



## AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE NEWSLETTER

EDITORS:

June Factor & Gwenda Davey

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### EDITORIAL

The last six months have seen major changes in the location and organisation of the Australian Children's Folklore Collection, the archive to which this Newsletter is symbolically connected. The A.C.F.C., Australia's largest public archive of folklore of, for and about children, was officially opened in 1979. From the beginning, it was housed in the Library of the Institute of Early Childhood Development in Melbourne, under the control of the two editors of this Newsletter, then both academic staff members of the Institute.

Time passed, the archives grew, one editor (Gwenda Davey) transferred to another College of Advanced Education and then to freelance work. At the beginning of this year the second editor and continuing Director of the A.C.F.C., June Factor, was installed as Senior Research Fellow at the new Australian Centre at the University of Melbourne. At the same time, the Institute amalgamated with Melbourne University to become the School of Early Childhood Studies in the Institute of Education.

These bewildering changes in occupation and nomenclature are of less importance than the good news, which is that the A.C.F.C. is now safely housed in the University of Melbourne Archives (conveniently located next-door to the Australian Centre). This institution has an excellent reputation for its archival work, and it has welcomed the A.C.F.C. as an important adjunct to its existing collections. It recognises the A.C.F.C. as a significant public resource and a valuable archive for researchers interested in childhood, schooling, and Australian linguistic and cultural traditions.

A Board of Management of the A.C.F.C. has been established, consisting of the Director of the A.C.F.C., June Factor, Folklorist Gwenda Davey, the Director of the Australian Centre, Professor Chris Wallace-Crabbe, and the Melbourne University Archivist Frank Strachan. The Board will oversee the development of the A.C.F.C., seek funds for research, and generally endeavour to enhance its growth and reputation as a core collection of material about Australian childhood.

The School of Early Childhood Studies, meanwhile, maintains its decade-long connection with the A.C.F.C. through this Newsletter, which will continue to be published by the School. The editors of the A.C.F.N. take this opportunity to publicly thank the Head of the School, Dr. Gill Parmenter, the wonderful staff in the secretaries' office, and all those academic and non-academic staff who have supported the Newsletter over the years since its first issue in 1981. We're pleased to say we're still going strong!

June Factor  
Gwenda Davey



# *Nursery Rhymes and the National Library*

by Gwenda Davey

[Gwenda Davey is spending six months at the National Library of Australia as one of the Library's 1989 Harold White Fellows]

On August 30th, 1917, a correspondent "Ah Gee" wrote to the Bulletin Red Page as follows:

In our Australian literature there is a considerable gap which I propose Red Pagans should fill. I mean nursery rimes. Surely Australian nursery songs are as important (nearly) as Australian drama or fiction. This field has been almost entirely neglected, in spite of a large and expectant public... At present we have to give our youngsters 'Banbury Cross' and 'Dick Whittington' and 'I've been to London to see the Queen' - which are quite out of place in this land of kangaroos, rabbits and politicians.

Never loath to respond to a nationalistic call, the Bulletin took up Ah Gee's suggestion, and proposed a competition through the Red Page. Its Editor (Arthur Adams) wrote:

The idea commends itself to this page. A guinea will be given for the best nursery rime written by an Australian ... for Australian kiddies. No parodies will be accepted ... Competitors need not deliberately drag in Australian references or Australian color - an Australian kid has an outlook different from that of an English kid: the sort of songs he wants to sing will not be those that the English kid sings.

On October 18th of the same year, the Red Page is given over almost entirely to the results of the hugely successful competition. The Editor opened the page thus:

The kid that edits this page has had approximately a thousand nursery rimes to choose from. He has even found a few genuine Australian rimes already sung by our kiddies. Ethel Pawley has heard Australian kiddies sing

Captain Cook  
Broke his hook  
Fishing for Australia.

Captain Cook  
Wrote a book  
All about Australia.

That is the best our folk-lore has done: we can consciously do much better.

Whether the one thousand entries for the Bulletin's golden guinea were 'much better' than the above rather bland version of the ubiquitous 'Captain Cook' rhymes is debatable. (The above reads to me like an adult's 'cleaned up' version of a Captain Cook rhyme). Quality aside, time has shown that most of the entries are long forgotten. The only item from the Bulletin's 1917 competition which I have collected occasionally as still in circulation is 'Little Jika Jika', a rhyme which I regard as at worst racist and at best disastrously patronising. The Red Page Editor writes that 'The native names in the following, Angela Kennedy assures us, are well known'.

Little Ji-ka Ji-ka! All the darkies like her  
In her dainty Sunday dress and pinny,  
Give her wattle blossom and a joey 'possum -  
She's a good Australian piccaninny.

And she lives outside Benalla with her father, Doutta Galla,  
Who eats snakes for breakfast till he's pale.  
He kills them with a waddy, and devours the head and body -  
And Little Ji-ka Ji-ka eats the tail!

The competition entries could be roughly divided into these classes: 'Abo (sic) rimes, Station-life, City-life, Nonsense rimes', Natural History and War-rimes. The 'Best Kid's Complete History of the War' is provided by H.W. Stewart:

Over the sea is my Daddy to-day,  
Over the sea in Flanders.  
When I feel lonely for him I say:  
Daddy has gone with the guns  
Fighting the German Huns  
Over the sea in Flanders -  
Gone with the guns  
Fighting the Huns  
Over the sea in Flanders.

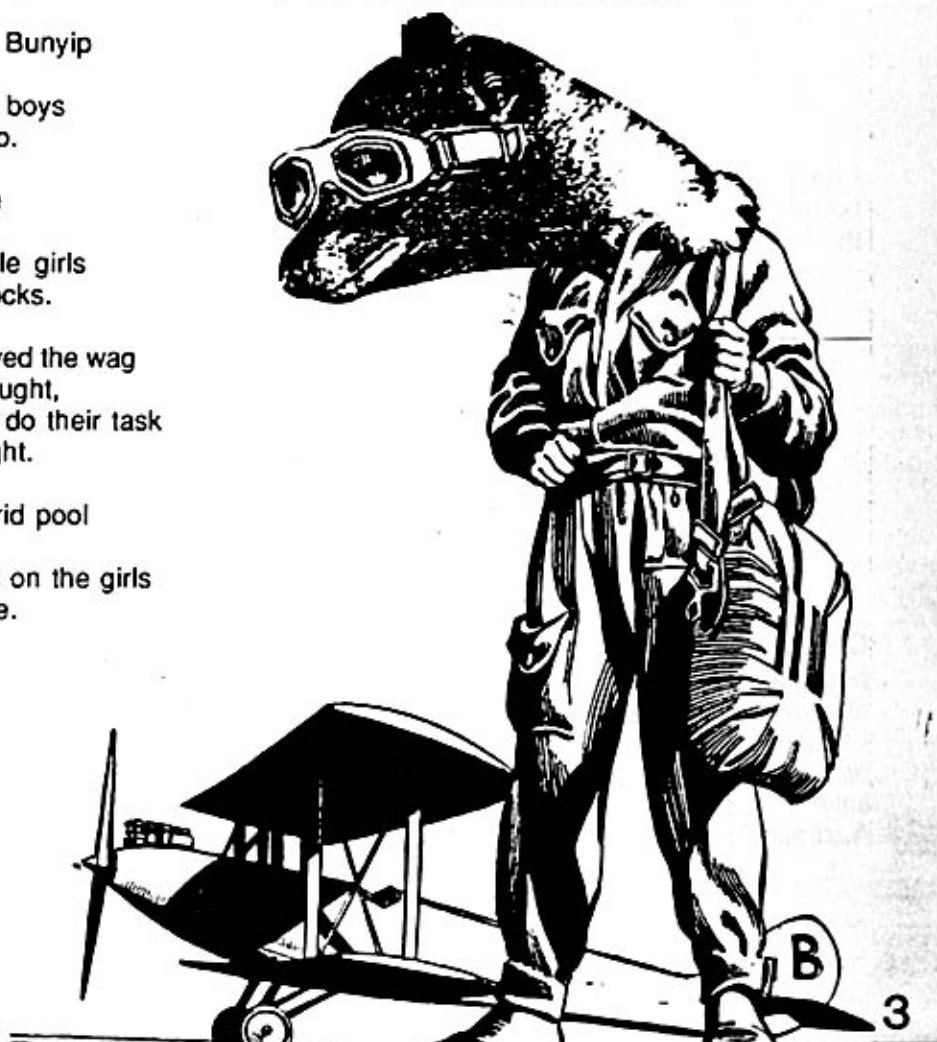
My alienation from the Bulletin's attitudes on racism does not however extend to some other areas of comment. I found myself in ready accord with the comment on The Moral Tale "which is not strictly a nursery rime: it is merely a mean advantage taken by the grown-up to frighten the kid." Jean Macpherson's poem is however printed 'as a curiosity' and 'for its Australian setting':

The fierce and frightful Bunyip  
Lives in a lonely scrub,  
And catches all the dirty boys  
Who do not like their tub.

He has a rapid aeroplane  
Steered by a flying-fox,  
To grab the naughty little girls  
Who never darn their socks.

And many a boy who played the wag  
The fearsome Bunyip caught,  
And girls who would not do their task  
Back to his den he brought.

There in a dark and horrid pool  
He soaks the dirty boys,  
And feeds small bunyips on the girls  
In spite of all their noise.



The well-known writer, Hugh McCrae, contributed the following gem:

Six white cats in an ole tin tub ...  
Muvver has gone to the Pub Pub Publ  
Over the paddocks an' through the scrub  
Six white cats in an ole tin tub!  
Boil the billy, it's time for grub,  
Six white cats in an ole tin tub!  
Wiv eyes on fire! Wiv eyes on fire!  
Gimmee a sprat I'll swing youse higher!  
Boil the billy, it's time for grub!  
Muvver has gone to the Pub Pub Publ

I like this 'Australian variant of an old nursery idea':

	My Little Bush Humpy
Baby's head -	Of wattle and dab
Baby's hair -	With bark on the roof
Baby's nose -	And chimney of slab
Baby's mouth -	The door's in the middle
Baby's eyes -	The windows are two -
Baby's eyelids	So pull down the blinds.

The Bulletin's golden guinea was divided between two writers, D.H. Souter for 'The Man from Mungundi' and Walter E. Perroux for 'Old Bob's Canter'.

The man from Mungundi was counting sheep;  
He counted so many he went to sleep.  
He counted by threes and counted by twos,  
The rams and the lambs and the wethers and ewes;  
He counted a thousand, a hundred and ten -  
And when he woke up he'd to count them again.

I have had my pronunciation corrected by some Canberra residents who are more familiar with the north-west of New South Wales than I am; Mungundi is pronounced Mung-un-die with the accent on the first syllable (like Narrabri and Boggabri). 'Old Bob's Canter' goes thus:

Three ha'pence for tuppence,  
Three ha'pence for tuppence,  
That's what the hoof beats do say.  
Daddy rode off to the township  
To buy me a Dolly today.  
Soon I will hear him returning,  
Bob's canter will tell me so true,  
Three ha'pence for tuppence,  
Three ha'pence for tuppence,  
Oh, Daddy, I do so love you!

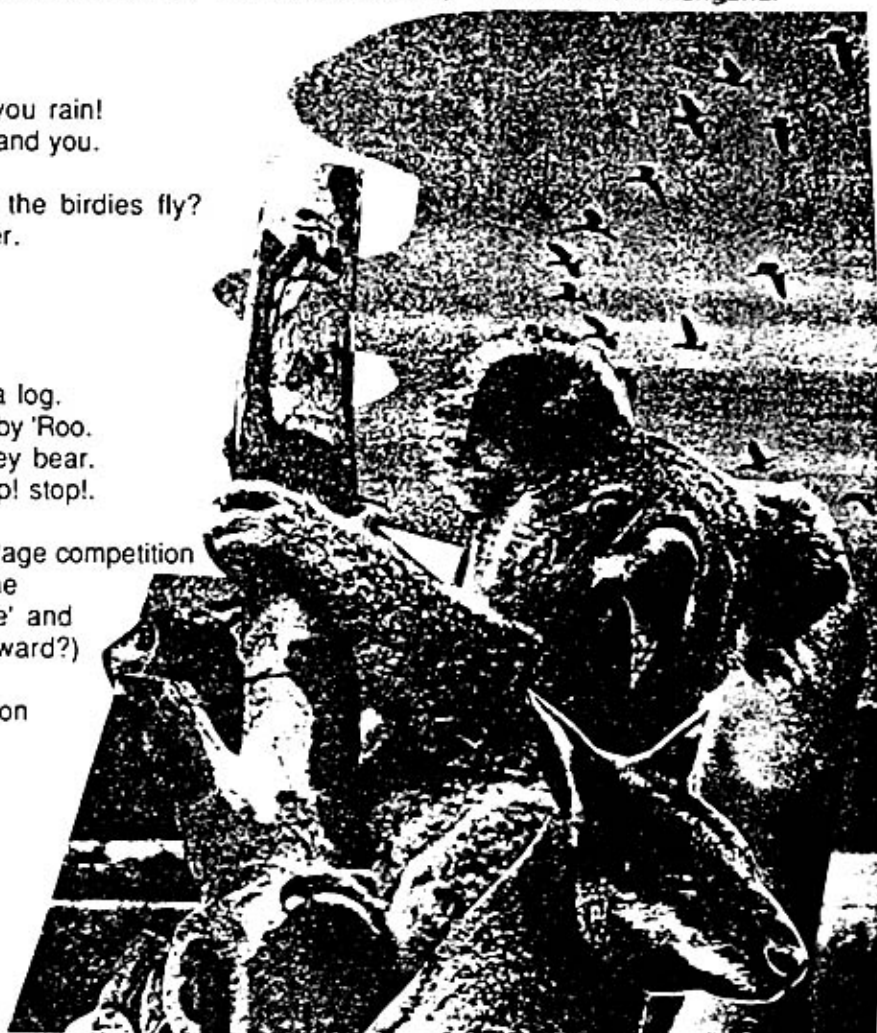
On December, 6th, the Red Page announced that Australian Nursery Rimes 'will soon be on the bookstalls', containing a selection from the competition entries. 'The cover is by Harry J. Weston; and the artists contributing are: Norman Lindsay, D.H. Souter, Muriel Nicholls, B.E. Minns, Percy Leason, David Low and Harry Weston. Owing to ill-health May Gibbs was unable to help.' All proceeds were for the Children's Hospital Sydney. By December, 20th, 10,000 copies were on sale, at one shilling; published by William Brooks of Castlereagh Street, Sydney. Present-day Australian publishers might well take a lesson from this speedy production!



The copy of Australian Nursery Rimes which I have seen is from the Ferguson Poetry Collection at the National Library, and its contents are listed below. For some reason, 'The Man from Mungundi' has become 'The Man from Menindie'!

The Man from Menindie.  
Rain! Rain! /Come, down will you rain!  
Sonny boy, sonny boy, just me and you.  
Little Billy Bandicoot.  
Wallaby, wallaby, why /Do all the birdies fly?  
Master, Master/ All of a cluster.  
Three ha'pence for tuppence.  
There was a little rabbit.  
Little Ji-Ka Ji-Ka.  
Tinkle, tinkle telephone.  
Five grey rabbits who lived in a log.  
There was once a baby 'Roo, Baby 'Roo.  
What are you doing/ O little grey bear.  
Old Mother Kangaroo, stop! stop! stop!

There are many reasons why the Red Page competition of 1917 is of interest. Not least are the linguistic reasons; the spelling of 'rime' and 'color/colour', the frequent (and awkward?) use of 'kids', and the wider usage of hyphens and apostrophes than is common today. I have already drawn attention to some aspects of racism, but by far the most important issue for folklorists, looking at the 'Australian Nursery Rimes' after seventy-two years, is that virtually none has entered the folk tradition in Australia. You can't write folklore to order!



# CHILDRENS RIDDLING OBSERVATIONS & A FIELD STUDY IN 1988.

by RoseMary Graham.

Riddling is a practice which has its roots in antiquity. There are records of riddles in the Bible and possibly the most famous ancient riddle in the Western World is the Sphinx riddle. But there are various types of enigmatic questions considered as riddles and Archer Taylor lists the most important as ..... 'the neck riddle, the arithmetic puzzle, the clever question with its several types, notably the Biblical question or riddle, and the conundrum.' True riddles..... 'are descriptions of objects in terms intended to suggest something else.' (Taylor, p.1) He cites Humpty Dumpty as an example of a true riddle. Although not posed as a question Humpty Dumpty is likened to a man falling off a wall, but the paradox is that this 'man' is shattered beyond repair.

The Opies define a true riddle as.... 'a composition in which some creature or object is described in an intentionally obscure manner, the solution fitting all the characteristics of the description in question and usually resolving a paradox.' (Opie, 1957, p.74) They give as an example 'What holds water yet is full of holes? A sponge.'

In Zickery Zan we find..... 'the basis of a true riddle is always a comparison of one object to another. Riddles are characterised by deliberate ambiguity, paradox, contradiction, misleading analogy, false deduction and partially accurate description of induction.' (Solomon, pp.88-89). The riddles cited in Zickery Zan include many that would not fit Archer Taylor's description of the true riddle, but typify the type one may presently find performed in an Australian School playground. For example

'Why is cooking exciting?'  
(It has many stirring events).

'What did one ghost say to the other ghost?'  
(Do you believe in people?)  
(Solomon, p.93)

These two examples would probably be classified by Abrahams and Dundes as joking questions..... 'A joking question is an enigma in which the question simply functions as a set-up for a punch line.' (Folklore and Folklife, p.136.) There is no metaphor in the ghost riddle, in fact, there is no way of arriving at a logical conclusion as Oedipus solved the Sphinx riddle. Although an interrogative pronoun is employed in the proposition 'Why is cooking exciting?' The solution consists of a descriptive pun. Abrahams and Dundes also define 'true riddles' .... enigmatic questions in the form of descriptions whose referent must be guessed .... these are the most interesting for they employ witty devices in order to confuse.' 'Riddles are questions that are framed with purpose of confusing or testing the wits of those who do not know the answer.' This latter statement then includes types other than the true riddle in the riddling repertoire. As an example of a descriptive true riddle, they cite several from Archer Taylor's collection, such as-

'A house full, a yard full,  
Couldn't catch a bowl full.'

-Smoke (ER 1643a)  
(Folklore and Folklife, pp.130-131)

McDowell considers the genre of children's riddling. He describes the riddle as an interrogative ludic routine which is in fact an inversion of the normal felicitous conditions of the speech act of questioning in which the questioner is ignorant of a piece of information which she may reasonably suppose the questioned to know and thereby impart. In riddling the riddler asks the question and

knows the answer, the riddlee (questioned) is merely there as the foil and audience - not to supply the information. In fact, if the riddler doesn't have an answer to his proposition the whole routine is ruined since ..... 'children recognise the riddler as the sole and final judge of the appropriate answer.' (McDowell, pp.21-31).... "Scholarship on the riddle, particularly on European traditions and their derivatives stands in essential agreement on one crucial point: the riddle in its characteristic form entails the 'pairing of a question and its answer'." (McDowell, p.20) In descriptive riddles such as Nancy Etticoat and Humpty Dumpty the question is implied. In the former, the contradiction or block is twofold -

"Little Nancy Etticoat,  
With a white petticoat,  
And a red nose.  
She has no feet or hands,  
The longer she stands,  
The shorter she grows."

(Opie, p.326)

inviting solution. These two riddles appear in many collections of Nursery Rhymes, thereby introducing riddles to very young children. Another descriptive riddle six stanzas long appears in Juba This and Juba That, entitled "This Man had Six Eyes" and describes a potato. This collection has been on recommended bibliographies for primary schools for many years and is familiar to many Victorian children. (Juba This and Juba That, pp.44-45)

Other examples of true riddles or metaphoric comparisons are riddles of the Lau people in the face of white man's technology. In an article entitled 'Folklore and Cultural Change: Lau Riddles of Modernisation', Elli Kongas Maranda records the following -

....."A thing, only when his food arrives, he cries. If it does not arrive he never cries." Engine.

....."A small child carried a big man." Chair.

....."A boat has only one mast but it has eight covers." White man's rain mat.  
Dorson, 1978. pp.210-213).

This collection is interesting in that the local and familiar are ingeniously used to explain and comment on the new - a sewing machine eats with one tooth, a lantern is unlike a baby - its eye open when he's full and closed when he's empty. McDowell would describe these riddles in terms of a diagram of the relationship between symboliser and symbolised; that is, the familiar relationship of a boat, mast, sails designates an umbrella. (McDowell, p.101).

Children are likely to be familiar with riddles which form a pivot of certain folk and fairy tales. The neck riddle is a term coined by Taylor ..... 'The neck riddle narrates an event known only to the poser of the riddle. By this setting an unsolvable puzzle the poser, who is condemned to death, hopes to save his neck.' (Taylor, p.1). This definition leads one to wonder whether Taylor would class the Sphinx riddle as one such, for despite the corpses of those who failed to solve it and the suicide of the Sphinx when Oedipus answered correctly, the riddle itself is solvable - it's a descriptive metaphor couched in interrogative routine describing the ages of man in terms of an animal. Rumplestiltskin is an example of a neck riddle quoted in Zickery Zan. I wonder how they would classify other folk stories children today are likely to hear. Grimm's story 'The Riddle' involves a beautiful and wealthy princess who offers to marry any man who can set her an unsolvable riddle, but..... If she solves it the riddler loses his head. The hero's riddle is based on experience of seeing a raven eat poisoned horseflesh and when he is caught and turned into raven pie, in turn kills twelve robbers. The riddle is posed ..... 'One slew none, and yet slew twelve.' (The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales, p. 128). A similar, although more involved tale appears in the Attic Tales of Joseph Jacob. Although the riddle in these cases is based on the individual experience of the hero/riddler it would be possible to offer a fair solution of an animal ingesting poison and in turn being devoured, thus



causing twelve, or any other number of deaths. The Czechoslovakian tale, 'Clever Marika', relies on a series of riddles before a satisfying happy ending ensues - although not matters of life and death, the wealth and happiness of the protagonists is dependent on the successful solution of the riddles. (Arbuthnot, p.147). In my fieldwork, primary school children didn't consider Rumplestiltskin or Tom-Tit-Toe to be riddles because the riddle was unsolvable - 'just another fairy story'.

Another category is defined by McNeil as the conundrum. It relies on double homonyms. Sutton-Smith classes them as multiple classifications an example being -

'What's the difference between a prince and a ball?'  
One is heir to the throne and the other is thrown in the air!

McNeil also mentions the Wellerism which seems to rely on the use of idiom out of its normal context and is usually posed as 'What did .... say to ....?' An example being -

'What did the rug say to the floor?'  
I've got you covered?

A glance at the riddles in the S.E.C.S. Folklore Collection showed that most were collected in the seventies, and there were few in the 'true riddle' category. Topicality was a feature such as -

'Why are Abba so cool?'  
Because they have lots of fans. (Ringwood, 1977) and

'What do Abba have on toast?'                      Honey, honey, honey. (Noble Park,  
1977)

What did Superman do when he ran out of cigarettes? He changed to Kent.  
(Wonga Park, 1977).

and many variations of the riddle parody question -

'Why did the chicken cross the road?'  
Because it couldn't go under.

Riddle and joke books are popular in primary school and municipal libraries. One such, How Do You Make an Elephant Laugh? and 669 Other Zany Riddles, by Joseph Rosenbloom, features more of the question and punch line variety than the true riddle. The answer to the title riddle is 'tickle its ivories'; a pun on cliché. Other examples are -

'What cuts lawn, and gives milk?'  
A Lawn Moo-er.

'What do you call a riot at the post office?'  
Stampede.

'How can you tell which end of a worm is its head?'  
Tickle it in the middle and see which end laughs.

None of the conform to the metaphoric description and confusing element or block of the true riddle. The first two rely on onomatopoeia and homonym pun. Also relying on idiomatic pun is-

'When is a man like a suit of clothes?'  
When his tongue has a coat and his breath comes in short pants.

Although this example almost fits the double homonym criteria of the conundrum (Rosenbloom).



In investigating children's riddling, cognizance must be taken of the child's competence in her use and understanding of language. For instance, a child may comprehend that a riddle is couched in question and answer form but intricacies of metaphor and the one line joking question may be outside her comprehension. However, in order to participate in a riddling session she will pose a question and feel assured that her own arbitrary answer constitutes a riddle. Sutton-Smith proposes two categories, very closely related to include some of these early attempts. His type Preriddles involves a puzzling question with an arbitrary answer. His example -

'Why did the man chop down the chimney?'  
He needed the bricks;

and his second type he calls a Riddle Parody, that is a question to which the answer is quite straightforward, such as -

'Why did the chicken cross the road?'  
To get to the other side,

or a 'puzzle masquerading as a riddle' as in

'How much dirt in a hole 3 by 3 feet?'  
None.

The difference between the two is the incongruous answer in the first and the straightforward and therefore unexpected answer in the riddle parody (Sutton-Smith, pp.3-5).

In my field work both these types appeared quite frequently but I would like to modify these classifications so that the pre-riddle encompasses transactions which employ the interrogative technique and supply an incongruous or almost unrelated arbitrary answer and also those which confuse idiom or known riddles indicating some degree of misunderstanding.

An example of the first transaction is -

'Why do birds lay eggs?'  
To make them real strong. (Girl aged 6)

and the second,

'Why did the skeleton go to the ball?'  
Because he had no guts. (Boy aged 6)

However these confusions are not confined to the younger children as a fourteen year old girl in Cairns asked -

'Why don't Abo's call their fathers Daddy?'  
Because they're all bastards.

Reversing the words 'father' and 'daddy' is more relevant to the intended meaning of the riddle.

### *"Why did the duck cross the road?"*

A particularly popular category I found was one I should label 'Parody on the Riddle', that is, taking a routine that is well known in riddling sessions and using it as the basis of a new routine. Since the prestige and power of the riddler is consequent on his control of the riddle solutions, new variants on old favourites are necessary. Although seen by Sutton-Smith and McDowell as a pre-riddle in terms of structure, in content the chicken crossing the road is used by children to produce new arbitrary solutions and solutions involving idiomatic puns.

'Why did the dinosaur cross the road?'

Because the chicken hadn't been invented yet. (Girl aged 10 and Boy aged 8)

and 'Why did the duck cross the road?'

Because it thought it was a chicken. (Girl aged 7)

The conundrum of the crocodile and the baby was changed to suit the needs of the Aboriginal riddles in Cairns and the old 'What's black and white and red all over?' had newer solutions such as a sunburnt nun and Collingwood football player with a bloody nose. A pun or idiom or cliché produces

'Why did the chicken have a knife in one hand and a gun in the other?'

Because he wanted to shoot across the road and cut around the corner.  
(Boy aged 8)

A parody of a true riddle becomes a vehicle  
for a one line racist laugh in -

'What has a head but  
cannot think?'

An Abo.

(Boy approx 8, Cairns)

According to these criteria I  
found 18 pre-riddles and 15 parodies  
of the riddle in my total collection  
of 83 riddles.

But by far the largest category was that  
using the various forms of the pun.  
They were topical -

'Why is Johnny Farnham  
so cool?'

Because he's got lots of fans.

familiar in subject,

'Why did the jelly bean go  
to school?'

He wanted to be a smartie.

locally racist,

'Why do Australians throw their  
scraps in the gutter?'

So Viets. can have breakfast in bed.  
(in Doncaster)

So Abos. can have breakfast in bed.  
(in Cairns)

It was interesting that this one and the racist  
riddle about glass garbage bins appeared in areas as  
far apart as Melbourne and Cairns. However, my 23 year  
old son remembers the 'glass garbage can' from his Doncaster primary  
school days which says something about continuity. As does the TOE truck,



TOW truck, which appears in the S.E.C.S. 1977 Collection. The enjoyment of the undisputed power of the riddler was evident when children expressed extreme disappointment if I guessed their riddles, or else they quickly invented another answer such as -

Riddler: What do you get when you cross a lemon and a cat?  
Riddlee: Lemon Chicken?  
Riddler: No. Lemon Kitten. You know, Chinese food for kids.

Riddles, Like jokes, allow conventionally taboo subjects and attitudes a degree of acceptable social expression. Of the five jokes offered in the playground, four were of bathroom humour., Classing the particularly racist one liners as riddles rather than jokes seemed to countenance their social acceptability.

There is both continuity and change in children's riddling today. The true riddles are old favourites, there is parody of old riddles with sharp new answers, present day idiom and cliché are food for the riddler.

'Why do birds fly south?'  
Because it's too far to walk'

in Doncaster, Australia, it becomes

'Why do Koalas carry their babies on their backs?'  
Because it's too hard to get prams up a tree.

Although few of the riddles I collected would find a place in Archer Taylor's collection, their variety, topicality and the enthusiasm with which they were offered indicate a continuing role for riddles in children's folklore.

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## Toys of the World

THE EMBASSIES EXHIBITION AT THE HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA

by Gwenda Davey

Every year during the Canberra Festival, **The Embassies Exhibition** displays exhibits supplied by a number of Embassies and High Commissions "to reflect the international character contributed by the diplomatic missions residing in Canberra and [to highlight] the significant role they play in enriching the cultural life of our City"

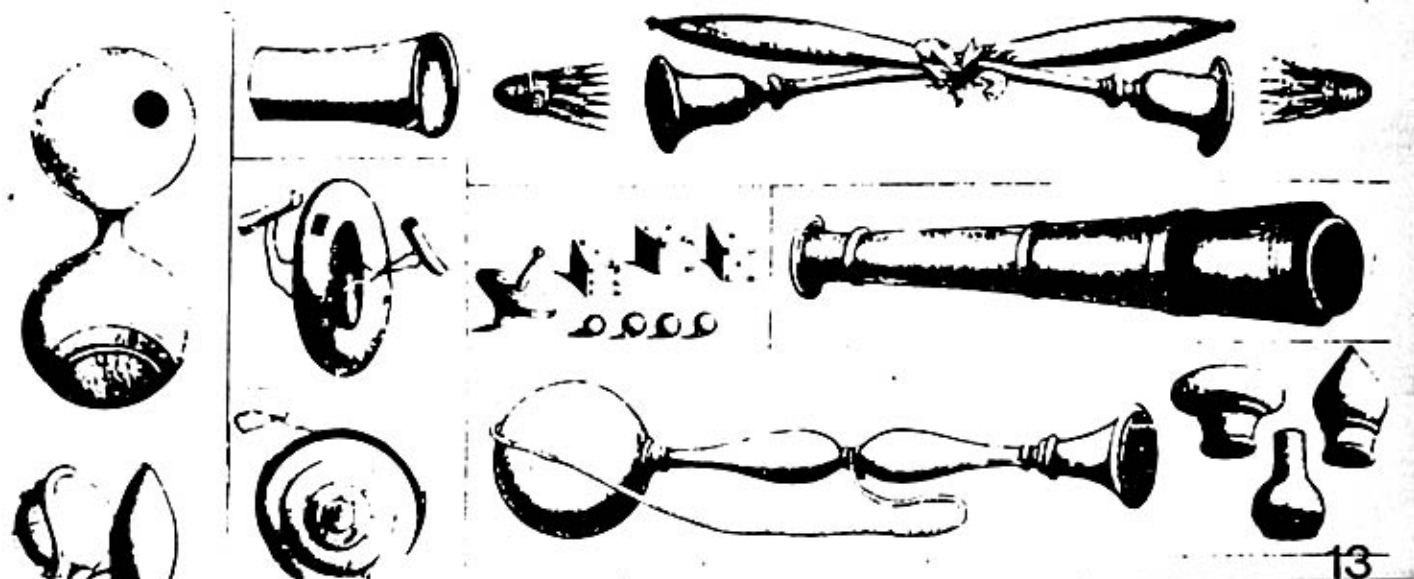
The Exhibition takes a different theme every year, and for 1989 the theme was Toys of the World. From March 11th to 20th, the foyer of the High Court displayed children's toys, many of which were brought specially to Canberra for the Exhibition. Forty-two countries were represented, many by folk toys of great interest.

From Argentina to Zambia ... Some of the items were games made by adults using traditional or local materials, such as the Argentinian taba, a cow's bone with a bronze side and a plated one. The bronze side is the 'good' side and the plated one the 'bad'. The Laotian game of marklovai is played with a hollow ball made from a vine, and an Indonesian board game called congklak is played with stones, shells, seeds or dried beans which are placed in hollows carved out of a log of wood - or in shallow plastic cups!

Some of the Embassies provided well-known manufactured toys such as Lego blocks from Denmark and wooden toys from Finland, Germany and Sweden, but these were of far less interest than some of the unusual homemade toys such as those made by children in South Africa and Kenya. The wire car, handmade by a young black South African, was made from 'ordinary fencing wire, snuff boxes and aerosol tins' - an astonishing feat of dexterity and inventiveness. The Kenyan animals and doll were made by children from banana leaves, and these home-made toys were the most interesting of a wide range of dolls, puppets and animal figures. Burma, Mexico, the Philippines and Sri Lanka also provided toys of this type.

By contrast to the many toys of different kinds, Malta supplied some splendid drawings by school children of their traditional games such as Bocci (marbles), Circu (hoop), Pupi (dolls), Tigiega l-Ghamja (Blind Man's Buff) and Passiu (hopscotch).

The Australian Children's Folklore Collection has written to many of the diplomatic missions represented in the 1989 Embassies Exhibition, and it is hoped to arrange a display in Melbourne in December.



# Children's Recitations

by Ruth Crow

Ruth Crow, born in Ballarat in 1916, grew up at a time when children were often expected to 'perform' before admiring adults; to sing, dance and recite. The poems below are some of those she learnt 'at my mother's knee', and recited at children's parties.

Her memory of some of the poems is incomplete. Readers might like to supply the missing lines and also send us examples of their own youthful 'performances'.

## Pa's Darling

'I wish I were a boy', said little Anne.  
'Oh don't say that!' said Ma,  
'What was it that Pa said last night?'  
'My own little darling has been here',  
'I know for the room is so bright.'

## Little Boy Blue and Little Bo-peep

Little Boy Blue was weeping out in the fields alone.  
For Little Bo-peep who he loved so well, away to Court had flown.  
With powder and pearls and patches and bows on each dainty shoe  
She was queen of them all as she danced in the hall,  
Forgetting her Little Boy Blue.

But at night when her heart was aching, her jewels she laid aside.  
She passed through the palace weeping into the dark night tide.  
THERE stood her true love awaiting. THERE stood her Little Boy Blue.  
And she CRIED 'Take me home I am wanting nobody else but YOU!'

## Ten Little Steps and Stairs

(I cannot remember all the words but it was my favourite poem. When I recited it the adults used to cry. I think it was written by the Australian Irish priest who wrote the stories in 'Around the Bourrie Log'.)

There were ten little steps and stairs  
(Missing a line or lines here)  
Coming in through the kitchen door  
With the vine like pattern of their naked feet  
Marking the polished floor.  
(Lines I can't recall)  
In their Home made frocks and Sunday suits.  
Up through the church with their squeaky boots  
While the folk went astray in their prayers.  
There were ten little steps and stairs

There were ten little steps and stairs.  
But the years have shuffled them all about  
Has made them thin and straightened them out

With the weight of a hundred cares  
With a gap in the line and break. Ah well,  
There were ten little steps and stairs.

#### A Farmer's Life

(This was my encore recitation)

It's hard to be a farmer, I think I ought to know.  
The folks in our house laugh and laugh, but do you think it fun?  
I planted a whole handful of feathers and not a chicken, not one!



## *Collecting Children's Folklore at the Children's Museum of Victoria, December 1988 - June 1989.*

by Heather Russell

Heather Russell was a consultant and archivist at the 'You're It' Exhibition of the Children's Museum of Victoria. She is the author of *Play and Friendships in a Multi-cultural Playground*.

In December 1989, the Children's Museum's second major exhibition 'You're It: an exhibition of children's traditional games', opened at the Museum of Victoria. Thanks to funding support from the Myer Foundation, I was employed to work within the Museum as archivist or collector, gathering children's traditional lore and games from Museum visitors as they explored the exhibition.

The 'You're It' exhibition demonstrated the continuity and antiquity of many traditional children's games, and the remarkable universality of children's games. Marbles, Hopscotch, String Games, Knucklebones, Tops and simple home-made toys were the central games featured in the exhibition. Visitors were encouraged to play these games - the versions they knew - and to learn variations from other cultures.

The 'You're It' exhibition was a perfect 'collecting' opportunity. Thousands of people of different ages and cultural backgrounds visited the exhibition, and, in the case of adults, were inspired and delighted to relive childhood memories of playground games. Children were impressed that here was an exhibition in the Museum where they were experts - they had the knowledge and the expertise

which we adults (myself and six other 'explainers' who were employed to help visitors explore the exhibition, and play the games) wanted to know about. This reversal of the flow of information - from child to adult- contributed significantly to many children's appreciation and enjoyment of the exhibition.

## Pencil and Paper collecting.

### 1. Visitors 'collect themselves'

Each different area (the Marbles area, the Jacks area, etc) had 'collection sheets' at a 'collecting point' where children and adults could sit and write their own versions of the games. Apart from lots of scribbles from energetic pre-school children, this form of collecting worked exceptionally well. With very little prompting, many many children and adults took the opportunity to write down how they played these traditional games.



The advantages of this method of collecting are obvious when you look at the number of collection sheets that were filled in each day. One professional collector or archivist could never have collected as much material. However there were disadvantages as well.

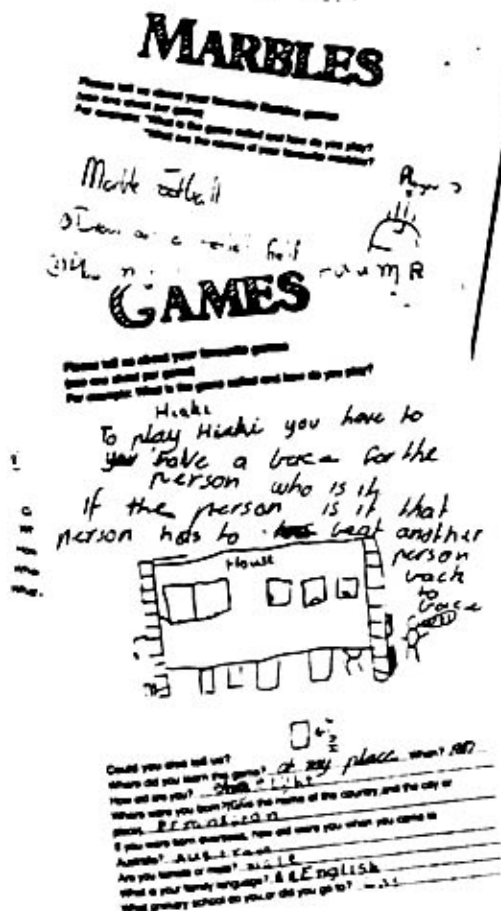
Firstly, the information was often not clear enough or detailed enough to get an accurate picture of the game. As a result, it would be difficult to play some of the games as they were described by the informants themselves.

Secondly, within the context of the Museum, it was difficult to give visitors (children and adults) the 'permission' to write rude or vulgar rhymes, so we probably have a sanitised collection, particularly of verbal lore, than is representative of the lore in the playground.

Thirdly, visitors to the Museum, were heavily influenced by the four or five games that were featured as part of the 'You're It' exhibition. Whilst a general 'Games' sheet was made available for people to write about other games such as ball games, chasey games, elastics, etc., there were fewer descriptions of these than of the featured games. So unlike Dorothy Howard's Australian children's folklore back in 1954-55, based on her collection of 'Checklist of Australian Children's Playground Games', the current collection from the Children's Museum will not be as representative of current playground practices.

### 2. Collecting by the archivist.

As the archivist employed to co-ordinate the collecting process, I spent most of my time collecting from people who were intently playing a particular game and appeared to have some expertise. I collected much information on this personal basis, with the aim of extracting as much detail as possible. This was very time consuming, but extremely rewarding because of the extra contextual, background information that was documented. For example, an Argentinian man described in minute detail how he played Jacks when he was a boy - and was still very proud of his expertise at the game. I inquired if





he had many sisters (assuming that Jacks was a girls' game) only to find that he went to an all boys' boarding school! In Argentina, Jacks is a boys' game!

Whenever possible, I chose to talk to people from non-English speaking backgrounds - people whom I thought might find it difficult to fill in the collection sheets. Much information was collected this way that would not otherwise have been documented.

### 3. Collecting in schools: the Outreach program.

The 'collect yourself' method of collecting was carried on as part of the Children's Museum's 'Outreach' program. The 'You're It' exhibition went to various schools in Melbourne's outer suburbs, and again the 'collecting' function of the exhibition took on a high profile - either as part of the visit, or as a follow-up project. In one school, approximately three hundred children were given the opportunity to fill in a collection sheet of their choice - thus providing us with an enormous body of information on current game practices, language, rhymes, etc.

Some of the same collecting problems occurred there as in the Museum. Asking Primary School children to write down the rules of their favourite game is a difficult language and writing exercise. Grade three to six attempted the task with varying degrees of success, and again, it would be difficult to play some of the games from the children's descriptions. However one of the advantages of collecting at schools was that children were not as heavily influenced by the context of the 'You're It' exhibition, and consequently wrote about a much broader range of playground games. It was also easier to give children permission to write down rude rhymes and jokes, and children took advantage of this freedom to express their 'underground' lore (as long as the teachers were not allowed to look!) One example is a contemporary parody of the theme song of the television program 'Playschool'

There's a bear in there,  
On an electric chair.  
There's people with Aids  
and hand grenades.  
Open wide,  
Commit suicide,  
It's Playschooll

Collecting in the more appropriate context of the schools themselves, means that we are building up a list of games that children currently play at recess and lunchtime. In many cases, we have descriptions of games complete with children's own drawings and diagrams, and their own expressions and comments about their play lore.

### Audio recording.

Both within the Museum, and at schools, the use of a portable professional Walkman recorder was invaluable for recording children's verbal lore. I hesitated to use it for anything else, (e.g. descriptions of games) because of the short life span of cassettes (only seven to eight years, I believe), and the extra time involved in transcribing material off the tape or writing out contents lists.

### Video and still photography.

In both locations the use of video and still photography was minimal, but could have been very effective if used as an adjunct to the 'paper and pencil' collecting method.

## The Children's Museum Collection of Children's Folklore

The Children's Museum Collection consists of all the collection sheets described above. The Collection is part of the Australian Children's Folklore Archive and is on public access at the University of Melbourne Archives, Barry Street, Carlton. Any inquiries about the collection should be directed to June Factor at the Australian Centre.



## *Children's Vernacular Speech - A Nation-Wide Study*

by June Factor

Part of my work at the Australian Centre at Melbourne University involved the preparation of a book - possibly a dictionary - exploring the rich but largely unrecorded territory of Australian children's colloquial speech: their expressions of disgust and pleasure, the names given to play objects such as marbles, special words used in games, and so on.

A great deal of material exists in the Australian Children's Folklore Collection, but as that archive is not fully representative of children's colloquial speech across Australia (as its contents derive largely from the south-eastern corner of the country), it is hoped to establish a nation-wide network of collectors of children's vernacular speech.

Collectors - to be known as C.L.I.s (Children's Language Investigators) - will be sought across the continent, from both sexes, all classes, and all ages. A 'certificate' will be provided to all 'accredited' C.L.I.s (and perhaps a badge too, especially for the children), and words, phrases and expressions remembered, used by the C.L.I. or collected from others will be written on 15cm x 10cm cards (where possible) and sent to me at the Australian Centre.

There the information will be catalogued, typed onto a computer, cross-referenced, and generally help to provide an ever-growing resource for our understanding of children's language use, social interaction, and the linguistic permutations of their play and friendship subculture. It will also be possible to compare children's colloquial verbal practices with those of adults - for example, as recorded in the Macquarie and Australian National University dictionaries, and in Sydney Baker's The Australian Language.

Many readers of the A.C.F.N. may be interested in becoming C.L.I.s. If so, please write to me at the Australian Centre (University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3052), and I will send you further information. In the meantime, here are some examples already collected.

snot blocks	(vanilla slices)
alleys	(marbles - general term)
tom bowler	(special large marble)
double dink	(carry another person on a bike)
little lunch	(recess in Queensland)
peach on	(to report someone, dob them in)
dubs	(corrugated iron toilets, S.A.)

# Traditional Games in an Outreach Program

by Cathy Hope.

Coomoora, one of Victoria's largest primary schools, provided a unique opportunity for The Children's Museum of Victoria in 1989 to work closely with 680 children from 50 nationalities. This school is located in the Melbourne suburb of Springvale.

Barry McIntosh, Principal of Coomoora Primary School, was approached while on yard duty by several highly-motivated children. They had seen 'You're It' (The Children's Museum exhibition of traditional play) on 'Behind The News', a television program for schools, and were determined to visit the exhibition. They recognised their games on television and wanted to try new string games, other variations of Jacks (Knucklebones), have a go at spinning tops, play Marbles and much more.

It just happened that at that very time, the Children's Museum was on the lookout for a school in which to conduct a pilot study on the feasibility of taking 'You're It' out to schools. Coomoora welcomed the opportunity and approved of the concept of an Outreach Program. One teacher commented:

*I think it's an excellent idea especially for schools that are a fair way away from the museum and can't afford to have an excursion. It's good for the museum people to come out and demonstrate what the kids can do in their own playground. It's more realistic for the kids and I think it will have a more lasting impression on them, to have those people out there showing them what to do, where they play, and also it would cut out a lot of travelling time for the schools.*

On March 20th, 1989, the 'You're It' team from the Children's Museum ventured out to Coomoora Primary School armed with loads of marbles, spinning tops, real knucklebone 'Jacks', skipping ropes, many metres of elastic for 'Elastics', chalk for Hopscotch and equipment for the South East Asian games *Danh Dua*, *O'Tedama* and *Choi Dai*. We took our exhibition 'You're It' to the most perfect venue - the real playground, the children's territory. Barbi Wels of the 'You're It' team wrote in her report:

*The playground at lunchtime was fantastic! The kids enthusiasm was infectious and I had the sense of being in the middle of something really powerful and special. It was great to see children of all ages and backgrounds being brought together through their common enthusiasm.*

A frantic marbles craze began soon after 'You're It' visited Coomoora Primary School. A survey conducted on April, 17th 1989 indicated that 243 children and 4 teachers had been engaged in the marbles games they call 'Rebounds'. Preps to Year 7, 115 girls and 128 boys with a wide range of cultural backgrounds joined in a massive marketing activity. The Year 7's came from a neighbouring high school at lunchtime.

Before school and during every recess and lunch hour, the sounds of bartering and cries of advertised odds could be heard from the sellers as they sat, legs astride, displaying their marbles in front of them. 'Cat's Eyes', 'Bird's Eggs', 'Beach Balls', 'Pizzas', 'Oily's', 'Pearlies', 'Tommies', 'Galaxies' of many hues were offered. Some were bargains, specials of the day, others, obviously more prized by the marbles marketeers, tempted many buyers. Both buyers and sellers were involved in risk taking. Buyers keenly moved from seller to seller bustling past each other seeking the best deal.

This frenzy of marbles swapping and playing has been operating since Easter and three months later continues to attract the players. Intrigued teachers relate:

At one stage you could not walk from one building to another without tripping over children. They were packed as closely as you could get them along the covered way and on the perimeter of the quadrangle. It's wonderful to see it. I appreciated the whole thing, the fact of the mixing, the learning, the bigs ones getting involved with the little ones. The noise was incredible. It didn't worry anyone. Yard duty was easy. There was no-one on the oval except for a little band playing football. Girls and boys are both playing it, big and little, young and old. It's right through the school. Marbles hits here every year.

You'd think with all those children, with a huge group of them playing Marbles, that you'd have a few blues. Hardly any of that has gone on and it's really good because it's got boys and girls, children of different nationalities, different ages, all playing together. It's something they all enjoy. Marbles is something you don't have to be really sporty for to be good at playing. It crosses a lot of ability barriers, age and sex stereotypes barriers. Yes, especially for some of the Asian children, who knew some of the games the Children's Museum brought out, they relate to those very well and teach the other children how to play. I think it's really helped them socially too.

The School Cleaner comments also:

*It really sounds like a market out there;  
'Rebound, Rebound, get your Rebound here!'  
That's what they call out. They are all competing with each other and the children running around are looking for the best marbles.*

When I asked an eleven-year-old boy if he was pleased with our visit he enthusiastically replied:

*Yea! There was no marbles for ages until you came, and then everybody one by one just started bringing their marbles, then the craze started.*

Teachers were keen to tell us of the changes they had noticed in the playground since our visit:

*It really has given the children something else to do in the playground. It's really interesting in this school to see both sexes playing together because our school has been very traditional with sport. It is really difficult to change ideas about girls' sports and boys' sports. Many are very sexist in their attitude to their sport, so it's really very interesting to see them playing together.*

*The two things that have really taken off since you came are Marbles and Elastics.*

*It's amazing how right from Grades 2 - 6 the children have really enjoyed the activities right through all the different age levels. Even the Preps and Grade 1s are in there having a go. Actually it would be a really good cross-age tutoring activity for an older grade and a young grade to meet for 1/2 hour a week and have older children teaching the younger children the various games.*

*Walking round the playground we'd find mixed groups playing them because they hadn't been classified in their minds as being a girls' game or a boys' game. A while ago the marbles were definitely the boys' territory and skipping ropes the girls'. With the new elastics you'd find a big group of boys and girls playing. A lot of these new games you have introduced - all of them would be playing them e.g. strings. That's one big difference. We have had a lot of visits from high school kids coming over to play. They have never done that until now.*



*It generated a lot of interest from kids with different migrant backgrounds. As soon as they recognised some of the games they said 'Oh yes, we used to do that'.*

*"Before you came none of the kids from Asia had volunteered any stories to me about what it was like in the camps....."*

*They brought their games along and they taught other kids how to make the equipment e.g. for Elastics using rubber bands threaded together. A lot of the kids have made those. A lot of the kids have learnt new games with Marbles, some that are quite different, especially ideas from Asian countries. Before you came none of the kids from Asia had volunteered any stories to me about what it was like in the camps in Thailand, etc. All of a sudden it was 'This is what we used to play in the camps in Thailand.' 'We had only these.' 'We only used chopsticks and a ball\*', 'So that's the way I played this game and I had to sit there and play while mum was selling food in the market to try and get us some money'.*

*They felt really good because they were actually in a position to show somebody something else that they were better at. There weren't just the differences in these games. There were a lot a similarities discovered. That kids play the same games like Marbles in many parts of the world. They began to swap a lot of ideas e.g. How we played Marbles in Asia, etc. The kids were really receptive to each other.*

It was important to gauge the feelings of the children and seek their impressions of our intervention into their playground practices.

#### *50 Nationalities of Origin Represented at Coomoora Primary School*

Holland	New Zealand
Malta	Papua New Guinea
England	Mauritius
Ireland	Kenya
Northern Ireland	Poland
Scotland	Singapore
Sri Lanka	Egypt
India	Macedonia
Greece	Fiji
Lebanon	Thailand
Seychelles	Austria
Cyprus	Iraq
Vietnam	Malaysia
South Africa	U.S.A.
Yugoslavia	Chile
Portugal	Pakistan
Cook Islands	Spain
Cambodia	Bethlehem, West Jordan.
China	Afghanistan
Croatia	Ethiopia
Turkey	Italy
Philippines	Nepal
Norway	Argentina
West Germany	Australia
Indonesia	Finland

\* Vietnamese game 'Danh Dua'

Cathy Hope Interviewing Junior Leaders at Coomoora School.  
Grade six Boys and Girls.

Cathy Hope is the Educational Officer of The Children's Museum of Victoria at The Museum of Victoria, Swanston Street, Melbourne. She is author of Themes from the Playground, Nelson, Melbourne: (1983).

Cathy: *What is the best thing that has happened since we came?*

Boy: *Kids seem to become better friends. Girls and boys seem to muck around a lot more together. It's alright. We have less fights because everyone is being amused.*

Girl: *People seem to co-operate more. Like if someone drops a marble most people will give it back. I mean some people still don't but most do.*

Cathy: *So traditional games have been a good thing for your school.*

Boy: *Oh Yeah! There's no fights at all lately because we have all been playing Marbles and you can't get into a fight 'cause you are having fun. It's good.*

Cathy: *How did this Marbles craze start up?*

Boy: *Because you came!*

Girl: *Elastics was going before that but now they have really got into it.*

Cathy: *How did you feel after our visit about games?*

Boy: *That there was more in life with games. If you are bored you can just go and get something to play.*

Boy: *String games you can just make if you are bored. They showed us some simple games that you can just do if you have nothing to do.*

Cathy: *What did you like about the traditional games we showed you?*

Girl: *They're easy - anyone can play them, not just older children. The little ones can play as well and they are just so easy to play.*

Cathy: *Have you noticed any children helping others with these games?*

Boys: *Not really. They just come up and play. The little ones learn by watching people. Sometimes we help them.*

By promoting the awareness of the importance of traditional games and folklore The Children's Museum is nurturing the culture of children.



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### A note to all subscribers - and friends of subscribers

Alas, the precious file containing our subscribers' names and addresses has been a casualty of the shift from the School of Early Childhood Studies to the Australian Centre and the University of Melbourne Archives. Despite repeated searches it remains lost, lost, lost. . . .

As a result, it is possible that a number of subscribers will not receive this issue of the A.C.F.N. We have retrieved most names and addresses, but some are still missing. If you know of anyone whom you think should have received a copy (and this applies to institutions as well as individuals), we would be grateful if you could contact us.

Is there a proverb, or a children's rhyme, which fits the editors' mortification at such an unwarranted interruption to our (mostly) orderly bi-annual publication schedule?

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Readers will note that from this issue the price of the A.C.F.N. has risen slightly. This is our first price increase for a number of years, and is necessitated by the general rise in costs associated with the production of the Newsletter

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### *Books of Interest, soon to be Published in Australia-*

Heather Russell, Coming, Ready or Not: Australian Children's Games, O.U.P. (in Press)

Gwenda Davey, Snug as a Bug in a Rug: Family Sayings and Rhymes, O.U.P. (in press).

June Factor, Ladies and Jellyspoons: Australian Children's Jokes and Riddles, Penguin (September, 1989)

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# AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE COLLECTION

associated with

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES  
AND  
THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

1989

Director: Dr June Factor

*The Australian Children's Folklore Collection* is housed in the University of Melbourne Archives. The Index to the collection uses the following coloured card system:

- white - written or printed material
- yellow - photographs
- \* green - audio tapes and records
- blue - artefacts
- \* pink - video and film
- + orange - student field work and essays

Books and journals associated with the Collection are housed in the Library of the School of Early Childhood Studies, Institute of Education, The University of Melbourne, Madden Grove, Kew, 3101.

*Australian Children's Folklore Publications* operates in association with the Collection. Publications include the *Australian Children's Folklore Newsletter*, produced twice yearly. (For further information, contact Dr Factor.)

All material in the Collection is available for public inspection and for research purposes. Whenever practicable, material from the Collection will be available for loan to appropriate bodies such as museums and libraries.

*The Australian Children's Folklore Collection* classifies children's folklore as either folklore of children, or folklore for and about children, depending on whether the main persons transmitting the lore are children or adults. Folklore of children consists largely of playground lore, such as rhymes, games, taunts, jokes and riddles. Folklore for and about children consists of those traditional songs, games, finger plays, stories, proverbs and sayings that are passed on informally by adults.

\* Audio, video and film material is at present housed in the Audio-Visual section of the library of the School of Early Childhood Development, Institute of Education.

+ Selected from work produced by undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Institute of Early Childhood Development, Melbourne, 1973-1988.



## FOLKLORE OF CHILDREN

### 1. Playground Rhymes

Over 10,000 items recorded on cards, collected mainly in primary schools from 1971 onwards. These items are classified under the following headings:

- skipping - games and rhymes
- clapping - games and rhymes
- ball bouncing - games and rhymes
- counting out - rhymes
- autograph album entries
- war cries
- taunts and insults
- charms and divinations
- games (those that do not fit under any other category)
- riddles
- parodies - hymns and carols
  - advertising
  - nursery rhymes
  - popular songs
- jokes - story telling jokes
  - knock knock jokes
  - practical jokes (involving some physical response from joker or recipient)
  - verbal tricks
- rhymes for fun - greetings
  - limericks
  - nonsense (both in meaning and syntax)
  - verbal substitution
  - amusement only (rhymes that do not fit under any other category)

### 2. Games of the Past

A small collection of adult recollections of childhood games and pastimes.

### 3. The Dorothy Howard Collection

*The Dorothy Howard Collection* includes all the original documents and field-work collected by Dr Dorothy Howard during her ten months research in Australia as an American Fulbright Scholar in 1954-55. Dr Howard was attached to the Education Faculty at the University of Melbourne and some of this material was kindly donated by that Faculty. The rest comes from Dr Howard herself.

*The Dorothy Howard Collection* contains original notes and descriptions of some 1,000 games from all over Australia, in addition to playground rhymes, taunts and jokes, and a file of play language and terminology. The Collection also includes a number of photographs, play artefacts and memorabilia.

*The Dorothy Howard Collection* also contains all Dr Howard's monographs written and published on Australian children's folklore as a result of her research, as well as other of her publications.

#### 4. Debney Meadows - The Multi-cultural Playground

This project is an ethnographic study of the playground at Debney Meadows Primary School - a multi-cultural, inner suburban primary school in Melbourne. The study, carried out from May to December 1984, documents the playground life, games, rhymes and informal activities of children during recess and lunchtime. The study contains the fieldwork collected during the project, including games, jokes, riddles; a 'playground diary'; photographs and a video of playground activities; and some 50 interviews with children from different cultural backgrounds talking about their friendship networks and play activities (on tape and transcribed). The report on this project, *Play and Friendships in a Multi-Cultural Playground*, by Heather Russell, is available from *Australian Children's Folklore Publications*, School of Early Childhood Studies, Institute of Education, University of Melbourne.

#### 5. Children's Museum Collection

Playground games and rhymes collected from visitors to the "You're It: Children's Traditional Play" Exhibition at the Children's Museum of Victoria, December 1988 to March 1989. Some material was also collected from children at Victorian primary schools as part of the Children's Museum Outreach Programme. The collection includes descriptions of Hopscotch, Jacks, Marbles and many other games; a large collection of rhymes; and details and photographs of children's collections (eg. football cards).

### FOLKLORE FOR AND ABOUT CHILDREN

#### 1. The Multi-cultural Cassette Series: Original Field Recordings

Approximately 500 items of folklore told to children by adults, on cassette tape only. Collected by Gwenda Davey and Norm O'Connor, mainly in 1976 and 1977. All the material is indexed according to the Language, Category, Informant and Title of each item. This index is separate from the main folklore index.

Languages include:

Arabic, Dutch, English, Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Serbian/Croatian, Spanish and Turkish.

Categories classified are:

Baby play, ball bouncing, circle games and rhymes, clapping, counting, counting out, finger plays, games, lullabies, music, rhymes and poems, riddles, songs and stories.

NOTE: Material from these recordings was selected and edited into the *Multi-Cultural Cassette Series*: 26 cassettes in Italian, Greek, Spanish, Turkish, Serbian/Croatian, Macedonian, Arabic and English plus a manual in English. The material in the four Italian and Greek cassettes was transcribed into booklet form. *The Multi-Cultural Cassette Series* is held in the library at the School of Early Childhood Studies, Institute of Education, University of Melbourne.

## 2. The AFC (Australian Folklore for Children) Project

The Australian Folklore for Children Project represents a recent addition to the Australian Children's Folklore Collection. Material for the archive is currently being collected from as wide a network of communities as possible (both English and non-English speaking). The material, documented on A4 sheets, gives lists of games, songs, finger-plays, rhymes, etc. that adults currently use with children. Each informant has listed his/her repertoire of folklore in current use, and has written down the words and/or instructions to at least one of the items in their repertoire. The material is being collected Australia-wide.

Languages to date:

Afrikaans, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, English, Fijian, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Latvian, Lebanese, Lithuanian, Maltese, Nigerian, Norwegian, Polish, Persian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Welsh, Yugoslavian.

Categories classified are:

Songs, rhymes, jokes, stories, games, sayings.

## 3. Old Wives Tales

Tales about birth and pregnancy (in English, although some cross-cultural items are included). The material is recorded on cards.

NOTE : Other non-English material (folklore of, for and about children) both contemporary and archival, is also housed in the Collection, and is catalogued in index by category and by language.



This issue of the ACFN was typed by  
JENINE DAVIDSON and designed and  
illustrated by DON OLIVER.

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