't like that". If you didn't eat it - there was nothing else and the food was never wasted. The only thing she was allowed not to like was dried figs – she didn't like the seeds.

About a month before Christmas, her mother would take the big bowl from the washstand, and put it on the sideboard. Every evening she would add one ingredient - just take a handful and throw it in. Winifred's job was to wash the dried fruit like raisins and take out the pips. Raisins. Crystallised fruit. Angelica. As her mother got the ingredients, in they went. Chopped carrot and apples - in they went. Bread crumbs, suet, and flour. Finally she would beat the eggs, and pour them in. Everything would be stirred up, and all the children would have a go and make a wish on Stir Up Sunday.

Sometimes, they would buy a card with silver lucky charms on it, and put the charms in the pudding. Other times they would put a silver sixpence in the pudding. Her mother used to save one shilling a week at the international stores. That way she could save up for Christmas. One year Winifred looked in the shop. There was a glass bowl that was full of sweets. She asked her mother if they could get it for Christmas. She looked at the money she had, and the huge amount of sweets in the bowl, and she agreed. Winifred was very happy as she carried the glass bowl in its packing all the way home. When it came out on Christmas day, she was very excited as they took the packing off and opened it up. All the children had one sweet each, and then asked for another one. But as soon as they took another one each, they realised that there were no more. It was a con: under the top layer of sweets was just more packing! Winifred was very disappointed. After that, her mother would get the glass bowl out and put things in it for Christmas - but Winifred never forgot and even now she has the glass bowl in her living room.

At Sunday school they had a Christmas party. A long table was set up, with jam sandwiches, doughnuts and sticky buns. Her brother always tried to eat as many buns as possible! One year the vicar bought a case of Jaffa oranges as a special treat. Winifred took hers home to her mother to show her. You didn't get an orange every day!!

As they got closer to Christmas, her mother would take her to Woolworths. The children had to select what present they were going to buy for their aunt and uncles. Then the money was counted to see how much was left. That was when the children could choose just one present for themselves. Maybe a tea set, or a wooden doll. A Meccano set for the boys, or a printing set for them all to share. Just one present each. Then the present went into the bag for Christmas day.

Her father was in business, and every year a firm in Redhill would send him two chickens for Christmas. They were delivered by the postman, and came in a basket packed in straw in a cloth. The birds still had all the feathers on them - so Winifred and her mother would pluck the birds and watch as the feathers floated around the house. Her grandmother was a cook in a big house, and sometimes she would be able to send them something like a gammon - that came in the post too!

Even now at Christmas, Winifred looks back and remembers when it was all so different. They had so little and, and yet it seemed so much. And she is grateful for every Christmas as it comes.

*Winifred (88), member of Crowthorne Reminiscence Group.
As retold by Janet Dowling*

Stir-up Sunday

When I was young I liked to eat *Stir it up! Stir it up!* Puddings savoury and sweet *Each*
 7 year on *Stir-up Sunday.* When De-cem-ber came a-round *Stir it up! Stir it up!*
 13 Mo-ther brought the ba-sin down *Each year on Stir-up Sunday* *This is what we used to do,*
 19 *Stir it up! Stir it up! Make a wish it might come true Each year on Stir-up Sunday*

*This is what we used to do
 Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Make a wish, it might come true
 Each year on Stir Up Sunday*

When I was young I liked to eat
Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Puddings savoury and sweet
Each year on Stir-up Sunday
 When December came around
Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Mother brought the basin down
Each year on Stir-up Sunday

*This is what we used to do
 Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Make a wish, it might come true
 Each year on Stir Up Sunday*

Wash the fruit, that's what it needs
Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Next you take out all the seeds
Each year on Stir Up Sunday
 Breadcrumbs, eggs and raisins too
Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Suet, carrots, just a few
Each year on Stir Up Sunday

*This is what we used to do
 Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Make a wish, it might come true
 Each year on Stir Up Sunday*

Sometimes there'd be silver charms
Stir it up! Stir it up!
 They'd not do us any harm
Each year on Stir Up Sunday
 A silver sixpence we might find
Stir it up! Stir it up!
 It might hurt but we'd not mind
Each year on Stir Up Sunday

*This is what we used to do
 Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Make a wish, it might come true
 Each year on Stir Up Sunday*

Off to Woolworths we would go
Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Lots of gifts were there on show
Each year on Stir Up Sunday
 Perhaps a lovely bowl of sweets
Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Just make sure it's not a cheat
Each year on Stir Up Sunday

*This is what we used to do
 Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Make a wish, it might come true
 Each year on Stir Up Sunday*

*This is what we used to do
 Stir it up! Stir it up!
 Make a wish, it might come true
 Each year on Stir Up Sunday*

Tune: South Australia (trad.)
 Lyrics: Yr 5 and 6 pupils, Crowthorne C of E Primary School

A Long, Long Time Ago

About a 100 years ago - the only way to send messages to other countries was to send a letter. Or maybe a telegram through the cross Atlantic cable. Ships like the SS Faraday literally had to go out into the seas, and lay the cables at the bottom of the sea to enable messages to be sent. Not like the mobile phones and satellites of today. The SS Faraday would sail around the world laying the cables. It was a very important job, and the men were away at sea for a very long time, and only had a very short shore leave.

Johanna (with an H!) lived with her mother, two sisters and four brothers in a house in Greenwich. All the children slept in one double bed. The three girls at one end, and the four boys at the other. As the older two children, Johanna and her sister Mary were responsible for looking after the younger children, washing them, feeding them and scrubbing the house clean. Sometimes they felt like they were servants. At school they heard other children talking about their fathers - but they didn't have one.

One day, when she was about 10, there was a strange man in the kitchen of the house. He had a uniform on with brass buttons and a white peaked hat. Johanna ran next door into her grandmother's house saying "There is a strange man in our house!". Her grandmother asked her to describe him - and then she laughed! "Oh you silly - that's your father - home from sea".

Johanna wasn't sure what to do with a father. Apparently he had lived at the house lots of times - but she had been too young to remember. He was working on the SS Faraday and was away at 9 months at a time - or even a year. No wonder Johanna and her brothers and sisters didn't know him. And he didn't know them.

And everything was different now. He had stopped working on the SS Faraday and had a job on land at Siemens in Woolwich. He had come home. It was difficult at first. They were used to their mother being in charge - now it was their father. He was used to giving orders to seaman - not young children. He was very strict and her brothers were terrified of him.

Johanna found herself with a new job. Each day she had to take her father's lunch to him at work. That meant when the school ended at lunch time - she had to run home, pick up his lunch and then walk from Greenwich to Woolwich, give him his lunch and then walk back to school. There was never any time for Johanna to have lunch herself unless she gobbled something on the way.

One Easter there was a fair at Blackheath. He took Johanna, her sister Mary and her eldest brother to the fair. There were musical roundabouts, slides, the helter-skelter and swings. There were all kinds of sideshows - some of them you wouldn't be allowed today. They paid a penny to go and look at a man with one leg. It was the way then. The noise of the fair was so exciting and noisy, with a band playing and the sounds of donkeys baying and dogs barking. The men on the stalls would try and get you to throw hoops and win some money, or to fire rifles and knock over some cans. Johanna held tight to her father's hand so that she didn't get lost. Just beyond the fair was a lake, and there were some children trying to catch tiddlers - the little fish. Her father watched what the other children were doing. Then he found a stick and some wire and a piece of cloth and made a net for Johanna to catch some tiddlers too. They found an old jam jar and put the tiddlers in there. When they finished - they tipped the tiddlers back into the lake.

They walked back through the fair on the way home. This time her father took Johanna's hand and held it tight. And that's when Johanna knew that she had a dad - because she never knew that she had a dad before.

And even though she is now 93, she can still feel him holding her hand.

*Johanna - (93), resident of Birdsgrove Care Home
As retold by Janet Dowling*

A Long, Long Time Ago

She's Jo - han - na with an 'h' you see — Oh yes oh! Her
 5
 fa - ther was a - way at sea A long, long time a - go

She's Johanna with an 'h' you see

Oh, yes, oh!

Her father was away at sea

A long, long time ago

For many years he sailed away

Oh, yes, oh!

On board the SS Faraday

A long, long time ago

Laying cables round the world

Oh, yes, oh!

While Mother cared for the boys and girls

A long, long time ago

Seven children in one bed

Oh, yes, oh!

Head to toe and toe to head

A long, long time ago

She and Mary were the eldest ones

Oh, yes, oh!

They made sure the work was done

A long, long time ago

Then one day she stopped and stared

Oh, yes, oh!

A stranger stood in the kitchen there

A long, long time ago

Shiny buttons and a white peaked hat

Oh, yes, oh!

She asked her grandma, 'Who is that?'

A long, long time ago

Her grandma laughed, 'Oh deary me

Oh, yes, oh!

That's your father home from sea

A long, long time ago

He's finished his job on the Faraday

Oh, yes, oh!

On land at last, he's here to stay'

A long, long time ago

He took charge of the family

Oh, yes, oh!

He bossed them about like men at sea

A long, long time ago

Johanna knew he really cared

Oh, yes, oh!

When he held her hand at the

Blackheath fair

A long, long time ago

There were lots of people, girls and boys

Oh, yes, oh!

She felt so scared of all the noise

A long, long time ago

She's 93, we understand

Oh, yes, oh!

But she still feels how he held her hand

A long, long time ago

Tune; A Hundred Years Ago (trad.)

Lyrics: Yr 5 pupils, Meadow Vale Primary School, Bracknell

A Whiff of Herring

Nan was born in the north of Scotland - Caithness. It's a barren place. Wide open moors. Plenty of rocks, and no trees. The sea just rushes against the rocky cliffs with a roar. It's not safe for anyone to swim in the sea. A very long time ago, someone carved out a safe place to swim in the rocks. You had to be careful - those rocks were sharp on your feet - but it was better than being swept out to sea. The rock swimming pool was already old when Nan was a girl. With her brothers and sisters, she would enjoy being a fish in the water, holding her breath and then coming up to get air. For Nan it was all she ever knew – she had never heard of other countries or foreign lands. As far as she knew the whole world was like her home.

Her school was two miles from her home. Every day she would walk there. Back home for lunch, and then back to school. Her playground was the harbour - where the fishing boats would unload their fish. The children would hang around the quayside watching the fishermen work. If it had been a good catch, then the fishermen would throw the children a few fish. It was a great prize to be able to take home a fish to their mother – and something very tasty for their tea!

The best time of year was when the herring fleet came in - and the village was full of the herring girls! The herring girls came from even further north - in Stornoway, and each year they would follow the herring fleet down the coast, as the herring shoals moved south. They came to Nan's village for three weeks every year and lodged in the houses and then moved on. Their job was to gut the fish - taking all the insides out, and then salt the fish before putting them in barrels. The barrels would be sold to fishmongers and some of it went to big hotels and companies that Nan barely knew. Her father worked on the railway and would see the barrels put on the trains to travel all over the country. Their mother would get a barrel of herring too, and it would be the way they got through the winter. There was little food available other than herring and boiled potatoes. Gutting and salting the herring was hard work. You could always tell when a herring girl was nearby without seeing her, because of the smell that stayed on her skin and clothes.

One day Nan and her friends were playing hide and seek. She sneaked in to the friend's family shed. She was trying to see if her friend was coming, and climbed on a barrel to look out the window when "Crack!" The lid wasn't on the barrel properly, and she went straight through into the herring barrel. The smell was terrible, and her socks and shoes were ruined. She got a smacking for that - and had to help to put the fish back in the barrel - nothing could be wasted!

For Nan it was an exciting time to see and hear all these girls talking about the places they travelled to, and imagining where the herring barrels went.

When she was 17, she left home to join the WAAFs. First of all she worked in the equipment stores. It was her responsibility to check the scouting planes when they came back from a mission to see what equipment they needed replacing. She had to make sure the planes were fit and ready to take an important part of the war work. She was very proud of her work. She met her husband working in the stores - and when they got married in 1944, they were posted down south and lived in a one street village called Bracknell. It was a very small village - and very different from Caithness - all the green fields and trees all around.

But they weren't here long. Her husband was posted abroad and Nan found herself living in foreign lands - Germany and Singapore. She had to learn about different ways of living, different cultures and different languages. At heart, she was still that little girl who swam in rock pools off the sea, and chatted to the herring girls in the small world that she lived in and was amazed that she had travelled so far herself.

In 1966 her husband was posted back to England, and they went to live in Bracknell again. But now it was much bigger - all the houses had been developed and factories springing up everywhere. It was such a shock! But here she stayed.

She sometimes thinks about going back to Scotland but she knows that the village won't be like it was when she was young. There probably won't be the rock pools - and certainly not the herring girls. But every now again, she can close her eyes, sniff and she is sure there is a whiff of herring.

*Nan (88) resident of Edmonds Court Sheltered Housing Scheme
As retold by Janet Dowling*

A Whiff of Herring

Born in Caith - ness far a - way A - mong the rocks I swam and played_

5 Liv - ing by that north - ern sea___ Knew no oth - er place to be The

9 Walked two miles to school each day___ Lived on tatt - ies and herr - ing Of

on - ly stran - gers I did see Were the girls who gut - ted the herr - ing

13 all the fish - that live in the sea The herr - ing is the one for me And

some - times in my me - mor - y I get a whiff of herr - ing

Born in Caithness far away
Among the rocks I swam and played
Walked two miles to school each day
Lived on tatties and herring.
Living by that northern sea
Knew no other place to be
The only strangers I would see
Were girls who gutted the herring.

*Of all the fish that live in the sea
The herring is the one for me
And sometimes in my memory
I get a whiff of herring*

Came there with the fishing boats
From places even more remote
And on their hands and skirts and coats
More than a whiff of herring.
Only came three weeks to stay
Working hard day after day
Then 'til next year they'd go away
The girls who gutted the herring

Of all the fish, etc.

Playing a game of hide and seek
Climbed on a barrel to take a peek
But, oh the lid it was too weak
And in the barrel was herring
The lid went crack and in I fell
Ruined my shoes and socks as well
Couldn't get rid of that fishy smell
And I had to clean up the herring

Of all the fish, etc.

Lived in Bracknell once before
That was 1944
A one street village, nothing more
Trees instead of herring
Then off we went across the sea
To Singapore and Germany
Lots of places strange to me
Far away from the herring

Of all the fish, etc.

When we'd travelled the world around
Back we came and settled down
No more village, a brand new town
But still I missed the herring
Sometimes I've thought about my home
The rocky shore I used to roam
It wouldn't be the place I'd known
With the girls who gutted the herring

*Of all the fish that live in the sea
The herring is the one for me
And sometimes in my memory
I get a whiff of herring (Repeat)*

*Tune: The herring's Head (trad. adapted)
Lyrics: Yr 4 pupils, Sandy Lane Primary School, Bracknell*

Those Days by the Sea

Elise was born in Southsea in Hampshire. She had five brothers - and she was the only girl. They lived just a block away from the seafront!

Whoosh! She loved the sea. Whenever possible she would be down by the seaside paddling and swimming in the sea. Sometimes her mother would get the pram, take out a board at the bottom, and put some bread, dripping, jam, meats and cakes there. They would put the board back, and wheel the babies down to the sea. They would collect old driftwood, and someone would set up a fire. The children would run into the sea, swim and splash around and come racing back to find their mother had made them a picnic and had boiled a kettle on the fire to make tea in a bright orange teapot. As a special treat there might be bread pudding with fat sultanas in it. Sometimes there would be other children on the beach who would come and look - and they would all get something to eat too.

Their school was right next to the Hippodrome - a place where they had shows and circuses. The trucks for the shows would come down a side street to get into the hippodrome. Sometimes if there was a lot of them, they would queue up in the street, parked on the pavement right next to the school windows.

Whoosh! It was the elephants. They could hear the noise from the classroom, and their long trunks would sneak through the windows trying to find out where the sound came from. The children were frightened that the elephants would pick them up and run off with them. Then they would give shrieks of laughter as they tried first to avoid the elephant's trunks, and then try to grab hold of them to stroke them. The Hippodrome had shows all the year - and the children always wondered what would happen next.

When the war came, the Hippodrome was closed down. Elise's five brothers went off to fight in the services. Elise wanted to join the women's service - but her mother told her "No, the services have your brothers they are not having you." She told Elise to get herself a safe job. So that's what Elise did. She got herself a job in a bomb factory. Making bombs!

Her job was to put the components together to make the bombs that were being used in the war. She had to make sure that the measurements were just right, screw things in very carefully, and put the explosive RDX in the bomb. Very, very carefully.

When she arrived at work she had to change all her clothes. She was given an overcoat to wear, trousers, and a thick headscarf to cover her hair. She wore a pair of expensive soft leather shoes. All care was taken so that nothing could possibly fall out, or knock against something else, in case there was a spark and everything would go up in an explosion. No nails, no screws, no hairclips. Nothing.

The workroom was on the edge of Portsmouth harbour.. But the moment that everyone dreaded was when the Germans were bombing the harbour. As they heard the planes coming over, they would stop work and look out of the window. They would hold their breath as the bombs dropped around Portsmouth.

Someone would call out - There they go again" and someone else would start to sing. There were no shelters for anyone in the bomb factory. "Clear off!" Elise would say. She was frightened when the bombs would drop in the harbour as they tried to attack the ships, but she knew she could do nothing about it

Whoosh! The water would spout up into a large column and fall back into the harbour - boiling! Sometimes the water would wash against the building they were working in. It would only take something to be caught up in the water to come crashing through the wall, set a spark and then all the explosives would go off. But in all the time that Elise worked there - only one bomb actually hit the bomb factory. And it hit the place where all their clothes were made - the overalls, the trousers and the headscarves.

Elise remembers that at the end of the day she would rush home, change and then go out to the dance. And oh how she would dance – just in case the next day was her last!

And now here she is - seventy years later - living in Bracknell. She has been here for over 40 years and seen a lot of changes. Life has had its ups and downs, but she never forgets the time when she held her breath.

*Elise (88) resident of Edmonds Court Sheltered Housing Scheme
As retold by Janet Dowling*

Those Days by the Sea

9 She grew up in South-sea, five bro-thers and her One block a - way from the shore ____ She
 17 swam and she pad-dled when - ev - er she could But one thing she liked ev - en more ____ When
 25 moth-er put good things to eat in the pram And a big or-ange pot for the tea ____ They
 33 all gath-ered drift-wood to make a good fire For a pic-nic right down by the sea ____ She'll
 41 al-ways re - mem-ber those days by the sea In peace-time and war-time as well ____ The
 sound of the waves as they crashed on the shore And man-y's the tale she can tell ____

She grew up in Southsea five brothers and
 her
 One block away from the shore
 She swam and she paddled whenever she
 could
 But one thing she liked even more
 When her mother put good things to eat in
 the pram
 And a big orange pot for the tea
 They all gathered drift wood to make a good
 fire
 For a picnic right down by the sea

*She always remembers those days by the
 sea*

In peace time and war time as well

*The sound of the waves as they crashed
 on the shore*

And many's the tale she can tell

Elise, she remembers the hippodrome too
 Not far away from her school
 Whenever the circus arrived to perform
 They parked in the street as a rule
 Then in through the window came
 elephants' trunks
 She was scared she'd be lifted away
 But in a short time they all giggled and
 squealed
 The elephants just wanted to play

She always remembers, etc.

And then came the war and her brothers all
 went

Elise said she'd like to go too
 Her Mother said no, they're not having you
 all

Stay home and find something to do

Tune: Roger Watson

Lyrics: Yr 5 pupils, Meadow Vale Primary School, Bracknell

Some of the factories are setting on girls
 Now that the men have all gone
 So Elise got a job in a factory too
 A factory turning out bombs

She always remembers, etc.

She handled explosives with very great
 care
 She wore special clothing as well
 They all held their breath when the Nazis
 dropped bombs
 And into the harbour they fell
 Elise shook her fist and she shouted 'clear
 off'
 As the waves hit the factory wall
 And when work was done she went
 dancing each night
 It might be her last night of all

She always remembers, etc.

Now elephants, teapot and bombs are all gone
 But memories still do not fail
 She says that her life's had its ups and its
 downs
 But Elise lived to tell us the tale
 Of how she remembers those days by the sea
 Of peace time and war time as well
 The sound of the waves as they crashed
 on the shore
 And this is the tale she did tell

She always remembers, etc...

The Girl with the Blue Dress On

Muriel was a very shy girl. She found it very difficult to speak to people. When someone spoke to her, she would look down, hold her hands very tightly and go bright red. She found it very difficult to make friends, and almost impossible to meet any nice young men. So her mother came up with a cunning plan!

She sent Muriel to ballroom dancing lessons.

Slowly, slowly Muriel began to learn the dances.

First the waltz. A nice gentle one two three. One two three.

Then she moved onto the quickstep - Slow-Quick-Quick, Slow-Quick-Quick

And then she danced the polka. Hop One Two Three. Hop One Two Three.

When she danced she felt she was in a different place – the world didn't matter-with her partner she would just swirl around. And now she was ready to go out and try dancing in the real world.

At the swimming baths. Now it might seem strange to go dancing at the swimming baths, but at that time (in the late 1930's and probably later) the local swimming baths would put a wooden floor over the swimming pool, and hold dances on a Saturday night. The local bands would play, and it was very cheap to go - only 6d in old money (about two and a half new pence).

Muriel arranged to meet a friend inside the dance. She was excited and scared at the same time. But the friend never turned up, and Muriel sat at the edge of the dance wondering what to do. "Can I have this dance?" a man's voice said. She looked up, and she knew the face. It was the man who sold insurance to her mother! Relieved it wasn't a stranger - she said "yes" and she danced. And danced and danced. He introduced her to his friends and they all said what a good dancer she was. And she found that she was talking with them, and even laughing a little. At the end of the evening the insurance man escorted her back home. She never saw him at the dance again - but he had helped make the first step.

One thing she knew - that she was going to need a special dress to go dancing with. A long one - a smart one. But she didn't have the money to spend on a dance dress. Until her sister got married - and Muriel was going to be a bridesmaid. And of course there had to be a bridesmaid dress. Muriel and her mother went up to Oxford Street and found a beautiful long blue dress. She tried it on - it was perfect. Her mother made her a long black, velvet cape with a white lining. She would twist and turn - and felt like she was Queen of the May. After the wedding, the blue dress became her dancing dress.

Dancing was an important part of her life. Saturdays would be spent getting ready - wash, put the make up on, and get the hair exactly right. And the blue dress.

There was one young man she became close to. He asked her to his firm's annual dinner and dance at the Savoy. She wore the blue dress. They had the meal, and everyone went into the ballroom for the dance. They didn't start the music immediately - they wanted everyone to settle down. When the head of the firm said "let the dancing begin" four young men all run across the floor to ask Muriel to dance. She was very flattered and surprised. Here was Muriel, who used to be so shy, now the centre of attention. She looked at the young man she had come with - and he laughed and said "go on!" as he knew all the young men from his office. That night she felt the belle of the ball – feeling so proud at dancing well and in her blue dress.

Afterwards - her young man took her home. As they stood to say goodnight - he looked at her in her blue dress and said, "I suppose we might as well get married?"

She smiled and said "That would be nice."

They married on May 9th 1940. They were together for 56 years until he died.

Muriel can't remember what happened to the blue dress, but she does know that it helped her go from very shy girl to a bride who didn't blush!

*Muriel (90), resident of Birdsgrove Care Home.
As retold by Janet Dowling*

The Girl with the Blue Dress on

When I was a girl I was ev-er so shy, I would-n't let an-y-bod-y catch my eye. My
 5 moth-er said 'Give your-self a chance, You should go and learn to dance So
 9 off I wne to the danc-ing school Learned the steps and I learned the rules
 13 I would-n't be an-y-bod-y's fool I'm the girl with the blue dress on.
 17 Who's that pret-ty girl dressed in blue Danc-ing the waltz and the quick-step too?
 21 All the young men wish they knew the girl with the blue dress on.

When I was a girl I was ever so shy
 I wouldn't let anybody catch my eye.
 Mother said, "Give yourself a chance,
 You should go and learn to dance!"
 Off I went to the dancing school
 I learnt the steps and I learnt the rules
 I wouldn't be anybody's fool
 I'm the girl with the blue dress on

*Who's that pretty girl dressed in blue?
 Dancing the Waltz and the Quickstep too.
 All the young men wish they knew
 The girl with the blue dress on.*

The time came around for my very first ball
 So off I went to the local hall
 It was the pool where we went to swim
 With boards on top so we wouldn't fall in
 My friend said she'd come with me
 So on my own, I wouldn't be
 She didn't turn up though, don't you see
 Just me with my blue dress on

Who's that pretty girl, etc...

I sat there wondering what to do
 Until I heard a voice I knew
 It was my mother's insurance man
 Saying "I'll have this dance if I can"

Whirled around the wooden floor
 Danced every dance and I wanted more
 Never felt so good before
 Happy with my blue dress on

Who's that pretty girl, etc...

Later on I wasn't alone
 I found a young man of my own
 He took me to the Savoy Hotel
 With my blue dress on and my cape as well
 When the band began to play
 Four young men rushed up to say
 "Shall we dance?" I said "Okay."
 And smiled with my blue dress on

Who's that pretty girl, etc...

He walked me home in the pale
 moonlight
 And looked at me as we said goodnight
 "I suppose we might as well get wed."
 "That would be nice," I smiled and said.
 The 9th of May I became his bride
 No more shy, no more tongue-tied
 We danced through life then side by side
 Me with my blue dress on

*Who's that pretty girl dressed in blue?
 Dancing the Waltz and the Quickstep
 too.*

*All the young men wish they knew
 The girl with the blue dress on.*

(repeat)

Tune; *The Girl with the Blue Dress on (Trad.)*
 Lyrics: Yr 4 pupils, Sandy Lane Primary School, Bracknell.

Story Givers to Song Makers - Finding the Stories to Inspire the Songs

Once we had identified the care home or day centre, I contacted the centre manager to explain further about the Age to Age project and arrange two days when I interview some of the residents. Experience has shown that when the centre manager understands the nature of the Age to Age project, they are better able to engage the members of the community to take part.

I explain that I interview about 6 – 8 people (the story givers) in their centre about their earlier lives. What they did as children, what kind of jobs they did, and anything else that they want to share with the children involved in the project. I emphasise that it doesn't have to be about the war (some older people do not want to talk about it) - and that I will be respectful and sensitive. I explain that I will be recording the interview and that I would ask the participants to give their consent for the interview to be used as part of an oral history archive, and there will be a form for them to sign. For the project with the children, we only need five stories, but by asking for 6-8 interviews it enables me to ensure that we had a range of stories that I could discuss with Roger to ensure that we have the strongest stories for songwriting potential. After all, what makes for a good story doesn't always make a good song, and vice versa.

Once agreements have been made, I make two half day visits. Whilst it may be possible to do all the interviews in one day, I have found that older people are at their best in the morning, and find the afternoon tiring.

I interviewed people in their own rooms, or in a suitable side room. While I set up my recording equipment, I chatted with them about where they came from, and how they came to be in the unit. Part of the brief from Bracknell Forest Council was to enable the recording to go in to the oral history archive. Therefore I needed to establish their connections with Bracknell and how that might influence the flow of the interview.

I would also explain about the copyright forms for the Oral History archive, and their waiver of copyright to the council. People were generally happy to sign. I explain about the recording process (I use a Marantz and a flat mic which is unobtrusive), and how we start. I described the project, plus date of interview and invited the story giver to say their name and date of birth. I advised them that the recording will be available to the public, and not to comment on anything that they feel uncomfortable about other people hearing. I advised them that at any time they could say stop if they feel they might be about to say something that was not appropriate. I also advised them that if I thought they said some in appropriate or might be about to say something, I would pause the recording and just check with them. There were two people I paused the recording for. One was happy to continue, the other wanted to tell me what had happened - off the record. A third person made some derogatory comments about a family member and then asked if they could be taken out, which I was able to do.

Generally I asked about the connection with Bracknell first - either as an incomer or as a long term resident. Then I would suggest some topics such as childhood games, or festivals or otherwise invited them to tell stories about things that would interest the children. My emphasis was on witnessing what they had to say. Knowing that I had to make a story out of what they had to say, I would look for about three linked episodes, and try to judge the emotional content of each. It is the emotion that acts as the hook for the interest in the story and eventually the song.

I would finish the interview by asking if there was anything they felt they wanted the children to know. Most of the time their final thoughts proved to be the summary of their experiences, and I found that these last comments were the basis of the writing of the story of their life. Interviews last about 30mins, but we allowed an hour to include informal chatting time when setting up, and when finishing the interview.

Back at home I then replayed the recordings, and made a partial transcription from which I drafted bullet point summaries. I then met with Roger to discuss the themes that would make for good song writing and we would select the five strongest potential stories. I then shaped their reminiscences into a five minute story that I told to the children in the two schools with Roger. To increase their engagement with the stories, we invited the different school groups to listen to three stories, and then choose the two stories that they were going to create songs.

I next met the children and story givers on the day of the concert, and would introduce the children and story givers as the concert proceeded.

After the final concert the story givers were given a CD with their personal story on (read by me) and a copy of their interview. Roger would later send them a copy of the CD with the children's songs.

Janet Dowling

The Songwriting Process.

Choice of story/stories

- You have your stories. They have been told to the children and you need to help them select which story/stories to choose. They will almost certainly be guided by the personality of the storyteller, which comes through in his or her words, and the incidents and themes, which are best remembered and thus probably mean most to him or her.
- It should be remembered, that the best stories, packed with incident, do not necessarily make the best songs. They can be too long and too disconnected. So think if there is a story that has a particular strong incident that can form the central theme, with others referred to, if the children choose to, as and where possible. Or one that has a running theme with each incident a possible verse, these connected by a chorus that sums up the theme.
- It is interesting to note how many of the best songs created in these projects have featured incidents of childhood misbehaviour, with which the children can identify.

Getting started

- Once the stories have been selected. As the teacher/ workshop leader you can spend a little time before the first songwriting session getting your own thoughts in order and considering tunes or even whole song-templates from the folk tradition or other public domain sources, which will be easy to sing, clear in structure and make the process smoother for the workshops. The selection should not be too rigid. If something isn't working in the form in which you have considered it, use your repertoire knowledge and creative ability to adapt or invent.
- If the children are encouraged to try to recall the story's main incidents and themes, that will indicate what has made the strongest impression on them. From this a brief brainstorming of words and phrases can lead to a verbal hook.
- Chorus songs were always chosen as my models in these projects, for two reasons: they can more easily involve children from another group or school taking part in the project; and the chorus or refrain lines constitute half the song. Thus a first session which sets out as its target the completion of a chorus or a couple of refrain lines if that is the format chosen plus one or two verses, gives a great sense of immediate achievement and a stimulus for future sessions. The singing of the chorus can be a good warm up for the next sessions. Another possible task for the first session is a rough template for the song: how many verses for which bits of the story.
- Stress that song writing doesn't necessarily start with verse one and follow the narrative in chronological order. If an incident that suggests good metric phrases and rhymes, from whatever point in the narrative is tackled first, the rest can fit around it.

Songwriting as a group activity – some further guidelines

- Songwriting can work very well as a group activity. This may come as a surprise to those who have the impression that one person sits down and toils away at a set of lyrics, or a melody, or both, to produce the finished entity of a song. But folk song versions were the result of many generations of anonymous people, each adapting what he or she had learned from someone else and bringing it to a point where their community would take ownership of it. This scenario can be replicated in the classroom by guided, group activity, stimulated and led by the teacher and the workshop leaders.
- The amount of completely original suggestions depends on the individuals in the class. It is often a good idea to 'give them a start' in the following ways:

- You could suggest a line or half a line, and encourage pupils complete it, taking theme and metre into account. (Often in workshops we made a line and worked out the rhyming line which was going to come BEFORE it)
- Once an end of line word has been decided, the process towards the following or preceding rhyming line can start with just a 'brainstorm' on rhymes, narrowing down to ones which will make sense with the theme. Then expand to phrases, taking the metre of the song into consideration.
- As a teacher/workshop leader you need to participate yourself! Suggestions to 'break the log jam' – and allow the 'trial by singing' process (see below) to reject them – can avoid a session stagnating and attention and concentration being lost.
- It is accepted that some pupils will be more eager to suggest things than others, and you should not try to force participation from individuals in a way that will allow the momentum of creativity to grind to a halt.
- It is vital to make sure that no suggestion is dismissed without being tried out, by the whole class singing it. This makes it clear that there is no 'right' or 'wrong', and the only criterion for acceptance of a lyric idea is that the whole group feels comfortable singing it. If mistakes are constantly made, revise the word-fit/melody until they are not. This way, even those who are shy to make suggestions will have an active role in the selection of lyrics and be encouraged to take ownership in the completed song.

Roger Watson

The Authors.

Roger Watson was born in Mansfield and now lives in Berkshire. For more than four decades he worked nationally and internationally as a musician, singer, songwriter, dance caller and workshop leader in the field of folk music. Responsible for a large number of songs that were recorded not only by himself but also by such notable performers as June Tabor and The Young Tradition, he began his song-making career in 1964, using reminiscences from his own family about the Nottinghamshire mining community in which he grew up. Many of these songs are still around in folk singers' repertoires. Sometimes, they get referred to as 'traditional', which their author takes as a compliment, as well as a source of some amusement!

Once a secondary school teacher, he left in 1989 to become the founder and Artistic Director of Regional Development Agency Traditional Arts Projects (TAPS), and was responsible for the development of its inclusive and creative policies and projects. TAPS ceased to operate in 2008, but until his retirement in 2010, Roger continued to introduce audiences, students, community groups, schoolchildren and teachers to English traditions of music and dance through creative projects and still believes firmly that people's involvement in the evolutionary process of oral transmission is vital to the continuation of tradition.

Janet Dowling is a storyteller who specialises in telling stories from many traditions and cultures, to inspire and to make a difference. She develops stories with children, adults and communities to find their own storytelling voice, celebrating their unity, community and diversity. Her passion is in finding the personal stories of ordinary people and communities, and telling how extraordinary their lives are.

She has travelled in the US, Canada, Israel and Palestine, as well as the UK, to hear the personal stories of people from different communities and facilitated them to share their stories to create better understanding between them. She finds the personal stories she hears in the Age to Age project some of the most inspiring – just by virtue of being ordinary people. Everyone has a story to tell. And the exciting part is being able to share them with the young people to transform them into songs.

She lives in Ewell, Surrey, with her husband and about 117 dragons (each of whom has a story!) She aspires to play a musical instrument, has failed completely and utterly, and stands in admiration at the awesome talents of Roger Watson.

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