

The Gregory Book

GO AND MEK YER OWN SAUSAGES!

A collection of tales, rhymes and advice
from the residents of Gregory House, Grantham,
Elder Tree Project 2019

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**This book is fondly dedicated to the memory of
Nora Hancock who sadly passed away peacefully
June 2019 mid way during this project.
She gave her all to the discussion and workshops and
contributed many beautiful memories, experiences
and creative words that will remain forever
held within the pages of this book.**

Foreword By Michelle Mother Hubbard

The Elder Tree writing residency at Gregory House, has been exciting and challenging. Working with such a varied group of wonderful elders all keen to share their life experiences and stories brought the obvious dynamics of trying to ensure every participant had a voice and got an equal opportunity to be listened to, and to contribute during the sessions. We have edited as lightly as possible to ensure that the voices of our wonderful participants are loud and clear.

Creative outputs were achieved via large and small group discussion, writing prompts, handling objects, sensory stimulation, and the exploration of familiar rhymes, songs, and sayings, plus a museum visit.

We started with blank paper, but soon found many themes and commonalities to explore! It's harder than you think trying to 'focus-in' when there are so many amazing characters, with such wide experience and tapestries of life, they could put the Bayeux Tapestry to shame! We've certainly got a right diverse medley of pages here for you to read. We are sure you're going to love them as much as we do.

Thank you to:

Lytisha Tunbridge, for her personal, professional and creative support as Shadow Writer throughout this project.

All Gregory House Staff, particularly Anna the manager.

Staff and volunteers at Grantham Museum.
Writing East Midlands for giving me the opportunity to work on this project.

Arts Council England, The Baring Foundation for funding the project.

Last but not least, the amazing participants for allowing me to be custodian of their life stories and experiences:

Alan Woods, Bobby Bell, Erica Garret, Eva Lemmon, Frank Northing, Jean Miller, Joan Mattless, Kathleen Thomas, Ken Bean, Margaret Johnson, Maurice Hobson, Nora Hancock, and Phyllis Woods.

*We leave you our tips and advice, right here.
The things we don't want to see lost and disappear.*

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A Lifetime of Experience

713 years of combined wisdom,
and we still haven't got the answer!
Don't throw anything away,
it might be useful one day.

If we can get our brains going,
They might be useful too.
Crank them up!
Crank the car.
Our pearls of wisdom,
That's what these are!

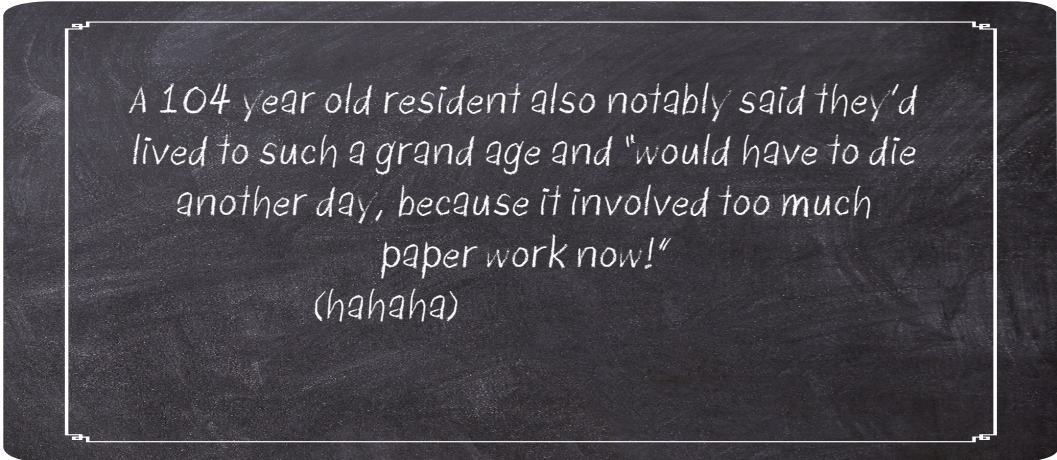
Crack the handle.
Turn the mangle.
Crank the sausage machine.
Life was but a dream.
Monday Washday, through to Fish Friday.
Rest day on a Sunday.

Monday, Washday:
Dolly blue, blue bags and starch.
On we would march.
Copper in the wash house.
Dolly pegs, dolly washer,
And a ponch, or a poncher.
And, of course, a washboard.

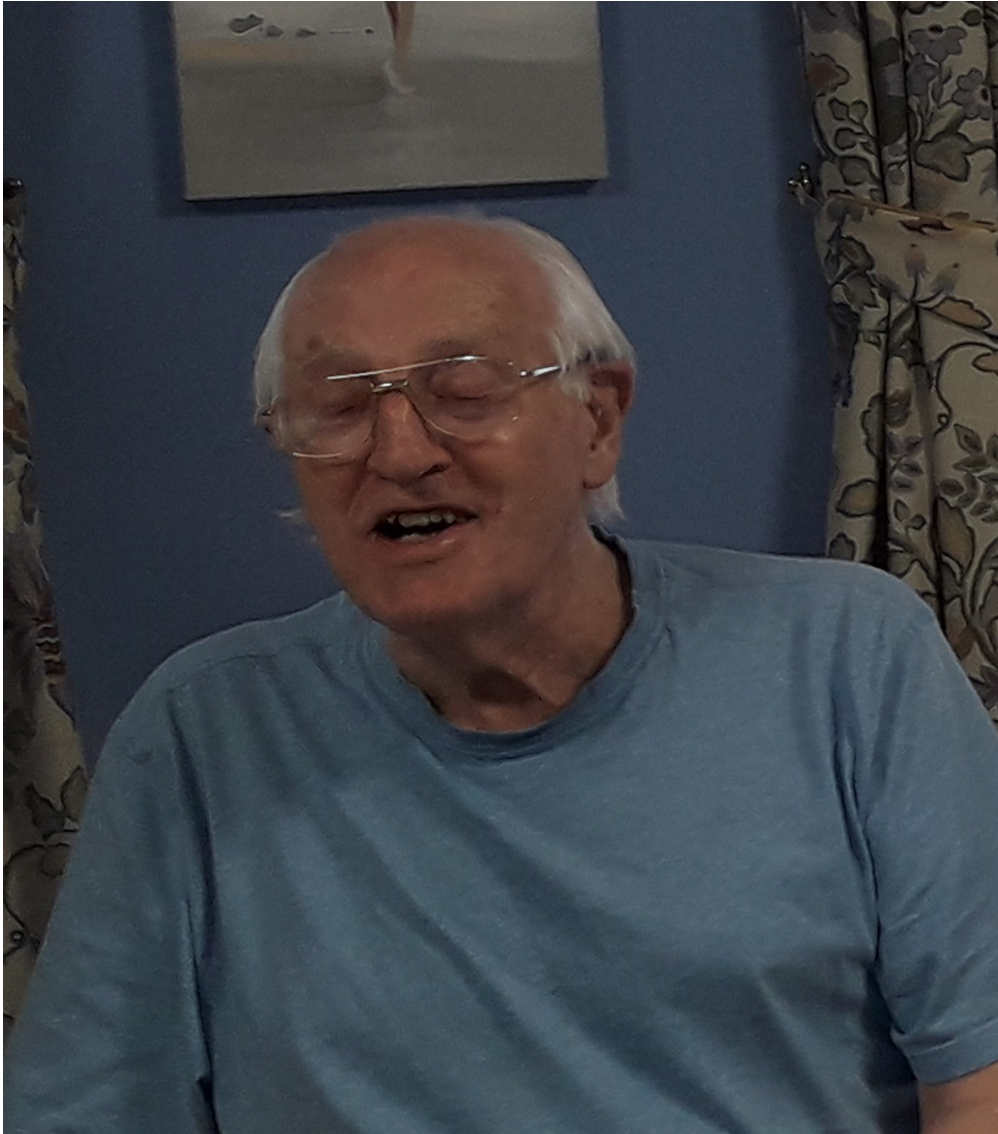
Wash bowl and jug and wash stand.
Poe, Guzunder, Potty, and a Bedpan.
Clothes airer. Clothes maid. Clothes horse.
There wasn't any remorse.

Carbolic soap. Sunlight/ Lifebuoy.
Elongated blocks of cleanliness, filled with joy.
Fairy Snow and Lux Flakes to wash the woollies with.
Smells that stay with you, as long as you live.
Gypsies came and sold wooden clothes pegs.
Busy doing chores, no time to rest our legs.

Chewing The Wheat. Simple fun.
It went rubbery, like chewing gum.
Separating the chaff from the wheat.
Threshing machines, in the cold or the heat.
Cutting bands of binder twine and feeding them into it.
Morning til evening, not a wasted minute.
8, 10, or 12 stone-weight sacks.
Working in the Pult Hole was dirty and black.
The dirtiest job on threshing day,
so you'd get an extra 1d (pence) pay.



*A 104 year old resident also notably said they'd
lived to such a grand age and "would have to die
another day, because it involved too much
paper work now!"
(hahaha)*



Connecting Through Nursery Rhymes and Songs from our Past

When we recite nursery rhymes,
it's nice realising they stay in our mind,
even now, after all this time.
What a blessing,
They haven't gone missing.

A version of Jack n Jill by our resident 104 years old...

*Jack n Jill went up the hill
Doing things they didn't oughta
Jill forgot to take her pill
And now they've got a daughter!*



Music Memories Made to Last

Funny how conversations
spring up a song in the mind and heart.
We've forgotten most of the endings,
yet still we remember the start.
Back in the days of gramophones,
when people played the rib bones,
and the spoons, and the washer-board.
Those were instruments everyone could afford.

Did you know:

*musicians/ artists using
these items for
instruments were
known as Skiffle Groups.*

*Lonnie Donegan
was a famous
'skiffle' character.*



Food Glorious Food

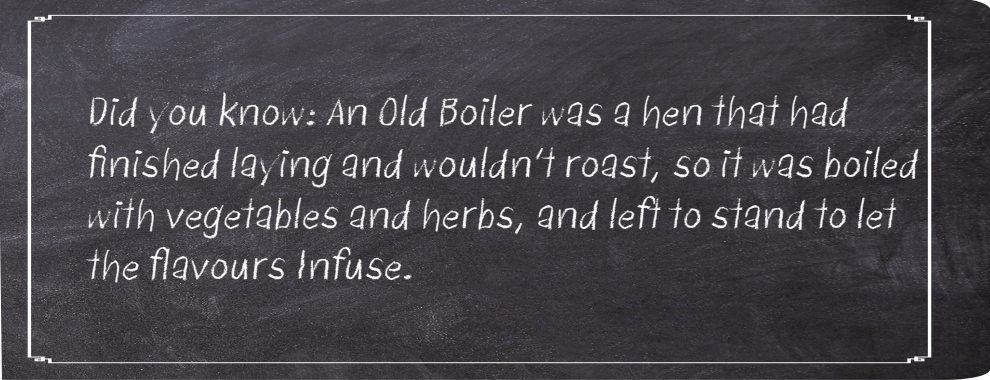
Boy, girl, woman and man
Connected together through the soil and the land.
After the war when everything was rationed:
Waste not, want not, be self-sufficient.

We had to grow our own, make do, mend, and pray.
We fixed things and didn't throw anything away.
We never knew when it might come in useful and help
us.
The animals we kept as livestock fed us.

This little piggy went to market alone,
This little piggy stayed here at home.
5 little sausages sizzling in the pan.
One went POP, and the other went BANG!

Lincolnshire sausages, intestines for skins.
Links, looped up in strings,
hang from a butchers' hook in his shop.
One-pound of sausages... chop, chop, chop!

Pork Pies were from Melton Mowbray
but we didn't mind them being sold locally.



*Did you know: An Old Boiler was a hen that had
finished laying and wouldn't roast, so it was boiled
with vegetables and herbs, and left to stand to let
the flavours Infuse.*

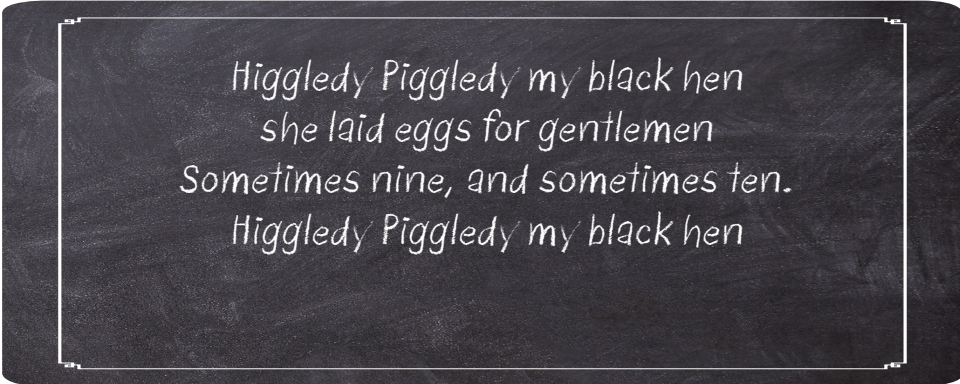
Potatoes

A 'tatty spinner'. Children picking potatoes.
Out in the fields, with a cold red nose.
Dancing up and down the rows.
Picking, picking potatoes.

Game

Run Rabbit Run...
You could poach rabbits, but occasionally,
If one 'accidentally'
Strayed into the path of a bullet,
You could have pheasant for dinner too.
There was an old saying locally
"Catch a rabbit with a humped back
To hold the pie crust up!"

Pheasant and game-bird were plucked and dressed.
Remove the quills, and hang, to rest.
For 10 or 11 days at best.
Rabbits had to be skinned and hung.
Delicious 'parsons nose' was a chickens bum.
(Excuse me, mum)



*Higgledy Piggledy my black hen
she laid eggs for gentlemen
Sometimes nine, and sometimes ten.
Higgledy Piggledy my black hen*

Pork scratching were known as 'Scraps'
Or scratching bits.
Scraps was also the name
For chip shop batter bits.
Going to the chip shop
Without any money
And receiving a bag of scraps
Was absolutely yummy.

Tu'penny worth of scallops,
A penny worth of chips,
A ha'penny bag of scraps,
Licking your lips.
Covered in salt and vinegar,
All wrapped up in newspaper,
And you'd got yourself a good supper!
If you were lucky you'd find some fish
Hidden in your batter-bits.



*Did you know: Brandy-Snaps were shaped by
curling them, whilst still soft, around the
handle of a wooden spoon.*

Try our famous Grantham white gingerbread.
Try our lovely delicious Lincolnshire plumb bread.
Then, if you're still hungry, perhaps
you could try our tasty Brandy Snaps.

Someone's auntie hid the plums she had scrumped
From local trees, in the bottom of her bloomers!
The children could see her walking down the street
Absolutely blooming loaded.



Pigs

Killing a pig was something
We knew was happening
But didn't like witnessing.
A 'Cratch' was used for killing.
When that thing came out...
Under the stairs we'd be hiding!

Stuffed Chine was a delicacy:
Pork stuffed with parsley.
Crackling, scratchings, chitlins (chitterlings)
A special pail to collect pigs blood in.
And then we'd have Black pudding.

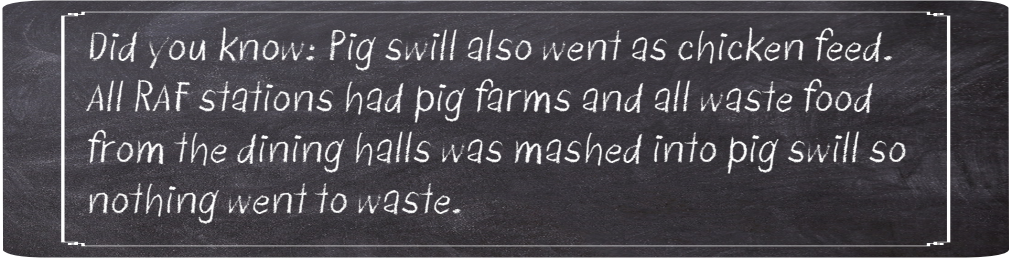
"There's nothing wasted from a pig, except its squeal"

A German lady made bread in the dark, from pigs
blood.
Nothing was wasted. This was clearly understood.

A 'spong'. A mincer. A sausage machine.
2 miles of sausage skin. Pigs trotters. Chitlins.
"Mek Yer Own Sausages!" "Sling Yer Hook!"
Strings of sausages all hung up,
dangling on the butchers shop hook.
Intestines made natural sausage skins,
to wrap the tasty sausage meat in.
Pig or Pork was something that everyone ate.
Ah, you couldn't beat Skinners of Barrowby,
and Watkins Pork Butchers of Westgate.

The 'Leaf' was the fat around the kidneys
Rendered down to make lard.
Skin-scrap pork scratchings
With salt 'n' vinegar. Times were hard.

Q. Where are the pig swill bins nowadays?
Think of all the waste we have!
Where does waste food go from here?
There used to be a swill bin on every corner.
We think it's time they should re-appear.



*Did you know: Pig swill also went as chicken feed.
All RAF stations had pig farms and all waste food
from the dining halls was mashed into pig swill so
nothing went to waste.*

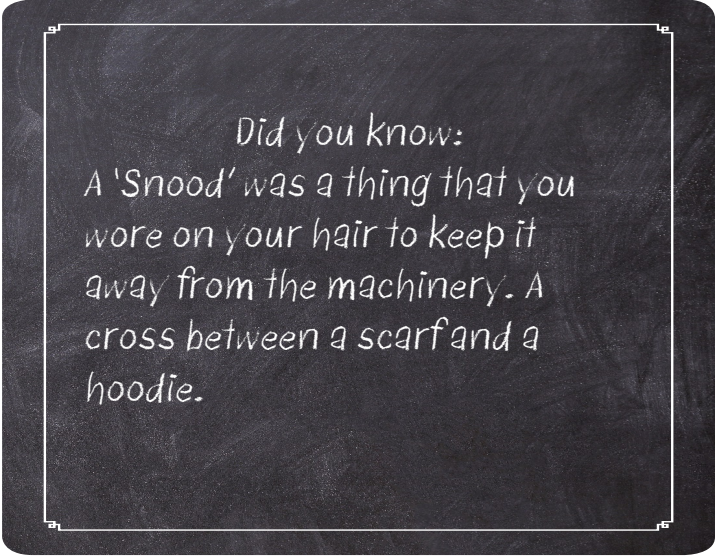
We've been thinking,
Never mind the 'stinking' ...
Bring back the swill-bin!
Bring back the swill-bin!

There was a young lass from Nantucket
Who emptied the pigsty to 'muck' it.
She was so very keen to keep the sty clean
That she kept her pigs in a bucket!

Pig Checks –
You were allowed to keep two pigs,
but not three.
One was your own,
The other for the Government bacon factory.

Homemade Wine

A good old drink, or two!...
Raise a glass to me and you.
With a Knees Up Mother Brown!!...
Something to wash the good old days down.
Sloe gin, picked in October.
Elder-flower picked in summer.
Elder-berry picked in the autumn
And blackberries if you saw em.
Guzgog (Gooseberry) wine.
Cowslip wine and Wheat wine.
But no, we didn't drink ALL the time!



*Did you know:
A 'Snood' was a thing that you
wore on your hair to keep it
away from the machinery. A
cross between a scarf and a
hoodie.*



The Weekend

Friday night was Amami Night.
The radio advert for Amami shampoo.
Washing your hair and staying in
As ladies sometimes do.
Green bottle for Brunette's
White bottle for Blonde's.
Don't forget (when dry, not wet)
To put your crocheted hairnet on.

Saturday night was bath night,
With a galvanised zinc dolly tub,
Which hung on the wall in the back yard.
Brought into the house for our fire-side scrub.
Filled with hot water
Heated in the copper.
Lifebuoy, red, springs to mind.
White Lifebuoy was hard to find.
Going to Malta and clearing the shop
Of their entire White Lifebuoy stock.

On Sundays you were not allowed to knit,
But could only read a 'suitable' book.
The pubs were always closed.
Gentlemen always doffed their hat to a lady.
Men could *never* wear a hat in church.
Ladies *had to* cover their head with a veil or hat in church.





Meet Us: From Here There
and Everywhere

I'm the girl named after a story book character.
My granddad was a 'lamp lighter'.
George Formby was leaning on a lamppost for a bit,
But none of the ones my granddad lit!
Let us all meet,
At the gas lamp, down our street.

I'm the proud owner
Of a much sought after
Rare 1937 Australian Wine Flask.
How very nice of you to ask.
And I saw every Northern red brick,
Sent to build the Iron Bridge
over the river Severn in Shropshire.
Which is where it still lives!

My childhood days when girls danced round the
maypole, and boys danced round the 'salmon tin'
singing:

Here we go round the salmon tin,
salmon tin, salmon tin.
Here we go round the salmon tin,
that doesn't have any salmon in.

(with apologies to Here We Go Round The Mulberry
Bush)



*Did you know: Girls in the cotton mills wore clogs.
A common Liverpool saying
"Liverpool, where the bugs wear clogs"
and they often called a woman 'Judy'.*

If The Clog Fits, Wear It

There was a man from Liverpool
He thought that he was very cool
He met a bug a-wearing clogs
He found his 'Judy' and gave her snogs...
But never undid her whirlpools.

Me, the girl from Peterborough, and beyond.
Dad lived and worked in the Tan yard, near the pond.
Back in the olden days
My granddad worked on the railways.
When my grandparents moved to Stroxtun,
From over in Long Bennington,
My grandma followed behind the van
Walking all the way with the pram.



There was a young woman called Nora.
No-one would ever ignore her.
She's from Lake Alberta,
Let nobody hurt her.
Hundreds of miles across the water.

Those dark days in the war.
Oh the things that I saw.
There, on the front, and the Siegfried Line.
Wounded in service a couple of times.
Many a mission, all for my country.
Le Legion D'Honneur was proudly awarded to me.

*Did you know: Lincolnshire Day is on 1st
October each year.*

*The Yellow Bellies ... a name given to people from
Lincoln because it was the name given to the
Lincolnshire troops due to the yellow jackets they
wore, and because the frogs and newts found
locally had yellow bellies.*

*People from Leicestershire (because of the sheep)
were known as Woolly Backs.*

*Nottinghamshire - ah, that would be that Robin
Hood bloke and his Merry Men!*

*Northamptonshire - known for its shoes and
shoe makers.*

*Liverpool - more than just The Beatles or
Gerry & The Pacemaker's Ferry 'cross the
Mersey.*

Canada - Its Maple Trees and its Maple Syrup.



Crafting & Re-purposing

Peg Rugs

Made by dim light in the evening.
Snips and strips of material re-using.
Using a normal peg if you were not posh,
Or a pegging needle if you could afford one.
Binding and band-cutting.
Hessian sacking
Was used for the backing.
This is how we made rugs.

Newspaper

It was used for wrapping
Your fish and chips and scraps in.

You'd get 4 squares from one sheet of newspaper -
That's what we used to use for loo roll!
None of this soft stuff back then.
We hung it from a bit of string on a hook
On the toilet wall or the back of the door.

When I'm Cleaning Windows

You could also clean windows with newspaper and
vinegar, and indeed we still do!
The printing ink spirits are different now though so they
don't clean the same. It was taken out because it was
so flammable, to stop fires happening in places the
newspapers were stored...
...We'd better let George Formby know!





Miscellaneous & Humorous

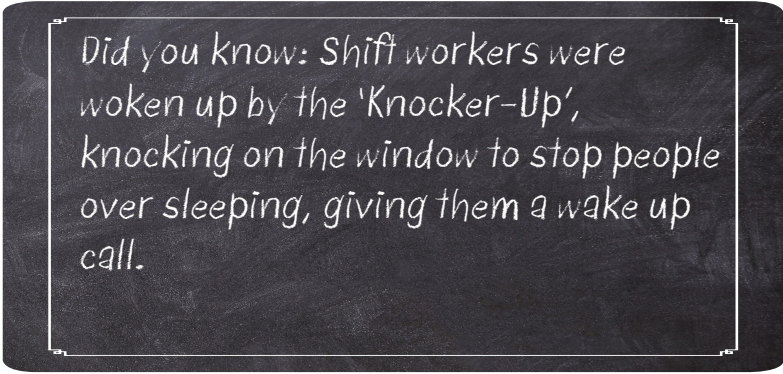
I'm deaf in that ear, and I can't hear in this one!

We used to have hot stones heated in the oven after dinner, wrapped in cloth, placed into a feather bed to keep us warm and cosy at night. There wasn't any heating back then!

A Liberty Bodice is an under garment (like a vest) with rubber buttons worn by ladies to keep their tummy and chest warm "or you'd catch your death of cold!" They also had suspender clips dangling from them, for stockings, with a gap at the top.

Next doors washing-line was always interesting...
It's how you learned a few things!
With a nudge nudge, and a wink wink.

Wee Willy Winkie runs through the town,
upstairs and downstairs in his night gown.
Knocking on the windows, crying through the locks:
are all the children safe in bed? It's now past eight
o' clock.



*Did you know: Shift workers were
woken up by the 'Knocker-Up',
knocking on the window to stop people
over sleeping, giving them a wake up
call.*

But who wakes up the knocker-upper?
A knocker-upper's knocker-upper, of course!

There's a Magpie in the garden!
What's black and white and read all over? ...
a newspaper.

Here's a forfeit...
Show four legs and a bare bottom ... an upside down
chair!

One of those O's
With a doo-dah-day

Charlie Dimmock and her chapel hat pegs
She opened the Downton Garden Centre
She is much bigger now,
So she opens bigger gardens!

There's a Rat in the Stook

Wheat sheaves. In the chaff-hole.
A 'stook' was an arranged plait of wheat sheaves.
You could play hide and seek
In the centre, underneath.
There where it was hollow.
All your friends would follow.
The thrashing and the threshing.
Stacked corn was fed in
To the threshing machines,
And the rats that had set up home in the stacks,
Would run out of the threshing machine rather fast.
People stood waiting
With a stick to whack the rats in.
The local council would pay
Per rat or squirrel tail that didn't get away .



Limericks

You have to laugh or you'd cry!
You don't have to be daft to live here, but it helps!
You have to learn to be patient here, and tolerant,
Or else!

There was a lovely man from Japan
He got stuck in a frying pan
It fell on the floor
And slid out the door
Avoiding eating SPAM.

Sam, Sam, the dirty old man
He washed his face in a frying pan,
Combed his hair with the leg of a chair
And died with a toothache in his ear.

The walking frame
Stays mainly...
In Margaret's garage!

We thought 'walkers' were crisps until we came in
here!

We all started with a stick,
Then advanced to a frame.
'One has painted one's walking stick red'.
Swedish trolley (light weight frames)



Young Mrs Hubbard
Moved into a corner cupboard.
Oh well,
Sorry, Michelle.

A Rhyme of Impossibilities

The elephant is a graceful bird
It leaps from twig to twig
It makes its nest in a rhubarb tree
And whistles like a pig

The Slippery Man

There was a young man from Yokahama
Who slipped on the skin of a banana
He'd forgotten the rest
But remembered his vest
And turned up wearing his pyjamas.

The Slippery Man Part 2

There was a young man from Yokahama
Who slipped on the skin of a banana
His son ate his breakfast in slippers
And always ate jam with his kippers
He'd go anywhere to find a good fair
To ride on the biggest Big Dippers

Old Blue Eyes and the Woman From Peru

There was a daft woman from Peru
Who got stuck in a puddle of glue
Then to her surprise, a man with blue eyes
Said, now I'm stuck here with you, too.

Glue Factory

Yuk! The horrible stink of pig and horse bones
being turned into glue at the glue factory.
Some smells get stuck in the nose,
as well as stuck in the memory.





Childhood Pranks & Punishments

“Who remembers mischief night?”

The ‘Devil Up The Drain Pipe’

Setting a piece of newspaper alight

then watching it whoooosh up and out into the night!

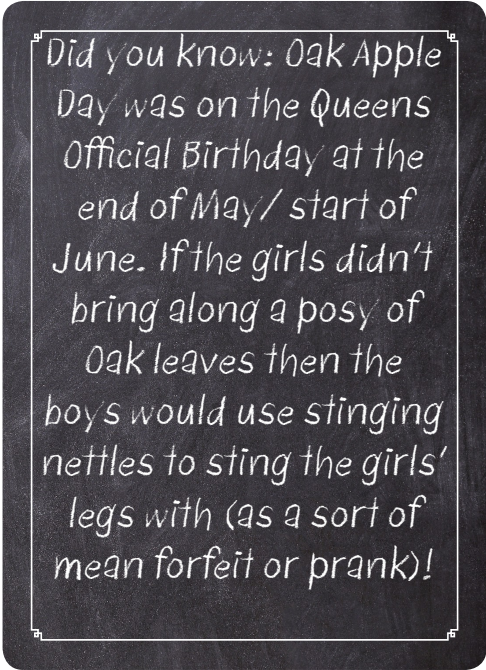


Rubbing fresh horse manure onto the door ‘snick’
Watching people wipe their hands and get it off,
quick!

'Window tapping' –

Two boys would get a piece of string,
Rigged with a nail or something
Each stood either side making it tap on the window.
They scarpered fast when the door was opened
though!

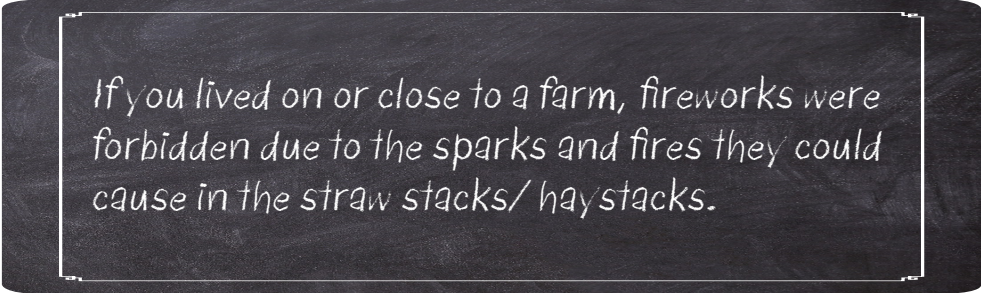
'Knock A Door Run'. Innocent fun.
Tying adjacent front doors together.
Then hiding behind a bush, trying to keep hush.
Knocking and roaring with laughter
as they tried to open their doors thereafter!



*Did you know: Oak Apple
Day was on the Queens
Official Birthday at the
end of May/ start of
June. If the girls didn't
bring along a posy of
Oak leaves then the
boys would use stinging
nettles to sting the girls'
legs with (as a sort of
mean forfeit or prank)!*

Punishments for naughty children.
Let's not forget
The slipper, the cane,
And the naughty step.
Being sent to sit in a corner,
Like Little Jack Horner.
Or swiftly sent to bed
Without any supper!

*There was an old woman who lived in a shoe,
With so many children, she didn't know what to do.
She gave them some broth, without any bread,
And smacked all their bottoms, and sent them to bed.*



*If you lived on or close to a farm, fireworks were
forbidden due to the sparks and fires they could
cause in the straw stacks/ haystacks.*



Long Gone Familiar Sounds

The street cries of the Rag and Bone man peddling,
With his horse and cart clip-clopping.
Hark, hark, the dogs do bark,
the beggars are coming to town.
Some in rags, and some in bags,
and one in a velvet gown.
Those long gone familiar sounds.

Another yesteryear sound
The Milk Man doing his round
With his horse and cart, and the milk churns rattling.
A 10 gallon churn he was delivering.
Milk scooped out with a measuring jug.
Quart or half gallon... glug, glug, glug.

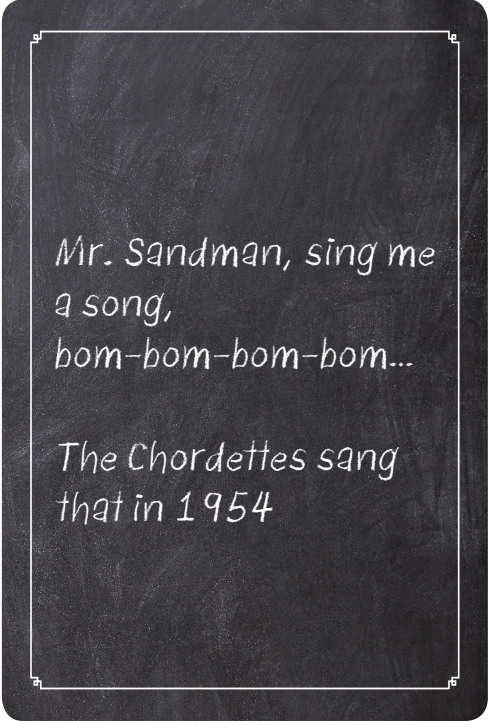
It's old Guy Fawkes
The sounds and smells of bangers,
Jumping Jacks and Sparklers.
We made a 'guy' from old clothing.
Packed him with newspaper stuffing.
Paraded him round in a wheelbarrow, shouting
"A Penny for the guy! A penny for the guy!"

A hole in my sock,
a hole in my shoe,
a hole in my hat where the rain leaks through.
Please can you spare a penny, or two.
A penny for the guy.

We wondered, was that a rhyme
Recycled from Christmas time?

Christmas is coming
The Geese are getting fat.
Please do put a penny in the old man's hat.
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'ppeny will do.
If you haven't got a ha'penny, then God Bless you!

And speaking of Christmas;
We were told if we didn't get to sleep
On Christmas Eve
That Santa wouldn't leave
A present, or a surprise.
Instead, the Sand Man,
Who usually puts sleep-dust into our eyes,
Would simply fill our Christmas stocking
... Full of sand!

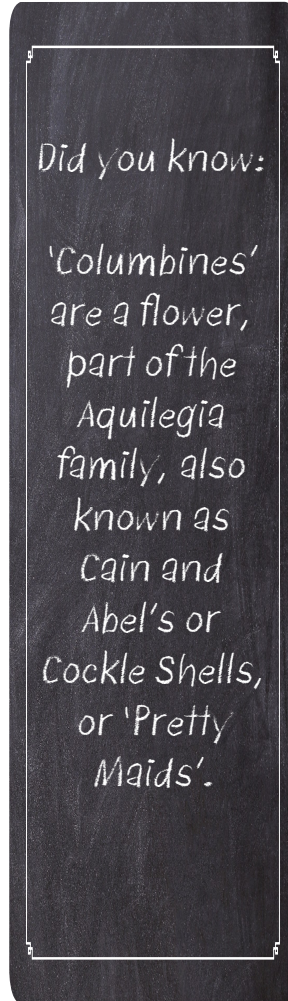
A blackboard with a white border, containing two lines of text in a cursive script.

*Mr. Sandman, sing me
a song,
bom-bom-bom-bom...*

*The Chordettes sang
that in 1954*

A Canadian version of a popular rhyme:

Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does you garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells,
And 'Columbines' all in a row...



Well there you go. We didn't know.
But it's true what they say:
You learn something new every day!



Ailments

*"Jack and Jill went up the hill
to fetch a pail of water,
Jack fell down and broke his crown
and Jill came tumbling after.
Up Jack got and home did trot,
as fast as he could caper.
Went to bed to mend his head
with vinegar and brown paper..."*

Vinegar?! Why vinegar?
Well, it was good for cleaning windows,
treating bee stings and ant bites too.
But as for a broken head, what good could it do?
Thank goodness care-staff don't try this on me & you!

Sneezles by A.A. Milne:

They said that the measles could turn into sneezles
And bundled him into his bed.
They gave him what goes for a cold in the nose,
And some more, for a cold in the head.

*... It wasn't the cough that carried him off,
t'was the coffin they carried him off in.*

A short cautionary tale: Let me tell you about the plight of a young lad aged 3. One day an older girl came to collect him and take him to dance round the Maypole in his white trousers and white shirt... Well, the trouble was, his mum had recently given him Syrup-Of-Figs! Dancing round the Maypole dressed all in white, then having a nasty 'accident' that ruined his white suit was one of those memories his mother never let him forget.

Rickets was a vitamin D
Or calcium deficiency,
From lack of sunshine and good food.
So play outdoors, jump around and move.
The school milk program,
Aimed to alleviate this problem.

Measles and Chicken pox were very contagious.
We'd be covered in calamine lotion for ages.
Mumps. Toothache. Earache – bring out the cloves,
Said to be very good for all of those.
Bites and Burns and Bruises. Styes and Blisters and
Ulcers.
Nits, were an itchy curse, often found by the nit nurse!



Syrup-Of-Figs was a routine remedy often given to children as a laxative, usually at weekends on Friday evening after school to 'clear you out' for the week ahead. You didn't dare stray far from the toilet all weekend! One way of ensuring us kids didn't stray far!

Sweet Niter – this was a product made from Sodium Nitrate Minerals, that was give to children feeling poorly, a bit like Calpol is today. It tasted so nice we invented illnesses just to get a spoonful of it!

Poultice or Pin? Boils and Carbuncles usually appeared on the bottom or in the armpit. Those fleshy delicate places. All required a good drawing-out poultice. The poultice was made with bread and hot milk or hot water. Another remedy would be to pop them using a pin or sewing needle, heated in a naked flame to sterilise it first.



Courting:
a series of coincidences...

'Rabbit Run' ... on a Sunday, when the shops were shut, young men and women could be seen parading up one side and down the other side of town, hoping to attract a partner.

The last girl you danced with,
Is the girl that you walked home, or walked home with.
The man who asked if he could walk a girl home,
She said yes, then revealed it was a 10-mile-round-trip!
It's a fine romance, without any kissing.
My girl, my missus.

Well, courting was such a long time ago!
Makes it hard to remember it well,
But I was 16 years old when I met my husband,
And we met in the old Methodist chapel.

Smiling and talking
Emotion is all part of the courting.
May I walk you home?
A nice conversation
A mutual relation
And maybe some quiet time alone.

There was a young girl from New York
Who liked a nice bit of crispy pork.
She said she was taken

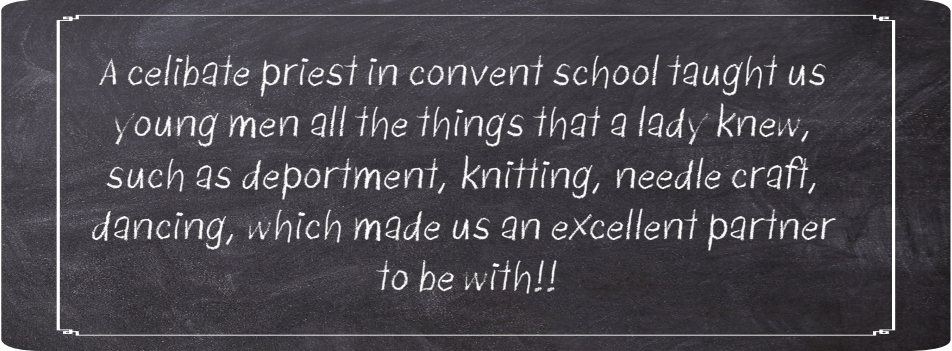
But tempted by bacon
Agreed just to go for a walk

There was a young girl from New York
Who ate men with a knife and a fork.
She preferred those who were plump
With a nice bit of rump
Because of her liking for pork.

There once was a young girl from Lincoln
Who said she'd been doing some thinking.
She wobbled home late from a terrible date
And headache from what she'd been drinking.

Old time dancing,
modern dancing.
An ideal partner,
for fine romancing.

Mary had a little lamb, she also had a bear.
I've often seen her little lamb ... But never seen her
bare!



*A celibate priest in convent school taught us
young men all the things that a lady knew,
such as deportment, knitting, needle craft,
dancing, which made us an excellent partner
to be with!!*

A Love Like Ours

For those that loved and lost
For those who proposed by post
For those that got posted over seas
For those that left, then came back to me.

For those who proposed in the sunshine
For those who proposed in the rain
For those who proposed to those they loved the most
Life was never the same again.

For those that proposed on a bike
For those that found love at first sight
For those that went walking on a Sunday night
And finally found the one they liked...

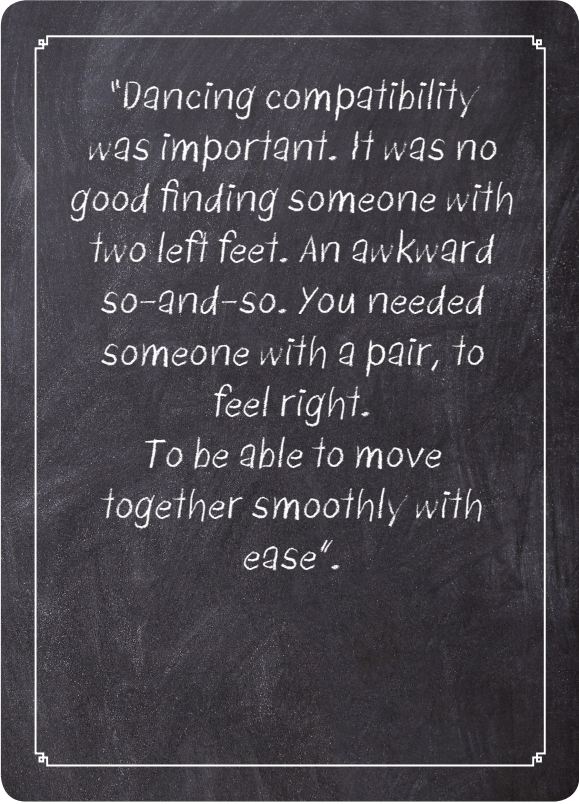
For those that met in a chapel.
For those that met in a church.
For those that met on a dance floor
And danced until their feet hurt.

For those that went to MARCO's dancing
And met their spouse from fine romancing
For those who asked fathers' permission
For those who found love and compassion.

For those who found love from a distance
For those that found love in an instance.
For those that believed it was fate
For those that met their soul mate

For those that promised to wait
And longed for the very next date.
For those that met on stage
For those that got engaged

For those that met through family and friends
And stayed together right to the end...
This is a poem for you.



*"Dancing compatibility
was important. It was no
good finding someone with
two left feet. An awkward
so-and-so. You needed
someone with a pair, to
feel right.
To be able to move
together smoothly with
ease".*

Deportment was important
Yoga and Pilates
Sausage and tomatoes
Pontius Pilate
Punches private.

We met at the chapel
He played in a band
And offered to walk me home.
It was love at first sight
So we knew it was right
The best music we've ever known.

Some clumsy dancers have two left feet,
But the ideal partner has one of each.

Beware of the dancing teacher
Who was a man eater
Oh the courting and the wooing
And the to-ing and the fro-ing





Top Tips For Good Living

Spare the rod and spoil the child.
Or throw a stern look from the start.
Did I hear somebody say
“Cold hands, warm heart”.

Look out mi laddie...
Don't be so flipping faddy!
We were quite healthy, in spite of no NHS
Because we lived in the countryside, I guess.

Yes things were hard, but things were good
All the working men were part of an insurance club.
We're not suggesting everything was great.
There were hand written medical cards,
right up to 1948.

Everything written in little boxes, see.
Like Earl Of Ancaster, and his family
'Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby'.

And if your eyes are failing
And you can't see when you're driving
Make sure the locals know you
So they can attempt to avoid you!

One of the best things that happened to me,
I learned to drive when I was sixty.
You never stop learning. It's never too late.
Set your goals, then celebrate.

Walk your way to health, and keep cycling.
And none of this over-eating.
Food was on ration,
but nobody was starving.

We grew food in our gardens
and kept chickens, if you could.
And for headaches, or pregnancy,
Nettle Tea was good.

When the bed sheets were wearing thin
We didn't chuck em in the bin.
We'd make a 'sides-to-middle'.
They were still very comfortable.

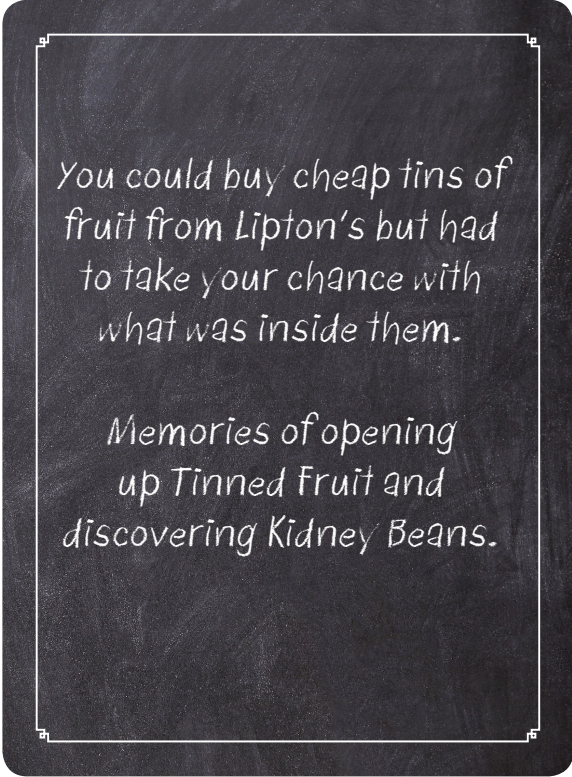
Waste not, want not. Believe it.
Pick it up and eat it.
Never did us any harm
Foot and mouth didn't bring us down.

No nonsense about paper in our loos
Newspaper was used for number 1's, and number 2's
Toilet seats in family sizes to choose.
Big ones, middle ones, and little ones too.

A long handled ladle,
Dad used to scoop slop from the loo
To spread muck onto the garden so everything grew.
The veggies loved leaks... but if only they'd known
What went on them, and how they were grown!

I hate to have to beg,
But "please, can you spare us an egg?"
Never waste anything, not even the fat out of the tin.
We'd do anything but throw it in the bin.
We'd make it into something else
That we could keep upon our shelves.

It wasn't the answer to our dreams,
Opening up tinned fruit and finding kidney beans!
Too bad if mum had nothing else for tea,
She did her best to stretch it out for you and me.

A blackboard with a white border, containing two lines of text in a cursive script.

*You could buy cheap tins of
fruit from Lipton's but had
to take your chance with
what was inside them.*

*Memories of opening
up Tinned Fruit and
discovering Kidney Beans.*

When finding sugar got harder
Dad reached for the 'depth-charger'
Plop a saccharin in to the cup
It went down down down
Then fizzed up up up.
We're spoilt these days,
But then we didn't know any other,
Unlike our father and our mother.

My father, he was a lovely danner.
He stitched his trousers, with his Long Johns on,
Sewing away with the radio on.
Stood up and found he'd sewn them together
WRONG!

We lived through war on, war off, and more war.
With not much peace in between.
We wouldn't have what we have now for sure
If we hadn't have been through war before.

We passed clothes down the line,
From oldest to youngest. From family to family.
Cast-off clothes travelled around the county.
We didn't have shops for charity.

When visiting friends or relatives called round for tea
Some had codes within their family:
More In Pantry = M.I.P
Family Hold Back = F.H.B

Tips for a healthy mind

Is remembering these riddles and rhymes

Patience is a virtue
Obtain it if you can.
Often in a woman.
Seldom in a man...

...Frank was asked if he approved?
He felt that he had to agree.
Because he was out-numbered:
One, two, three!
(And four, five, six)!

I went to the pictures tomorrow.
I took a front seat at the back.
I bought plain cake with currants in.
I ate it, and gave it them back.
Where does the train come in?...
... At the station!

The train came along one way.
The car was travelling the other.
Both sped along to the junction at the same speed.
How did the car driver get across?
... His wife bought it for him! (A 'cross')

You take that back,
I'm a Leicestershire woolly Back.

When you come into this hall,
Use the paper, not the wall.
And, when you have eased the pain,
Don't forget to pull the chain!
... Shakespeare ... hahaha!

There was a not-so-young woman called Jean
Who, to fall out of a car, she was keen.
She gave us a fright
But it turned out alright
So we simply asked her where she'd been.

You have to laugh, or else you'd cry.
If you're happy and you know it, say H.A.P.P.Y.





A Day at Grantham Museum

I've been here before but a long time ago.
The Guildhall, next door, for dances in long dresses.
I used to come and change my library books.
Cowboy books and westerns, out on the prairies.
I came to the Mayor's dances,
By invitation to come to his 'do'.
My uncle was the Mayor of Grantham.
I've never been inside this building.
It's brand new territory for me.
I'm a Leicestershire woolly back, see!
New shops, new houses, new buildings.
Library laid newspapers out each morning for the men
that wouldn't otherwise get to read them.
Library in Boots used to be next to Timothy Whites and
Taylors.
Wheelchair bound, but we still get around.
They're very good to us.
There's a hat stand in here... Look, The Twat In The Hat.
Used to go to chapel in a hat.
You daren't go in without one.



The Aeroplane

Lancaster Bomber
German engine's deep
Rrrummmm Rrrummmm Rrrummmm
From over the seas
And we were ready
And we fired at them!

1970's furniture

Is that cheap G-plan or natural Oak?
We had a big oak side board.
Never seen another one like it in my life

1970's wallpaper

We never had wallpaper, only emulsion
I grew up in a Woodchip house.

Jug and basin

Jug and basin
To wash your face in.
But we also used the basin,
To make our Christmas pudding in.

Model Of Grantham Town

We went to the local Picture House for tea.
Regular as clockwork, every Thursday.
It's where I had my wedding anniversary.
And Grantham was bombed in 1943.



Dambuster Music

Nice to hear the sound of The Dambusters.
We were in a fighting action area.
There was water all over.
We confiscated a motorbike.
Water up past the wheels.
All of a sudden the bike sank
And disappeared into the water.
We had no choice but to leave the bike
And carry on, on foot, in the dark.

Handling objects...

Hot Iron

Pass it around.
It's made of heavy stuff!
A stand for holding something?
An old can opener?
Heavy and made of electric?
A hot iron perhaps?
If you drop it on your toe
It wouldn't be a "Dash, bother, and blow!"
It would be something French!

Rug Beater

Hang your rugs or carpets on the line
And give them a real good beating.
You get a lot of dust out
On a long garden with the biggest piece of lawn.

Wash Board

In the sink with a bowl full of soapy sunlight suds.
A block of soap in your hand
To scrub the collars and cuffs and difficult stuff.
But don't use Lifebuoy on a white shirt
Because it sends them red!
A ponch or poncher with three legs.
Then there was no Persil about.
Oxydol and Rinso on a wash day Monday.
An all day job, starching and blueing.
Starch in a bowl from pillowcase down to
handkerchief.

Bean Slicer

A bean slicer!
Put your kidney beans in.
Round and round and round. Turning.
Screw it to the draining board.
String em first!
Get your bundle done.
Sit and do em.
Sunday afternoon,
Or a wet day job.
If you didn't have a knife sharp enough,
Then use the bean slicer.
Top and tail.
And don't forget to de-string them if they're a bit old.



Dolly Peg

A knob at the end. A clip.
An ivory shovel tool. Tongues.
A fork... a big one!
A dolly's head. A clothes peg.
A dolly-peg, to hang your sheets out with.

Glass Bottle

I really can't believe my eyes.
What a marvellous surprise.
To think after all this time
They've kept this bottle of mine.
Well, my Granddad's.
G. Dale. My granddad!
The lamppost was his signpost.
The bottle with the marble stop.
Still rattling merrily in the top.
And he made his own lemonade pop!

Stuffed Rat

Don't pull my tail.
Got anything to eat?
How did I end up here?
Not seen you here before.
Did somebody just kill me?
You rotten sod!
Birds whistling. Eeeep squeaking.
Blue rat out on the river
Only one field away.

'He's brown. A general rat'.
Said mice squeaking.
Anything going through the grass or water?
Meeting Squadron Blue.
Don't want anything to do with you!
They'll get indoors if they can.
Crossing river Wytham
Carrying a ribbon
With its tail swishing
Watching men fishing
To the water rhythm
At the bottom of my garden.
I smell a Rat!
I smell my dinner.
A fish, a vole.
I smell chips and scraps
By the flats.
Do you suppose
He's following his nose
All the way up to the chip shop?
Any food, scraps, and tats, and cats.
Would a rat attack a cat?
Or would a cat attack a rat?
Not in our houses.
He catches mices and mice.
We've not been squeamish.
He's feeling nettles and prickles.
He was quite happy over there,
In the box, on the table, behind the chair.
He's got a taste for orange tomato soup.
He's solid from nose to tail.

A very big thing! Lunch crumbs all over the table.
Crumbs of caramel shortcake
And flaky bits of Steak Bake.
Wondering who's near by.
Will he share? I doubt it.
Mice might think it's nice,
But there's none for him.
There's not a nice mouse in the house.
A rat wouldn't attack a person.
He never ever attacked us.
There might be a dog nearby.
Some will creep round and kill it.
"Move a bit", said the Whippet.
A judge walking by.
A very distinguished guy
With a long grey curly wig,
Just like the tails of a pig.
He's got a vivid imagination.
Good job he can't bite us!
Ermin The Vermin
That's what we'll call him.
In Woolworths this rat came up from the basement
To drink from a bucket that caught the rain.
But it was a trap. They laid some fat,
So the rat stuck fast to the floor boards.
He's stuck to the board even now,
Yet seems quite happy, somehow.
It's not every day he gets to play.
He's glad we've passed this way.

A Closing Verse

Can you remember... Nostalgia.
It's a part of growing older.
We tried to write looking to the future
But slipped back to the past, where it's comfier.

*Did you know:
Go And Mek Yer Own Sau-
sages! is a phrase which
means...
Sling yer hook!
(Butchers meat hook, not
fishing hook).
Clear off!*

*On Yer Bike mate!
Get out the way!
Be away with you!*



About The Elder Tree

The Elder Tree is a three-year project led by Writing East Midlands, delivered by a consortium which includes Creative People and Places, First Art and Made in Corby, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, and Museums and Development East Midlands, working with non-arts focussed organisations Age UK, Shaw Healthcare and Orders of St John Care Trust. It is funded by Arts Council England and The Baring Foundation.

Elder Tree aims to empower groups of older people across the East Midlands to create new work stimulated by museums, archives, heritage spaces, with guidance and support from professional writers. Activity includes story-telling, reminiscence writing, poetry, group reading and role-play, and embodies an ethos of celebration and fun. The project also celebrates the wealth of experience, knowledge and talent older people bring to communities, especially in the former coalfield areas of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, rural parts of Lincolnshire, former steelwork centre Corby and inner-city areas in Leicester.

The Elder Tree consists of 12 different writing residencies, with many taking place in residential care home settings or community centres - a truly participatory project, which is created in collaboration with the older people participants, with the writers guiding them through the process.

Writing East Midlands believe literature can make social change, and evaluation of The Elder Tree will add to the body of evidence towards showing 'how participating in creative writing activity affects feelings of social isolation and wellbeing in older people' and will inform our, and our partners' future work.



**The Baring
Foundation**

