

Play and Folklore

no. 64, October 2015



Play in Paradise: Lord Howe Island

Dorothy Howard in Australia: an addendum

**A new home for the Donne Buck archive
of play and adventure playgrounds**

Establishment of a National Play Collection at Sheffield University

**Exploring Play: the Importance of
Play in Everyday Life – a free online course**

**National PLAY and PLAYwork
conference, Melbourne, March 2016**



From the Editors

Play and Folklore no. 64, October 2015

This issue presents the results of an informal research project into play on a small island in the South Pacific – Lord Howe Island. A World Heritage site, Lord Howe Island is well-known for its unique environment, rare species and spectacular beauty, and is a favourite destination for tourists from across the globe. This article explores some of the environmental and social influences on children's play on Lord Howe Island in the past and the present.

We are also delighted to reveal details of the discovery of a 'treasure trove' of archival material relating to US folklorist Dorothy Howard's research into children's folklore in Australia in the 1950s. Among other information, the documents in the archive contain letters which confirm the dates of Dorothy Howard's visits to various parts of Australia and add to our knowledge of her methodology.

There is welcome news about the relocation of two significant UK play collections from the Children's Play Information Service, which lost its funding last year, into new homes at the Victoria and Albert Museum and Sheffield University. Also from Sheffield University is news that a free online course, which looks at play in everyday life, is about to start, and there are details of an Australian Play and Playwork conference, to be held in Melbourne in 2016.

Judy McKinty, June Factor and Gwenda Beed Davey

Play and Folklore

Editors: June Factor, Gwenda Beed

Davey and Judy McKinty

ISSN (printed) 1329-2463 ISSN

(web) 1447-5969

Editorial address: Dr June Factor,
School of Historical and
Philosophical Studies, University
of Melbourne, Victoria 3010,
Australia.

Phone: +61 3 9499 6151

Email: j.factor@unimelb.edu.au

Two issues per year, published
by the Humanities Department,
Museum Victoria.

GPO Box 666, Victoria 3001,
Australia.

Phone: +61 3 8341 7378.

Email: playandfolklore@museum.vic.gov.au

Available on the web at

<http://museumvictoria.com.au/about/books-and-journals/>

[journals/play-and-folklore](http://museumvictoria.com.au/about/books-and-journals/journals/play-and-folklore)

Design Layout: MV Design
Studio and Belinda Smullen
Communication Design.



MUSEUMVICTORIA

Contents

From the Editors	2
Play in Paradise: Lord Howe Island Judy McKinty	4
Dorothy Howard in Australia: an addendum June Factor	14
A new home for the Donne Buck archive of play and adventure playgrounds Alice Sage	25
Establishment of a National Play Collection at Sheffield University Helen Woolley	27
Exploring Play: the Importance of Play in Everyday Life – a free online course	28
National PLAY and PLAYwork conference, Melbourne, March 2016	29



Lord Howe Island. Photographer – Ian Hutton. Source – Ian Hutton.

Play in Paradise: Lord Howe Island

Judy McKinty

Lord Howe Island is a tiny, crescent-shaped landform in the South Pacific, 700 km north-east of Sydney. Measuring just 10 km north to south, it is a little over two kilometres at its widest point.¹ Volcanic in origin, the island has a spectacular landscape, with towering mountains at its southern end, a central, low-lying populated area and steep hillsides to the north.

In 1982 the Lord Howe Island Group was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a site of 'outstanding universal value'.² It has 241 different species of native plants and 168 bird species, many rare and endemic to the island.³ Most of the island is covered by rainforests and palm forest, and offshore it is surrounded by the most southerly coral reef in the world, with marine species that are found nowhere else on Earth.⁴ These unique features make it a place of exceptional natural beauty – a sub-tropical paradise.

People have lived on Lord Howe Island since 1833:⁵ *The earliest European discovery of Lord Howe appears to have been in 1788 by the British. A small permanent settlement was established in the 19th century, subsisting on trade with passing ships. There is no recognized evidence of prior Polynesian or Melanesian discovery or settlement.*⁶

There are around 370 residents on the island, some living there permanently and others for fixed terms – from a few months to several years – depending on their employment. Most of the permanent Islander families are proud descendants of the early settlers who arrived during the mid-1800s.⁷ The Islanders call the transient residents 'itinerants'. Public servants, doctors, teachers and environmental scientists are among the professionals who travel across from the mainland, or from other parts of the globe, to live on the island for a while. Tourism is the main industry, but a limit of 400 visitors at any one time ensures that the island and its residents are never overwhelmed with people, even in the peak season.

The school

The children who live on the island attend the Lord Howe Island Central School, which caters for children from Kindergarten (Kindy) – the first year of school – to Secondary students studying through the Distance Education program. It is the most remote school in New South Wales:

*The isolation that defines this school is unique among isolated schools in New South Wales. The school community is a blending of families whose history is closely linked to the island and families who live and work here for a contracted period of time. Interest in, and support for, the school is very high.*⁸



Playing 'Five Steps in Lava'.

When I visited (September 2015), there were 36 children at the school, 32 in Primary and four in Secondary. The numbers have fluctuated since the first school was opened in 1879, with T.B. Wilson as schoolmaster. After several closures and re-openings, the school was finally established in 1902, with George Kirby as schoolmaster and 16 children attending. Although uniforms were introduced at that time, 'shoes were not a prerequisite',⁹ and this has been the case ever since. Uniforms have come and gone over the years, but on Lord Howe Island most of the children go to school barefoot. In fact, they spend most of their time without shoes – riding their bikes and walking around the island, playing in the bush and helping out at home all happen without shoes.

Rhonda Wilson grew up on the island and started school in Kindy in 1949. Rhonda is a granddaughter of the island's first schoolteacher, Thomas Wilson, and is also a teacher at the school. She remembers having to wear shoes only on special occasions, such as having a school photograph taken or when an important visitor was coming. She also remembers being stung on the foot by a bee – a painful experience that still determines where the children can and cannot play in spring, when the clover is in flower.¹⁰

Influences on play at the school

Play on Lord Howe is influenced by the geography and environment of the island as much as by the play traditions of the children themselves. In the local museum, exhibits tell the story of how the island was created around seven million years ago from the fury of a volcano. At the school, one of the games most frequently played on the play equipment is 'Five Steps in Lava'. The equipment stands in soft sand under a shade cloth covering, and is the place for climbing, digging in the sand, swinging on the monkey-bars and playing group games on different levels. 'Five Steps in Lava' is a 'tips' game – the play equipment is 'safe' and the sand is the 'lava'. One person is 'in', and tries to 'tip' anyone who leaves the safety of the equipment. The players are only allowed to take five steps on the ground. Anyone who takes more than five steps becomes 'in' and helps to 'tip' anyone who lingers too long in the 'lava'. A player who is 'tipped' changes places with the person who is 'in'. This 'tips' game has been played on the equipment since at least 2005, when Charlotte Tofaeono started school. At that time, and for the next six years or so, it was known as 'Two Steps in Lava', and only two steps were allowed off the equipment.¹¹ Charlotte is now in Year Nine at the school.

The current adaptation of the game Charlotte played could be a response by the children to one of the school's distinctive characteristics since its



French Cricket the Lord Howe Island way.



Playing Handball. The children in the foreground are waiting in line.

establishment – the fluctuation in the number of children at the school and the cohort in each year level. The primary school children study in two classrooms – Kindy to Year One, and Years Two to Six. The school population depends on how many children are living on the island and whether they are permanent or temporary residents. At the start of a school year, if there are only three children enrolling in Kindy, this will most likely be the number in that particular group for the whole of their time in primary school, apart from children of ‘itinerant’ families, who might temporarily join the group at different year levels. Also, many children leave the island at Year Five or Six level to study at boarding school on the mainland. When I visited there was only one student, a girl, in Year Six, three boys in Year Five, three boys in Year Four and three girls and a boy in Year Three. The majority of the children were in the younger year levels, and it was these children who were playing ‘Five Steps in Lava’. When Charlotte started primary school there was a larger group of older and bigger children so, in the case of the ‘tips’ game, two long steps would probably have taken them from one piece of equipment to another across the ‘lava’. The current group of younger, smaller children possibly need to take five steps to cover the same distance. Or perhaps someone just decided to have five steps instead of two – adaptation is one of the fundamental processes of children’s play and playlore.

Younger children in school traditionally learn how to play a game from the older children, by watching and learning before trying it out for themselves when they are ready to join in. They, in turn, become the tradition-bearers of the school, passing on their knowledge of the playground to the younger children and shaping the culture of play in the playground.

This process of transmission and sharing requires sufficient numbers of children in the upper and middle primary years – cohorts of boys and girls – to maintain interest in the games and extend the play repertoire of younger children at the school. Charlotte commented that there are games, such as Elastics, that were really popular four or five years ago when she was in upper primary, which are not being played by the children now.¹² It can sometimes be hard to keep traditional playground games going with such a small number of players, and children who come over from the mainland usually find themselves adapting to the games and rules of the island, rather than trying to introduce new ones. I was reminded of who owns the playground while talking with a group of boys about their game of French Cricket. I was describing the version I was familiar with when one of the boys simply said, ‘We prefer to play it our way’.

Ball games

French Cricket the Lord Howe Island way has been shaped by the available playing space within the school grounds. There is a small lawn of natural grass in the centre of the school, with buildings and small gardens on three sides and a dense patch of vegetation with palm trees, bushes and other growth along the other side. Because of the limited open space, the children play the game vertically, rather than horizontally. Any number can play, but players must have good bat and ball skills, so when I visited it was mainly being played by children from Year Two onwards. One person holds a cricket bat in front of him, another player throws the ball – not fast and not bowled, just thrown – and the batter hits the ball straight up into the air. The aim of the game is to get the batter out by catching the ball, but there are a number of rules that dictate how this can be done



Children playing in the school garden.

which give the game an unexpected level of complexity:

- to catch someone out on the full, you're allowed to use two hands
- to catch someone out when the ball has bounced once, you have to use one hand. This is the 'one hand, one bounce' rule.
- to catch someone out when the ball has bounced twice, you have to put your arms together and catch it on your forearms
- to catch someone out when the ball has bounced three times, you have to catch the ball in the crook of your elbow.

There is also a rule that says a player cannot go out on the first hit, which was lucky for me when I was batting. If the ball goes into the trees or up on a walkway roof the children retrieve it and continue playing. The game is played the same way even when they have an opportunity to play on the cricket oval next to the school, which has soft green grass and plenty of open space.

The school's central lawn area where French Cricket is played has not always been so grassy. When Charlotte was in primary school it was mainly hard-packed dirt. After a downpour of rain the ground became muddy and the children would slide around in the mud, and get into 'very big trouble' with the teachers.¹³ Now on rainy days the children play Handball on the large, sealed basketball court, which was covered by a weatherproof roof during the last decade and became a Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA).¹⁴ Everyone at the school simply calls it 'the cola'. Handball is one of the enduring play traditions at the school and perhaps the most popular game. There is always someone playing Handball during play times, perhaps partly

because the court is just outside the Year Two-Six classroom, it has been specially marked-out for the game and is always available. The Handball court is one of the two main playing areas at the school. Handball has been played, with and without a roof, for twenty years or more. The attraction of this game is that anyone can play, it can accommodate a large number of children of mixed ages and has a rapid turn-over of players, so everyone gets a chance to play at least once. When I visited during a heavy downpour there were ten children playing the game and a line-up of at least six children waiting to have a turn.

Like French Cricket, Handball is a game of skill with its own rules and terminology. The top square is the 'Ace' square, followed by the second square, third square, fourth square and so on, depending on how many people are playing. The player in the 'Ace' square serves, and the ball is passed from person to person, in a random order, by bouncing it, but the ball is only allowed to bounce once in a square before it must be returned. If a player miss-hits or the ball bounces more than once he or she is out, and one of the waiting players joins the game. There are a number of terms the children use to describe the different types of 'shots' possible in a game:

- drop shot
- power shot
- treetop shot (bounce really hard)
- underdog drop
- underdog power
- backward shot
- slam shot (hit the ball at the other person).

Calling out 'Poison' saves your spot if you have to leave the game for a short while. If someone hits the ball into your spot when it's 'poison' they're out.

Somewhere in the school sports shed could still be the small bats Charlotte and her friends sometimes used to play Handball. Rather than play with the small, bouncy rubber balls being used now, it became popular back then to play with a tennis ball which had the soft outer covering torn off. They were called 'naked' balls, and there was always competition among the students to see who could be first to get the 'naked' ball at recess time. Then there was another ball the students named 'Eggy'. 'Eggy' was one-of-a-kind, a mistake in the delivery of a batch of sports equipment and therefore in great demand. Roughly the size of a basketball, 'Eggy' was blue and very, very cool. One day, the students were digging a 'massive' hole in the sand underneath the play equipment (resulting in 'big trouble' with the teachers) when one of the boys decided to bury 'Eggy' in the hole. The subsequent excavation of 'Eggy' took a long time and turned into a new game, as 'Eggy' was found and re-hidden again and again.¹⁵ 'Eggy' is a lasting memory of their school days for Charlotte's generation of Lord Howe Island students.

'Eggy' is the type of ball that can be used for a different version of Handball called 'Butterfly'. Played at the school for at least a decade, 'Butterfly' uses a bigger ball, softer than a basketball, and is played in a similar way to Handball, except that the person in the 'Ace' square can decide how many bounces someone can do before they have to hit the ball to someone else. They can also make up other rules, like only hitting the ball with your right hand, or not doing 'slams'.

Some of the games the children know about have been introduced by teachers over the years, and the children have discussed game-playing and rules in class. 'Spud' is a ball game which came from a teacher. The ball is thrown up and the person who is 'in' has to retrieve the ball and call, 'Spud!' and everyone freezes. The ball is thrown at the legs of another player, and if it hits, that player is 'in'. The children's version of this game is called 'Brandings', where the person who is 'in' chases the other players and throws a ball at someone. If the ball hits, the other player is 'in'. The children say there are no rules for this game. The ball currently in use is a soft foam football – chances are that in past years other types of balls, some not quite so soft, were also used, particularly by older children.

Play at the school – 1940s and 50s

The cement slab where the children play Handball was originally laid as an open quadrangle in the late 1960s, when a new Secondary science block was built (now the Year Two-Six classroom).¹⁶ Prior to this, a large, sandy tennis court had occupied the site from around the time Rhonda Wilson started school in 1949. Rhonda began her school days in the Public Hall, about a kilometre from the school, which was used as a temporary Infants' classroom – the 'little school' – while a second classroom was being constructed at the 'big school'. The children played on the grassed area in front of the Hall or went down onto the sandy beach. They also played 'shopping'. There was only one shop on the island at the time – Thompson's Store, run by Rhonda's uncle Cam¹⁷ – which was across the road from the Hall (and still is). Thompson's Store had the only ice-cream on the island. Made with milk from the local cows, it was kept cold with big blocks of ice and sold on the day it was made. In the game, somebody was sent off with a list of things to buy from the 'shop'. Household shopping was done in bulk, so the children's 'shopping lists' consisted of items like 'two pounds of butter, a pound of tea – and an ice-cream'.¹⁸

On Fridays, the Infants would walk down to the 'big school', with their handkerchiefs pinned to their chests, to eat their lunch and play games like chasing or 'Drop the Hanky' afterwards. The new classroom was completed in May, 1951,¹⁹ and the Infants moved out of the Hall and into the 'big school'. Rhonda recalls the children heading into the bush around the school to play 'Cowboys and Indians', where the 'Indians' hid and the 'Cowboys' had to find them. A favourite hiding place was on the roof of the 'long drop' toilets down in the bush behind the school. Children also hid on the roof of the school and inside the toilets with the door closed, as well as in the bush.²⁰

Also in the bush behind the school was the 'dirt heap' – holes in the ground where all the rubbish from the school was thrown away. It contained bottles, old pots and anything that was unwanted, including fine pieces of cane left over from cane-weaving classes. This rubbish heap was a rich source of play materials for the children at the school.

Pieces of cane were retrieved and the ends lit, to be smoked as 'cigarettes', and small bits of wood or flat pieces of 'fibro' were collected and used as 'taws' for games of Hopscotch. Rhonda also used stones as 'taws', and scratched hopscotch patterns in the sand with a stick, but they were not allowed to do this on the tennis court, which was kept smooth by flattening the surface with a big, heavy roller. Occasionally, if someone was lucky enough to have a piece of chalk hidden in their pocket, a hopscotch pattern would be drawn on the concrete remains of the old pavilion, where people used to sit to watch cricket games on the oval next to the school.²¹

Betty Lonergan started school in 1940, and played Hopscotch using smooth, coloured pieces of glass found on the beach as 'taws', or stones and 'fibro' picked up in the school grounds. She remembers drawing 'Aeroplane' and 'Snail' hopscotch patterns in the sand with a stick – there was no tennis court at the school then. Like Rhonda Wilson, Betty is descended from Nathan Thompson, one of the earliest settlers, who arrived on the island around 1853. Five generations of her family have attended the school. When Betty's mother, Daisy Thompson, was a child, she and her friends used to see if they could get from home to school without touching the ground, by climbing through the trees and swinging on the vines. In those days the bush was a lot thicker than it is now. Betty recalls using vines for skipping, but she had to be careful as some, known as 'lawyer' vines have sharp spurs.²² To Rhonda Wilson, the vines were also a good place to hide, particularly if she climbed up under the limb of a banyan tree and hung in a thick tangle of them.²³

Using natural materials in play

On Lord Howe Island the children frequently include natural materials in their play. When I visited the school, a small group of five- and six-year-old girls were making 'salads' by picking flowers and leaves and mixing them in a bucket. Afterwards, they floated leaves, sticks and flower petals on puddles of water as 'boats'. Another Kindy girl presented me with a gift of several different leaves which had been carefully threaded onto a thin reed, knotted at one end, and a Year Five boy showed me a case-moth cocoon he had found in the garden.



A secret 'hut' decorated with shells, coral and reeds.

During Betty Lonergan's schooldays they made boats from the seed pods of the 'boat vine'²⁴ (*Marsdenia rostrata*²⁵), and both Betty and Rhonda used the broad ends of palm stalks – cut so they had a bow and a stern – as boats, with a banyan leaf on a stick for a sail. Rhonda recalls racing these sailing boats in the creeks and sometimes in the Lagoon, where the wrong kind of weather would send them sailing out to sea.²⁶

One of Betty's favourite play activities at school involved the indigenous Lord Howe Island land snail (*Placostylus bivaricosus*²⁷). These snails are around seven centimetres long, and were once quite common on the island. They could be found in the bushy strip between the school and the Bowling Club, and Betty would go in there and scratch among the leaves to find the snails, then use sticks to build little houses for them, with leaves for roofs and little yards also made from sticks. Then she would wait patiently for the snails to lay their tiny eggs. This was usually a girls' activity – the boys would mainly play Cricket. Some of the other games Betty played are Jacks, chasing games, Hide-and-seek and 'Cat's Cradle' with a loop of string. She also made tree houses.²⁸

Making 'huts'

The lush vegetation on Lord Howe Island is ideal for making cubby houses or 'huts'. During my visit I discovered a network of tunnels through bushes on the foreshore, leading to several 'huts' made by girls. These secret places were decorated with shells, coral and hanging circlets, skillfully and patiently made from thin reeds. UK researcher David Sobel has conducted international research into children's place-making. He found that creating personal spaces is an activity shared by children



Playing a game of 'Killer Whale' in the rotunda.



'Iko Iko' clapping game.

from diverse environments and cultural backgrounds around the world. The children in his study talked about their 'secret' places, hidden away from everyone.²⁹ Lord Howe Island offers myriad opportunities for children to create their own spaces among the palm forests, banyan roots, vines and bushes.

Rhonda Wilson remembers making 'huts' at school, but over the weekend other children would go in and wreck them, so they were eventually banned because of the conflict this caused. Instead, on their weekends away from school, Rhonda, her siblings and their cousins created a whole village on the other side of the island near Ned's Beach. They named it 'Taffay Village', and built about five separate huts from palm leaves and branches, furnishing them with beds and other furniture, also made from leaves, sticks and whatever else they could find. The children of 'Taffay Village' had their own fireplace, and lit fires to boil the billy and drink weak tea made from tea leaves provided by their parents. A green stick was placed across the top of the billy to stop the smoke getting into the tea. Their parents also gave them bottles of ready-to-drink Mynor cordial. They drank the tea and the cordial from durable enamel mugs, often with food they took for lunch and sometimes dinner. The children played until late in the afternoon, and when they heard their mothers shouting out their names from all over the island they knew it was time to go home. If they were extra-late home, they picked flowers on the way to appease their mothers, with mixed results. 'Taffay Village' lasted for a few years, even when another gang of children came and started destroying the buildings and there was 'an outright war'. Rhonda says they just eventually grew out of it.³⁰

A popular playing place for younger children at the school – a kind of ready-made 'hut' with bench seats around the walls – is the wooden rotunda where Charlotte Tofaeono and her friends ate their lunch when she was in primary school. After lunch the children would play 'pretend' games in the rotunda, turning it into a house and using the seats as beds and other furniture, or it was perhaps the base for a spy game.³¹ When I visited the school the children in the rotunda were playing a game of 'Killer Whale'. In this game players stand up on the seats, with one person who is 'in' standing on the ground in the middle. The players on the seats can move to another spot by running across and dodging the person in the middle. When they are standing on the seats they keep their arms by their sides, but move their forearms up and down (like fins) to indicate that they are 'paused' and cannot be 'tipped'. The person who is 'in' has to try to 'tip' one of the other players when they stop moving their arms or when they are off the seats. 'Killer Whale' is an adaptation of a game made up two years ago by a boy who is now in Year Two. He called it the 'Monster' game. In that version there are no special arm movements, and players can be 'tipped' if their legs are hanging down off the seats or if they are running across to change position.

Hand games

The children decide who will be 'in' by doing a counting-out ritual called 'Twenty-one'. They form a circle and chant, 'Twenty-one, who's in, so sucked IN!' and on the last word everyone puts a hand into the circle, holding out as many fingers as they like. Then someone counts all the fingers around the circle, and the person whose finger is number twenty-one is 'in'. The boys say this is the only way they choose who's 'in', apart from simply calling, '[somebody's name] is in!'



Surfboards waiting in the palm forest at Ned's Beach.



A familiar hand game played by girls at the school is clapping. Two Year Three girls demonstrated two clapping games for me and Charlotte recalled another two from her primary school days. One of the clapping games currently at the school is 'Apple on a Stick' – a chant with five verses and a complicated sixteen-part, sixteen-beat clapping action, which involves closing their eyes and completing the clapping action without making a mistake. The instructions are: 'Close your eyes and count to ten. If you muck it up you're not my friend'. Year Three is usually around the time when girls really start to take an interest in clapping games. Their physical co-ordination allows them to do quite complicated clapping patterns while at the same time chanting a rhyme or singing a song, and sometimes the rhythm of the clapping pattern will be in three beats while the rhyme is in four beats. The language-play involved in a clapping rhyme also appeals to this age group. At the Lord Howe Island school there are currently only three girls in Year Three, and one of these girls taught 'Apple on a Stick' to the others.

The other clapping game at the school is 'Iko Iko', with an eight-part, eight-beat clapping pattern. 'Iko Iko' is a song based on a New Orleans Mardi Gras call-and-response chant, made popular by performers including New Orleans group the Dixie Cups in the 1960s and New York singer Cindi Lauper in the 1980s³². This song was taught to the girls by a music teacher.

Charlotte recalls that 'Apple on a Stick' was really popular when she was in the primary school, and says that it has most likely been passed down to the younger girls from her generation of students. She has also noticed that some of the words of clapping

rhymes have changed over the years. One of the clapping games she remembers is 'My friend Anna plays the pianna twenty-four hours a day, SPLIT!' On 'SPLIT!' both players jump their feet apart. The chant is repeated over and over again, with the feet getting further and further apart each time until someone loses their balance and falls over. This game was especially popular at the time because there was a girl named Anna at the school. The other clapping game is called 'Concentration'. It has a steady chant which lets someone choose a subject, and from then on each person must name something from that category without breaking the rhythm or repeating a word someone has already said, for example:

Concentration (clap, clap, clap),
Is a game (clap, clap, clap),
With no repeats (clap, clap, clap),
Or hesitation (clap, clap, clap),
I speak first (clap, clap, clap),
And you speak second (clap, clap, clap),
The subject is (clap, clap, clap),
Lord Howe Island (clap, clap, clap),
Palm tree (clap, clap, clap),
Ocean (clap, clap, clap),
Beaches (clap, clap, clap),
Mt Gower (clap, clap, clap),
etc.

If someone misses a beat or repeats a word they switch partners. Charlotte said that some of her friends will still play this game if they're bored. She has taught it to her younger sister and they play it at home.³³ Play traditions can often be passed on within families through parents or older siblings and brought into a school by a younger child.

Freedom, independence and a 'rite of passage'

Lord Howe Island has much to offer a bored child. Children aged from around nine or ten years onwards enjoy a freedom that is unknown to children in urban centres. Most of the children ride their bikes to school, and bikes allow the older children to roam around the island independently. The particular honesty of the Islander culture means that they can simply leave their bikes by the side of the road and go off to play, knowing the bikes will still be there when they return. This applies across the island, to visitors as well as local residents – under the play equipment in the small public playground is a crate of plastic sand toys, with a note letting people know that everybody can use them. The children learn to swim in the Lagoon, a long beach within walking distance of the school and a favourite swimming place out of school hours. On weekends, if the wind happens to be in the wrong direction, they can go across the island to Ned's Beach, away from the wind, to swim or surf. When they have finished surfing they carry their surfboards into the palm forest near the beach and leave them there, knowing no-one will touch them. Fishing is also a leisurely activity for a slow weekend or in the holidays, with the possibility of catching something good to eat. In really bad weather, and when there is no alternative, there is always the lure of technology. Television, DVDs and computers are also part of children's lives on Lord Howe Island, although there is no mobile phone service so their communication still happens mostly in person.

A 'rite of passage' for children at the school is the play equipment with its two sets of monkey bars. The equipment has been at the school since before Charlotte started in Kindy, and she remembers starting off on the triangle hanging rings. Once someone can go right across the 'triangle monkey bars' the next step is moving up to the 'big' monkey bars with the fixed bars. As the children grow and their confidence and ability increase they may find they are able to get right across the 'big' monkey bars without dropping. Then they can try one or two tricks, such as missing a bar or two – known as 'Skip by Ones' and 'Skip by Twos'. At this stage they are ready for the final achievement – doing the forwards and backwards 'Waterfalls'. To do a 'Forwards Waterfall', they sit up on top of the monkey bars, lean over the side, grasp the bars from

underneath and swing down. To do a 'Backwards Waterfall' they sit up on top, tuck their feet under the bars to hold on, then go over the side of the monkey bars backwards and hang down, while still holding on with the feet. Then, in a quick action, the feet are released and the child flips over to land on her feet. Charlotte says the monkey bars were 'definitely something that was very good to achieve'.³⁴

Conclusion

The children, past and present, who have grown up on Lord Howe Island are fortunate to have shared a rich play environment and a personal freedom undreamt of by most mainland children. Intimate knowledge of their island home, a sense of its history and their place in it, and the uniqueness of their surroundings has offered them a childhood full of creative play possibilities. For some, growing up with siblings, cousins and friends in a small community has generated lifelong memories and bonds of common childhood experiences. For children who have come from other, more crowded places, with bigger schools and a larger cohort of playmates and friends, transferring to a small, close-knit community can sometimes be difficult at first, and the experiences they have at school, including the games they play, can help them settle into their new, albeit temporary, lives.

Play at the school is a blend of enduring traditions and new adaptations, with a strong sense of belonging and ownership by the children. Some of the games played by previous generations have not survived the changes that have occurred over the years, particularly the decrease in the number of older students who usually know all the games and teach the younger children. Despite this, play at Lord Howe Island Central School, and throughout the island, reflects the children's ability to be creative, adventurous, adaptable and independent.

I am deeply grateful to Trev Mason, Principal of the school, and the people on Lord Howe Island who shared their games, their memories and their knowledge of the island and its history so freely and generously with me.



Children playing on the foreshore at Ned's Beach.

Unless otherwise attributed all photographs were taken by Judy McKinty.

Judy McKinty is an independent children's play researcher and a co-editor of *Play and Folklore*.

ENDNOTES

¹ UNESCO, *World Heritage List: Lord Howe Island Group*. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/186>

² *ibid.*

³ Australian Government – Department of the Environment, *World Heritage Places – Lord Howe Island Group, New South Wales*. <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/lord-howe>

⁴ Lord Howe Island Museum, *Marine Life*. http://www.lhimuseum.com/page/view/environment/biodiversity/marine_life

⁵ Lord Howe Island Museum, *Early Settlement*. http://www.lhimuseum.com/page/view/history/early_settlement

⁶ UNESCO, *World Heritage List: Lord Howe Island Group*. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/186>

⁷ Lord Howe Island Museum, *Early Settlement*. http://www.lhimuseum.com/page/view/history/early_settlement

⁸ Lord Howe Island Central School, *Our School*. <http://www.lordhowe-c.schools.nsw.edu.au/our-school>

⁹ Daphne Nichols, *Lord Howe Island Rising*, (Brookvale: B A Printing & Publishing Services, 2006), 159.

¹⁰ Rhonda Wilson, pers. comm.

¹¹ Charlotte Tofaeono, pers. comm.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ NSW Education Department, *A–Z Acronyms and abbreviations*. <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/information-access/a-z-of-acronyms-and-abbreviation>

¹⁵ Charlotte Tofaeono, pers. comm.

¹⁶ Daphne Nichols, *Lord Howe Island Rising*, (Brookvale: B A Printing & Publishing Services, 2006), 162.

¹⁷ Many of the Islanders have a shared heritage dating back to the mid-1800s. Rhonda Wilson is also a descendant of Nathan Chase Thompson, one of the earliest permanent settlers, through the marriage of her grandfather, Thomas Wilson, to his eldest student, Mary Thompson – Nathan Thompson's daughter. http://www.lhimuseum.com/page/view/history/early_settlement

¹⁸ Rhonda Wilson, pers. comm.

¹⁹ Daphne Nichols, *Lord Howe Island Rising*, (Brookvale: B A Printing & Publishing Services, 2006), 162.

²⁰ Rhonda Wilson, pers. comm.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Betty Lonergan, pers. comm.

²³ Rhonda Wilson, pers. comm.

²⁴ Betty Lonergan, pers. comm.

²⁵ Ian Hutton, pers. comm.

²⁶ Rhonda Wilson, pers. comm.

²⁷ Lord Howe Island Museum, *Invertebrates*. <http://www.lhimuseum.com/page/view/environment/biodiversity/invertebrates>

²⁸ Betty Lonergan, pers. comm.

²⁹ David Sobel, *Children's Special Places: Exploring the Role of Forts, Dens, and Bush Houses in Middle Childhood*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002).

³⁰ Rhonda Wilson, pers. comm.

³¹ Charlotte Tofaeono, pers. comm.

³² Performing Songwriter, 'Mardi Gras Mambo' and 'Iko Iko'. <http://performingsongwriter.com/mardi-gras-music/>

³³ Charlotte Tofaeono, pers. comm.

³⁴ *ibid.*

Dorothy Howard in Australia: an addendum

June Factor

The American scholar, Dr Dorothy Howard, influenced the study of children's folklore in Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand as well as in her own country. She willingly contributed her experience and her wisdom to Iona and Peter Opie in England, to Brian Sutton-Smith in New Zealand, and to Ian Turner and me in Australia. In this country we have the gift of many play objects from her personal playlore collection, as well as the wealth of material she gathered during her 10 months in this country in 1954-55 as a post-doctoral Fulbright scholar, documenting the play lives of Australian children.

We thought we had compiled a reasonably substantial archive of Dorothy Howard's visit to Australia. Yet the sharp eyes of one of my history colleagues, Dr Juliet Flesch, has led to the discovery of letters explaining how Howard gained access to schools around the country, as well as correspondence, collection sheets and other playlore research material written by Howard herself.

All these fascinating documents were scattered through a couple of the many boxes holding the papers of George Stephenson Browne, the Dean of Education at the University of Melbourne at the time of Howard's visit to Australia. She was based at this university, and it is Melbourne University which holds Browne's papers in its archives. Dr Flesch was researching a subject far removed from children's folklore, but she remembered Howard's name and contacted me. The resulting hours of careful scrutiny of the Browne boxes proved immensely rewarding. We now have an enhanced appreciation of Howard's methods: the meticulous details that underpinned her fieldwork and the care and courtesy of her approach to colleagues, schools and children. We also know much more about the role Professor Browne played in introducing her to school directors around the country. A lucky find indeed.

In this issue of *Play and Folklore* we publish a small sampling of the Dorothy Howard material found in the G.S. Browne papers held in The University of Melbourne Archives.

Letter from Dorothy Howard (DH) to Prof Browne, 10 June 1954:

Dorothy G. Howard,
5 Centennial Street,
Frostburg, Maryland,
U.S.A.

Professor G.S. Browne, Dean
School of Education,
University of Melbourne,
Melbourne, Australia

Dear Dean Browne,

Mr. Rossiter of the [United States Educational] Foundation has written of your hospitality in offering the facilities of the University of Melbourne during my Fullbright project in Australia. I am happily looking forward to my visit and trust that my accomplishments will be worth your trouble in looking after me.

I expect to have my completed travel schedule from the British Overseas Airways Corporation in Washington on June 14. Then I shall cable you the exact time I expect to arrive in Melbourne.

I understand the housing problem in Melbourne and assure you that I can be very easily accommodated. I would like to live within the means of my stipend. A bed to sleep in and a place to work where I won't disturb other people (I sometimes like to work around the clock) are my basic requirements. If your hotels are not too expensive, perhaps a hotel room might be a good arrangement at first since the details of my project are yet to be determined. However, I would like to be near your campus, if possible.

Mr. Rossiter quoted you as saying "Australian folklore is a relatively unknown field" which confirms the guess I made when I applied for the Fullbright grant. As you may know children's folklore in the British Isles is now being thoroughly explored by Peter and Iona Opie; I have seen articles based on a collection and study of children's lore in New Zealand made by Dr. Sutton-Smith, University of Wellington; many collectors and a few scholars in the United States are now busy in the field. But, as far as I know, little collecting has been taking place in either Canada or Australia. With the brief time I shall have in your country, I cannot hope to make a definitive collection and study. (I have been collecting American children's lore for thirty years; that of Maryland children for eleven – and the delightful task still goes on). But I am confident I shall have a very good time working with Australian children and I hope to produce a little candy for the scholars.

I would like to explore the Melbourne area first; get oriented, myself. I need to bury my nose in your libraries and museums to get a general background of information for my special field.

Do you have a laboratory school as a part of your School of Education? If so, perhaps I can work with some of the teachers and children there. If not, perhaps Melbourne State School teachers of ten to twelve year old children will be interested in working with me. Perhaps some of your college students who expect to teach in your State Schools can become interested in joining this undertaking. I shall have some questionnaire-type material ready for mimeographing (or duplication) upon arrival in Melbourne.

Together, I believe we can work out a satisfactory plan for my project when I get to Melbourne and we can talk the problem through.

I look forward happily to my stay in your country.

Sincerely yours,
Dorothy G. Howard

Letter from Prof Browne to DH, 18 June 1954:

Dear Dr Howard,
I was glad to have your letter this morning. At the School of Education we are all interested in your quest and will do what we can to help you after you have arrived. Australian Folklore is, strangely enough, an unknown field to us and your findings should be significant and interesting.

When we receive details from you about your travel arrangements we shall arrange to meet you, and also find some temporary accommodation here for you until your plans are more definite. A number of people at the University will be glad to help you, and we can enlist the co-operation of any school on whose aid you wish to call.

We have a research division in the School of Education and we have a number of training and demonstration schools associated with us, and you can be assured of any assistance which is in their power to give you.

This is a hasty letter despatched in the hope that it will reach you before your departure and telling you that you will be certain of a welcome when you arrive.

Yours sincerely,
[G.S. Browne]
Professor of Education,
Dean of the Faculty of Education

Letter from Prof Browne to Queensland Director General of Education, 1 September 1954:

Dear Mr. Watkins,
During the current year we have a Fulbright scholar working with us who is carrying out an enquiry into the nature of Australian Children's Folklore. This is Dr. Dorothy Howard who comes from Maryland in the U.S.A. Dr. Howard is an experienced research worker in the field of children's folklore and she has uncovered some material in Australia which we did not know existed. Her work so far has been very successful; she has an admirable way of her own with children and gets them to tell her all about their folk-games and folk-stories. I should imagine that her piece of work, when finished, in February or March of next year, will make a unique contribution to the educational literature of Australia.

Between September 17 and October 14 Dr. Howard proposes to visit Brisbane and would like to carry out some of her work in Queensland. We should be very grateful if you would allow her to call on you and obtain your advice and authority about schools she should visit and persons she should interview.

Attached are three mimeographed statements, numbered in order of priority, which may give you some idea of the sphere of Dr. Howard's work. However, she has considerable personality and charm and will be able to explain to you in much better fashion what her objectives are.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,
[G.S. Browne]
Professor of Education

Encls.

P.S. A similar letter has been sent to Professor Schoneill. [University of Queensland Education Department]

Extract from letter to Tasmanian Education Department from Prof Browne, 10 November 1954:

Dr. Howard proposes to visit Tasmania for three or four weeks from the middle of January onwards. She realises that the schools will not be in session for the early part of her visit and she wonders whether she might send you a description of her project and some questionnaires about the folk-games of children which might be distributed before the end of the current year.

There is no need for you to do anything at present. Dr. Howard will write to you in a few days' time to tell you something of what she has in mind. She is a very gracious and capable person and I am sure everyone will like her when she comes to Tasmania. We should be very grateful at the School of Education if you would give some consideration to the request she makes to you when she writes and grant her some facilities in order that Tasmania might be included in her enquiry. We are rather of opinion that Tasmania may prove a richer source of folk-lore than some of the other States.

Letter from Director, Commonwealth Office of Education, Sydney to Prof Browne, 19 November 1954:

Dear Professor Browne,
I was interested to receive your letter about Dr. Dorothy Howard and her work with folk-lore and folk-games of children. I would be most interested indeed to see any of her work relating to Australian aboriginal children, as it could be of assistance with the educational work of this Office in the Northern Territory.

As Dr. Howard would probably wish to visit native settlements, I suggest the best approach would be to the Director of Welfare who handles permits for these areas. The present Director is Mr. H.C. Giese, whose headquarters are in Darwin.

If you could let me know later when Dr. Howard proposes to visit the Territory, I would notify my Senior Education Officer and ask him to do what he can to let her see the work of some of the schools for aboriginal children.

Yours sincerely,
Wm. J. Weeden,
Director

Letter from Prof Browne to DH, 25 November 1954:

Dear Dr. Howard,
I am enclosing a copy of a letter I have just received from the Director of the Commonwealth Office of Education, Sydney. He is obviously interested in your work and hopes that there might be a section in it dealing with Australian aboriginal children.

This may be an entirely different project, but I think it would be essential to ascertain whether any aboriginal ideas have affected the folk-games and folk-lore of Australian white children.

Come in and talk to me about this when you can.

Yours sincerely,
[G.S. Browne]
Professor of Education

Letter from DH to the South Australian Education Department, 20 January 1955:

The Director of Education,
Education Department,
Adelaide, S.A.

Dear Mr. Mender-Jones,

I understand that Professor Browne has written to you about my Fulbright research study in children's folklore in Australia and about my forthcoming visit to South Australia in the middle of February.

I am hoping it will be possible to visit some of your schools, and observe children playing on the school playgrounds – of both city and country schools. I also hope some of your teachers of eleven and twelve year old children will be interested in getting the children to write down descriptions of games they play now or have played in years past.

Consequently, I am taking the liberty to send you six sets of mimeographed materials which I shall be glad to have you pass along to six classroom teachers who will be willing to work with me in this undertaking. These sets will be forwarded to you today by separate mail.

The collection, so far, includes materials from Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, with a little data from South Australia and Western Australia. I am hoping during my visit to South Australia to make that section of the study more comprehensive.

With best wishes to you for the New Year, I look forward to meeting you and your staff members. I shall appreciate any help you can give in this research project.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy G.M. Howard

Extract from letter to DH from Prof Browne, 22 February 1955:

My dear Dr Howard,

I am so sorry that my trip to Western Australia intervened and made it impossible for me to be in Melbourne when your day of departure arrived.

We have all enjoyed your presence with us and have been very interested in the quality and character of your work. I hope that your enquiries have a very successful outcome; if the work is published we shall read it with the greatest of interest and I think it will be most valuable to Australia. I wish it were possible for you to extend your enquiries into the aboriginal field, for it is possible that they may have something unique to contribute which we know very little about...

With every possible good wish from all at the School of Education and particularly from myself.

Yours very truly,

[G.S. Browne]

Professor of Education

School of Education
University of Melbourne

ENQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF
AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S FOLK-LORE

Dr. Dorothy G.M. Howard a Fulbright Scholar from Maryland, U.S.A., is making a collection of children's folklore. This collection will include the games and play customs which belong to the undirected playlife of Australian children (present-day children and children in times gone by) --- traditional games which have been handed down from one generation of children to another without supervision of teachers, parents or other adults.

Examples: Stag, Tipcat, Charlie Over the Water, Egg Cup, Creeping (or Statue), Cockalorum; skipping rope games such as Double Dutch and Double German (and accompanying rhymes); marbles (all the various ways of playing and terms used for marbles and for plays); counting out rhymes and customs (ways to find out who must be "It" or "He" in the game; ball bouncing and hitting games; fortune telling formulae such as plucking petals and saying, "He loves me, loves me not"; chants such as "Ice cream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream"; charms and magic spells such as wishing on a star; beliefs such as white spots on fingernails mean the number of boyfriends or girlfriends the owner has.

It will help Dr. Howard if, in recording details of games, you would follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Give the name of the game.
2. The terms used (and their meaning).
3. The rules of the game (this may be in narrative or in other form).
4. Give the geographic setting in detail (size of town, specific location, and any distinguishing characteristics). Nature of country --- hills, sandy plain, etc.
5. Give the ages of the children who play (or played) the game.
6. Say whether the game is (or was) a boys' game, a girls' game or one played by a mixed group.
7. Say whether the game is (or was) seasonal like marbles in spring or an all-year-round game.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

ENQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF
AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE

CLASSIFICATION OF GAMES from HANDBOOK of IRISH FOLKLORE
by SEAN O'SULLEABHAN.

Games with Balls: Ball in the Cap. Rounders etc.

Flower-Games: daisy-chains, toss-balls, petal-plucking or blowing, trapping bees in foxglove flowers, flowers carried in processions.

Plant-Games: use of ivy-leaf in music-playing, blowing on a blade of grass held taut between the thumbs to produce a piercing sound, throwing cockles ("burrs") to adhere to one's clothes, use of rushes in making toys.

Fruit-Games: games or amusements involving the use of apples, nuts, berries, fruit-stones, shells, rinds etc.; eating "fairy potatoes," putting hairy seeds of dog-rose down one's back, raiding fruit-gardens.

Games with Coins: sleight-of-hand tricks with coins, pitch and toss, hand-passing of coins.

Games with Buttons: pitch and toss, buttons on string.

Games and Amusements with Matches: making matches "walk"; lighting of matches in certain ways; forming words and patterns with matches; arranging matches in certain ways.

Games with Sticks: acrobatic tricks with sticks; hurling; bandy-cad; birin beo; katty or buck.

Rope-and String-Games: skipping (salt, mustard, ginger, pepper); swinging; tying; tug-of-war; lassoing; cat's-cradle; nuts or buttons on string.

Marbles: give details of the types of marble-games played locally, describing the various methods of play, the stages of the game, terms used etc.

Games and Amusements with Hoops: types of hoop used ("bowlies"); how propelled; passing through hoops.

Top-Games: types of toys used; method of spinning (pegging, flogging); "dancers" and home-made tops.

Games with Household Objects: tricks performed with chairs, stools, household vessels, soap, candles, knives, forks, spoons; playing at house-keeping.

Games with Colours: Blue Cap, Green Cap; colours used in games; how used.

Games with Numbers: counting-games; tricks and puzzles with numbers.

Games with Letters and Words: word-building games; forming sentences with words whose first letters are prominent in school-books; spelling games; rhyming; catchwords.

Games with Paper: making toys or designs of paper; games in which questions, answers, names, numbers etc. are written on paper.

School of Education
University of Melbourne

ENQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF
AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S FOLK-LORE


CHECK LIST NO.1: SUPPLEMENT NO.1.

The following games have been reported from Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania or the Australian Capital Territory as played by children today or in times past. Will you please mark (P) in the first column if you have ever played the game; (S), if you have seen the game played; (O), if you have never played or seen the game. In the second column, please indicate when you saw or played the game, for example, 1945-1950 or 1954. In the third column, state where (for example, East Melbourne, Victoria or Mallee country near Mildura). Games starred, *, are reported current in 1954.

	P S or O	When	Where
Animals (Q)			
Ball - Captain Ball (Q)			
*Ducks in the Pond (Q)			
File Gap (Q)			
*Free for All (Q)			
*French Cricket (A.C.T.)			
*Keep the Ball (N.S.W.)			
*King Ball (Q)			
*Pig in the Middle (N.S.W.)			
*Poison Ball (N.S.W.)(A.C.T.)			
*Sevenses (A.C.T.)			
Tippy (Q)			
*Traveller & Wolves (A.C.T.)			
*Who Is It (N.S.W.)			
*Zig Zag (Q)			
Beast, Bird, Fish (V)			
Behind the Curtain (Q)			
*Biting the Apple (Q)			
*Blue Rover (Q)			
Bull in the Ring (S.A.)			
*Buy My Supper (Q)			
Cat's Cradle - Diamond (Q)			
French Lace (Q)			
King's Crown (Q)			
Queen's Crown (Q)			
See-Saw (Q)			
Witches Hat (Q)			
*Cats and Dogs (Q)			
*Cat and Mouse (Q)			
Chariot Race (N.S.W.)			
*Cocky Laura (A.C.T.)			
*Comic Strips (N.S.W.)			
*Crocodile Across the River (N.S.W.)			
*Crystal Bulldog (Q)			
Crusts and Crumbs (Q)			
*Crusts, Crumpets & Crumbs (N.S.W.)			
Diggley Bones (Q)			
*Egg and Spoon Race (Q)			
*Film Stars (N.S.W.)			
*Find the Obstacle (N.S.W.)			
*Fingers (N.S.W.)			
*Fly (Q) (N.S.W.) (A.C.T.)			
*Fly - Called Strides (N.S.W.)			
*Fly - Called Beetle (N.S.W.)			
*Fly - Hop, Step & Jump (N.S.W.)			
*Fly - Sticks (N.S.W.)			
*Foil the Hunter (N.S.W.)			
Fox and Geese (V)			

- 2 -
P S or O When Where

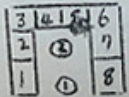
French Cricket (N.S.W.)
 French and English (V) (N.S.W.) (Q)
 Green Gravel (Q)
 Hawks and Doves (N.S.W.)
 Here I Come With My Stick and Staff (Q)
 Hiding - Bang (Q)
 Hiding - Hiawatha's Hunting (Q)
 Hiding - Indian (Q)
 Hide the Button (Q)
 Hokey Pokey (N.S.W.)
 Honey Pots (V)
 Hopscotch - Circular (N.S.W.)



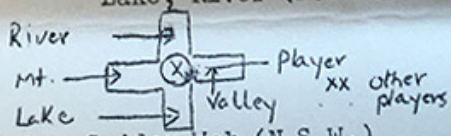
Hopscotch - Colors (Q)

Red	Silver	Purple
Asua	white	Yellow
Orange	Black	Pink


Hopscotch - Horseshoe (N.S.W.)



Hopscotch - Mountain, Valley, Lake, River (N.S.W.)



Hopscotch - Spider Web (N.S.W.)



Hunt the Thimble (Q)
 In and Out the Window (Q)
 Jennie Jones (Q)
 Jolly Miller (Q)
 Jumble Towns (N.S.W.)
 Marbles - Big Ring (Q) (NSW) (ACT)
 Little Ring (N.S.W.)
 Eye Drop (Q)
 Holesy (Q)
 Three Hole (N.S.W.)
 Holes (Q)
 Poison Ring (Q)
 Triangle (Q)
 Townsy (Q)
 Master (V)
 May I (N.S.W.)
 Mines and Submarines (Q)
 Mrs. Mackenzie's Cat (Q)
 Musical Arms (Q)
 North, South, East, West (N.S.W.)
 On Ship On Shore (N.S.W.)
 Paper Chase (Q)
 Pitch and Toss (N.S.W.)
 Punishments (N.S.W.)

Second page of Dorothy Howard's Checklist of Games, showing her diagrams of Australian hopscotch patterns.

CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE COLLECTION Folk Rhymes and Jingles

Traditional child-play is often accompanied by rhymes, jingles, chants, or sayings. For example, rhymes are used in:

1. Nursery play where the mother or nurse touches the child's body as she says, "This little pig went to market..." or "Eye winker, Tom Tinker, nose dropper, mouth eater, chin chopper chin".
2. Counting out to find who must be "He" in a game; "Eenie, meenie, minie, moe" and "One potato, two potato, three potato, four".
3. Hand-clapping, knee-clapping (~~xxxxxx~~) played by two children chanting, "Mary Mack, dressed in black ..." or "My mother said I never should/ Play with the gypsies in the wood".
4. Rope-skipping games like "All in together, girls/ Never mind the weather, girls ...".
5. Ball-bouncing-patting games with, "Hello, hello, hello, sir/ Meet me at the grocer..."
6. Nonsense play --- "One fine day in the middle of the night/ Two dead men got up to fight ...".
7. Taunting --- "Fat, fat, the water rat ...".
8. Charms --- 'the moz or jinks) "Under the Kaiser's hoo-oof".
9. Tonguetwisters --- "I saw Esau kissing Kate ...".
10. Proverbs and sayings --- "Finder's keepers, loser's weepers".
11. Catches.
12. Autograph albums --- "Roses are red, violets are blue ...".
13. Fly leaf admonitions --- "If this book should chance to roam/ Box its ears and send it home".
14. Swearing an oath --- "Cross my heart and hope to die/ If I ever tell a lie".
15. Parodies and satire on adult behavior--- "Ladies and gentlemen, I come before you to stand behind you/ To tell you something I know nothing about"; or "Listen my children and you shall hear/ Of the midnight ride of a keg of beer (Paul Revere)".

Please write each rhyme or saying on a card 3" x 5"; state how the rhyme is ~~xxxxx~~ or was used, when and where; give your name as informant, your age and address.

All data on traditional children's play should be sent to:

Dr. Dorothy G.M. Howard
School of Education
University of Melbourne

Dorothy Howard's draft list of Folk Rhymes and Jingles

Dear _____, My recent visit in {Queensland} {Sydney} was happy and profitable and I thank you heartily for your hospitality and cooperation in helping me on with my project.

Dr. Wyndham {only} It was a pleasure to meet members of your staff; visit in your schools; and sense the fine spirit with which you are all working together, solving ~~the~~ problems much like educational problems in America.

Good will and friendliness have been extended to me everywhere in Australia; and I hope that eventually my collection and study of Australian children's traditional games will be considered meritorious reciprocal tender therefor.

If I can ever be of assistance to you in America, please let me know.

My very best wishes to you and to your staff.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy Howard's draft note of thanks to her Australian contacts.

All documents: Source – 1975.0099 Browne, George Stephenson 1954-1958, Boxes 3 & 4 of 13, The University of Melbourne Archives.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ See Kate Darian-Smith & June Factor (eds), *Child's Play: Dorothy Howard and the Folklore of Australian Children*, (Melbourne: Museum Victoria, 2005) and June Factor, 'Collecting Children's Folklore in Australia', in *Antipodean Traditions: Australian Folklore in the 21st Century*, eds. Graham Seal & Jennifer Gaul, (Perth: Black Swan Press, 2011).
- ² All held in Museum Victoria as part of the Australian Children's Folklore Collection.
- ³ Unfortunately, Dorothy Howard was unable to visit the Northern Territory while she was in Australia, so detailed research into the playlore of Aboriginal children was not included in her study.

A new home for the Donne Buck archive of play and adventure playgrounds

Alice Sage

A significant archive of material relating to play, adventure playgrounds and playground safety has found a home at the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green, UK.

When funding was cut for the Children's Play Information Service (CPIS) at the National Children's Bureau, London, we were able to give this fantastic archive a home in Bethnal Green – and also to expand the collection to include much more material collected during Donne's six decades working in play.

Including hundreds of unseen photographs, personal letters and diaries, published reports and marketing and campaign materials from the 1960s-90s, this rich collection documents the people, politics and practice of play in twentieth century Britain and beyond.

Donne Buck has been a playleader and campaigner for children's right to play since the 1950s. A significant figure in the history of play, in his long career Donne has established and run adventure playgrounds in London, Stevenage and Peterborough. He has been an active campaigner for children's rights and promoted the importance of play in education and social development, working with central government, local councils and international agencies.

The collection's thorough documentation of debate, activism and practice holds much potential for researchers. The struggles to retain play services during Margaret Thatcher's government (particularly 1983-87) is well recorded, as are the ideologies of safety and freedom which shape conversations about play to this day.

Documents also record Donne's career as an organiser and promoter of playgrounds in Stevenage and Peterborough in the 1970s and 80s. Unpublished letters and minutes as well as newsletters, posters and pamphlets are preserved here.

A large section of the archive is dedicated to play safety, including files of newspaper clippings about accidents, official reports and surveys. There are also large numbers of books and specialist journals relating to playwork, training and child welfare.

The catalogue for this remarkable collection is now complete and can be accessed through the V&A Museum's website. We have started to digitise audio and video material, plus the over 1400 photographs of Adventure Playgrounds across Britain, as well as children's drawings and writings.



For more information, or to make an appointment to view, contact curator Alice Sage at a.sage@vam.ac.uk

More information about the Donne Buck archive can be found at:

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/moc/article/donne-buck-archive/>

<https://collectingchildhood.wordpress.com/2015/01/07/junk-and-adventure/>

Alice Sage is a Curator at the V&A Museum's Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green

All images: Notting Hill Adventure Playground, 1961.
Source – Donne Buck Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.



Establishment of a National Play Collection at Sheffield University

Helen Woolley

As a response to the information about the Donne Buck Archive I thought you might like to know about the National Play Collection, UK.

When the funding for the Children's Play Information Service (CPIS) ran out last year I was able to negotiate for the rest of the CPIS to come to our library here at The University of Sheffield, as one of our Special Collections. The collection remains open to the public. Details of how to visit and the current catalogue of the collection are available on the web site: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/special/play>

Introduction to the National Play Collection

The Collection consists of several thousand books, pamphlets, reports, journal issues and multimedia materials relating to the subject of play, with some dating from 1910. Topics covered include play provision, facilities and equipment, the psychology of play, play for children with special needs, play therapy, play and the environment, the design of play spaces, playwork training and the safety of play areas and equipment.

The Collection was originally known as the National Play Information Centre (NPIC) and was established in 1988 under the auspices of the Sports Council. In 1996, the National Playing Fields Association assumed responsibility for NPIC, with funding from the Department of National Heritage. This continued until 2000, when the National Children's Bureau

won the tender from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to run a national play information centre, known as the Children's Play Information Service (CPIS).

In June 2014, the Collection was transferred from the National Children's Bureau to the University of Sheffield Library's Special Collections Department, where it is co-ordinated by Helen Woolley and known as the National Play Collection.

Helen Woolley is Reader in Landscape Architecture and Sociology in the University of Sheffield's Department of Landscape, and a member of the multidisciplinary Centre for the Study of Childhood and Youth in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Exploring Play: the Importance of Play in Everyday Life – free online course

The University of Sheffield is running a free Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) called Exploring Play: The Importance of Play in Everyday Life, which is available to anyone wanting to understand the nature and value of play through the course of our lives, across cultures and communities. This course was first offered in 2014, and its success has prompted Sheffield University to run it again.



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Starting on 19 October, the course lasts for seven weeks, with a time commitment of approximately 3 hours per week. This course is delivered through the FutureLearn website, and students can enrol and access the units any time after the starting date.

The course topics include the importance of play; definitions of play; play across lifespans; play and culture; play as a universal right of childhood; the history of games and toys; urban play; emotion, gender and play; play and disability; playful spaces and the future of play.

To find out more about the course, go to:
<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/play>



Malarkey Pty. Ltd proudly presents

Australia's first National PLAY & PLAYwork Conference

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, South Wharf, Melbourne
Friday 4th and Saturday 5th March, 2016

The National PLAY & PLAYwork Conference will not be a conference specifically for the Early Childhood sector. It will not be a conference specifically for the School sector. It will not even be a conference specifically for the Youth sector. The National PLAY & PLAYwork Conference will be a conference designed specifically around PLAY & PLAYwork and those working in the children and young people's workforce...*the hint is in the title.*

PLAY does not stop when children reach school age. In fact our twelve-year-olds want and need play just as much as our two- and five-year-olds need it...and our fifteen-year-olds need it as much as our twelve-year-olds need it...and our nineteen-year-olds need it as much as our fifteen-year-olds need it...do you get the picture?

The conference will have four internationally-respected keynote speakers from the play and playwork sectors, including:

Bob Hughes – the Chairman himself – UK playworker, play theorist, holder of a Masters Degree in Playwork Development Studies and author of the book *Evolutionary Playwork*.

Ric McConaghy – award-winning Australian playspace designer and former board member of the International Play Association.

Dr June Factor – eminent Australian writer, historian and folklorist.

There will also be a choice of around thirty practical and theory breakout sessions; a number of *off-conference field trips; a family Pop-Up Playground; screening of a very special film plus short supporting films; a range of information stands; the Malarkey bookshop; a chance to network, share and learn; one or two special surprises and announcements plus an invitation to Malarkey's Second Birthday Party.

** Please note that a number of off-site study visits will be available as part of the conference program. These visits will incur a small additional fee for transport.*

Australia's 1st National PLAY & PLAYWORK CONFERENCE 2016

MELBOURNE

Friday & Saturday 4th & 5th March 2016

At the Melbourne Convention &
Exhibition Centre on South Wharf

www.malarkeyon.com.au/conference
www.facebook.com/national-PLAY-conference

Some of the conference themes are:

- PLAY and ...
- Playwork
- Learning
- Early years
- School recess
- Parks/playgrounds
- Out of school
- Loose parts
- Adventure play
- Theory
- Health
- Teenagers
- Policy
- Training – etc., etc.

For more information please visit the Malarkey website: www.malarkeyon.com.au/conference
Keep up with all the latest happenings on our National PLAY Conference Facebook page: www.facebook.com/pages/National-PLAY-Conference
Email us at conference@malarkeyon.com.au

Malarkey is a partnership between UK playworker Marc Armitage from 'Marc Armitage at Play' and Donna Ridley from 'Irresistible Ideas for Play-Based Learning': <http://www.malarkeyon.com.au/about-us>

