



Play and Folklore

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Play & Folklore – A New Venture

This issue of *Play & Folklore* is the first to enter the 'virtual reality' of the web. Museum Victoria, the home of the Australian Children's Folklore Collection since 1999, will now publish *Play & Folklore* on its web page. As before, it will appear twice a year; as before, it is edited by June Factor and Gwenda Beed Davey and will continue to publish childlore and play research, memoirs, debate and reflection – lively and thought-provoking material from across the globe.

Freed from the costs of printing and postage (although *Play & Folklore* will still be available in hard copy if required), we can now welcome a much wider readership, and, we hope, new contributors. The old, true notion of knowledge as a public good, freely available to all who wish to partake, is now a reality – at least for *Play & Folklore* readers. In the future, we hope to publish an Index covering all issues of *Play & Folklore*, and to reprint key articles, building up an archive of valuable material.

Send us your email address, and we will send you each issue. We look forward to your comments complimentary and critical – and your contributions.

▣ DOROTHY HOWARD MEMORIAL LECTURE

to be presented by PROFESSOR BRIAN SUTTON-SMITH

Information about the time and place of the Dorothy Howard Memorial Lecture will be provided as soon as possible. Keep checking the website – www.museum.vic.gov.au/playfolklore

The pioneering American scholar, educator and ethnographer, Dr Dorothy Howard, was born in Texas in 1902 and died in Massachusetts in 1996. During her long life she made a signal contribution to the study of children's folklore in the US. She was probably the first person in the English-speaking world to gain a doctorate (in 1938) for a study of children's 'folk jingles' – the rhymes, chants and songs of American children in the 1930s. As well as collecting and teaching, Dorothy Howard wrote extensively about the significance of children's inherited and adapted play traditions, an informal educational arena operating 'three feet below adult eye level and invisible to myopic adults'. In recognition of her outstanding scholarship, The Association for the Study of Play (TASP) presented her with its first Distinguished Achievement award in 1981.



Dorothy Howard noting the rules of marbles, Perth, Western Australia, 1955. Australian Children's Folklore Collection, Museum Victoria.

Dorothy Howard was also a pioneer researcher in Australia. In her ten months in Australia in 1954-55 as a post-doctoral Fulbright scholar, she travelled across the land, collecting and documenting children's games and verbal lore in cities, country towns and small rural communities. Her meticulous work laid the foundation for research into children's folklore in this country. All the material she collected at that time, including photographs and a large correspondence from informants, is held in the Australian Children's Folklore Collection, at Museum Victoria. A selection of this material has been exhibited at the National Library of Australia in Canberra.

Dorothy Howard mapped the play world of childhood, knowing and respecting the diversity of children's culture and wishing to inform adults of its power and significance. The Australian Centre at the University of Melbourne and Museum Victoria have initiated a lecture series in her name, at which internationally respected childhood scholars and researchers will have the opportunity to present a public lecture in the city and the university in which she was based during her time in this country. It is expected that the lecture will be broadcast and later published.

The inaugural lecture in Dorothy Howard's honour will be given by the eminent American folklore scholar, Dr Brian Sutton-Smith. Dr Sutton-Smith is originally a New Zealander, where his ground-breaking study of children's games in that country, *The Games of New Zealand Children*, was first published by the University of California Press in 1959. Dr Sutton-Smith, the recipient of prestigious national and international awards, is an emeritus professor at the University of Pennsylvania and widely regarded internationally as the leading active scholar and writer in the field of children's play and playlore. His visit to Australia, hosted and sponsored by the Australian Centre and Museum Victoria, is supported by a Senior Specialist Fulbright Award.



To complement the lecture, the Museum will present a display of material from the Dorothy Howard Collection in the Australian Children's Folklore Collection. It is also hoped to republish, for the first time in Australia, the eleven monographs written by Dorothy Howard about aspects of Australian children's folklore.

DOROTHY HOWARD:
AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE

Traditional Games and Play of Australian Children, unpublished, 1954-55

Folklore of Australian Children, *Journal of Education*, Vol.2, No.1, March 1955

The Game of "Knucklebones" in Australia, *Western Folklore*, Vol.XVII, No.1, January 1958

Australian "Hoppy" (Hopscotch), *Western Folklore*, Vol.XVII, No.3, July 1958

Ball Bouncing Customs and Rhymes in Australia, *Midwest Folklore*, Vol.IX, No.2, 1959

Autograph Album Customs in Australia, *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, June 1959

Marble Games of Australian Children, *Folklore*, Vol.71, September 1960

Counting-Out Customs of Australian Children, *New York Folklore*, Summer 1960

Notes & Queries: The "Toodlebuck" – Australian Children's Gambling Device and Game, *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol.73, No.287, 1960

String Games of Australian Children, *Folklore*, Vol. 72, June 1961

Folklore of Australian Children, *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, Vol.X, No.3, Fall 1965



Cock fighting or 'Hoppo Bumpo', Melbourne, Victoria, 1954. Australian Children's Folklore Collection, Museum Victoria.



'Wash the dishes, dry the dishes, turn the dishes over', Melbourne, Victoria, 1954. Australian Children's Folklore Collection, Museum Victoria.

▣ PLAYGROUND RHYMES KEEP UP WITH THE TIMES

Janice Ackerley

Iona and Peter Opie's research has shown us that children's nursery rhymes and playground rhymes has a firm grounding in history. Many of the rhymes currently heard in the New Zealand school playground can be traced to origins in the United Kingdom, as far back as Elizabethan times. The skipping and clapping rhymes have origins in Black American culture.

As Course Director of the National Diploma of Children's Literature paper, 'Patterns of Language', I have the privilege of receiving and filing many examples of playground lore, collected by students of this course. Each year I receive hundreds of samples of playground rhymes and chants. On closer examination of these gems I have been interested to notice that a number of these rhymes have been adapted to fit in with our world of hectic change. In a world of ever changing fashions in clothing, food, music, entertainment, technology and language, the rhymes of our playground have also been adapted to reflect the changing social trends and the consumerism that is part of today's society.

The rhymes of New Zealand school children deal frankly with social issues, including drugs, gangs and even the recent foot and mouth scare in the United Kingdom. There is a strong Maori – Pacific Island influence, and Aussie knocking is also featured. Our national anthem has many variations that reflect different aspects of our cultural identity. The influence of commercialism can be seen in the many rhymes including popular brand names and television programmes and movie stars.

One rhyme that was received from both ends of the country was a parody sung to the tune of 'Row, Row, Row your Boat':

<i>Roll, roll, roll your dope</i>	<i>Roll, roll, roll your dope</i>
<i>Scrunch it at the end,</i>	<i>Scrunch it at the end,</i>
<i>Spank it up</i>	<i>Puff, puff</i>
<i>And have a smoke</i>	<i>That's enough</i>
<i>And pass it to your friend</i>	<i>Now pass it to your friend.</i>

On the same theme and also parodied is the Maori song 'Po kare kare ana':

*Po kare kare ana
I was smoking marijuana
I gave it to the teacher
She said, "Come here!"
I said, "No fear.
I'll be back next year
With a bottle of beer,
To rub in your hair."*

Gang warfare is featured in this rhyme sung to the theme of the television series 'Beverley Hillbillies':

*There once was a man and his name was Tower.
He went down town to join Black Power.
There once was a man and his name was Bob.
He went down town to join Mongrel Mob.
Along came Tower with his 303
And he blew those boys right out of Beverley
(Hills – that is)*

