

FOREWORD



I am honoured to write a short forward to the Stanley Robertson school resource. My father Stanley could never have imagined, as a young boy being chased home from school by the scaldie bairns that one day his name would find fame in academic circles throughout the world.

Traveller children were ignored by the school system and because they were different to other children they were bullied and persecuted daily. However, my father was a very clever boy with a great imagination and this mind was fired up by reading books of far off places and peoples.

The world was much bigger than the cold dark tenement flat where he lived - ironically within a stone's throw of the University of Aberdeen - a place which some 50 years later would recognise his genius.

As children we never realised how lucky we were to have a father who was a storyteller, balladeer, and a keeper of his people's proud history. We learned through the stories the importance of honesty, kindness, and integrity. The Jack tales set our minds alight with stories of monsters, dragons and castles. As well as challenges and difficult tasks to overcome. My father had travelled the world, sharing his love and knowledge of those songs and stories; but he was most proud when chosen to work at Aberdeen University on a project documenting all he knew of his own history, while collecting songs, stories and memories from other Travellers their songs, stories and memories. Towards the end of the three-year project he was nominated to receive an honorary degree from the university. He was delighted, he was honoured; he was receiving this in some ways on behalf of the many Travellers who had gone before him with no recognition.

We as a family were immensely proud of our father and this resource will help keep his memory alive. My life has been enriched by the songs, stories and memories of my Traveller ancestors and I hope you will find joy and excitement in using this resource.

Tony Robertson, Stanley Robertson's Son

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource has been made with teaching professionals and educators in mind. Each activity plan has been carefully selected and designed to sit neatly within the curriculum, providing an inclusive approach to subject choice.

The design of the pack allows for flexibility and ease of use, spanning Early, First and Second Level CfE education – each section colour co-ordinated. This resource is a celebration of Stanley Robertson, Aberdeen loon and master storyteller. It has been compiled and designed by those who were influenced by Stanley and knew him best.

It is also a window into the centuries-old culture and lore of Scottish Travellers – the lore Stanley spent his life protecting. It is our hope that this resource will empower young people to learn about their local heritage, the diversity of Scotland and their role in preserving tradition.

In a way this resource is an act of preservation, passing the glowing torch of tradition from Stanley, to the next generation - so that they can become the Tradition Bearers of our future.

TERMINOLOGY

This resource has utilised the term 'Scottish Traveller' throughout, which differs slightly from the Scottish Government's official term 'Scottish Gypsy/Traveller'. This is in line with how Stanley Robertson defined himself, but it is important to note that not all families accept this terminology with some preferring to be defined as 'Scottish Gypsy/Travellers' (Mclennan et al, 2017), 'Nawken' (Donaldson, 2020) and 'Torikker' (MacDonald, 2009).

Mclennan, K., McPhee, R., McPhee, S., Turbett, C. (2017) *Gypsy Travellers: Human Rights and Social Work's Role.* IRISS Insights.

Donaldson, D. (2020) *Why I think self defining as Nawken will help reduce depression rates.* Available from: https://conyach.scot/why-i-self-define-as-nawken/

MacDonald, J. (2009) *Learn Beurla Reagaird [Words & phrases] 1.* Youtube. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il_kDvPCmwk&t=159s

CONTENTS

Who are The Scottish Travellers?

CfE Early Level	3
CfE First Level 13	3
CfE Second Level	

WHO ARE THE SCOTTISH TRAVELLERS?

Nobody can be certain on the origins of Scottish Travellers. Some have claimed that the community's roots lie in a pre-celtic nomadic people (Whyte, 2001); whilst others claim that the contemporary Scottish Traveller community is more closely linked with the Roma diaspora from Northern India (McPhee, 2017). However, what can be said is that they are one of Scotland's oldest nomadic cultures, having been travelling Scotland's highways and by-ways for nearly one thousand years.

Scottish Travellers continue to retain their unique culture through distinct cultural codes, languages and beliefs. Indeed, language and orality is a pillar of Scottish Traveller identity, with at least two spoken languages present in the community – Beurla Raigaird and The Cant. Beurla Raigaird is mainly spoken by the Highland Travellers, with The Cant being spoken throughout the Lowlands, Perthshire and North-East of Scotland.

Scottish Travellers have played an array of roles in Scotland over time, lending their specialised skills and talents to the development of the land. From skilled tin-smithing and basket-making, to seasonal harvest work; from remarkable ballads and songs to wonderful story traditions with local and international connections. Scottish Travellers have contributed to and have been an integral part of Scotland's culture for centuries.

As a people, Scottish Travellers' history is littered with persecution and oppression; they have experienced marginalisation of their nomadic culture, been forced into reservations and have had their children forcibly sent abroad. Despite it all, they are a proud people, rich in heritage and culture – who continue to hold on to ancient traditions, customs and ways of life.

The lived identity of today's Scottish Travellers can take many forms, some families are permanently settled, others travel for part of the year and others live on the road permanently. This said, for much of the community, the ability to travel or telling stories of life on the road are still an integral part of the way they experience their identity.

Many Scottish Travellers interact with the environment in a much more extensive and intimate way than settled people; they inhabit it as the 'world's room'. Thus, the roads and campsites of Scotland are as much home as a flat or a house might be to those from the settled community. So, where you see a set of caravans pitched up where none were before, it's families at home, expressing belonging and culture, living a different world view.

As a community, oral tradition is greatly important; songs, folktales, rhymes and legends – orality is at the core of Scottish Traveller culture. The community uses this tradition to educate their children, passing on knowledge of genealogy, history and geography.

There is no comprehensive history book on Scottish Travellers, but despite this, many Scottish Traveller families can trace their ancestors back generations. Impressively, through their stories and songs, some are able to pinpoint family members at the Battle of Culloden, the Glencoe Massacre and the Highland Clearances! As a result Scottish Travellers have become renowned in the Story and Ballad traditions, notably families such as the 'Stewarts of Blair' and the Robertsons of Aberdeen played a crucial part in the Folk Revival of the 1960s and 70s.

Despite an ancient history in Scotland, attitudes towards Scotland's Travellers have been described as the 'last acceptable form of racism' by campaigners, with the Scottish Government admitting that much still needs to be done to tackle the socio-economic inequalities faced by the community (Scottish Government, 2019).

This resource is a celebration of one of Scotland's most renowned Travellers - Stanley Robertson. Through exploring his life and the important role he played in Scotland's story, we will empower a new generation of tradition-bearers in his memory!

Davie Donaldson, Scottish Traveller and Activist



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EARLY LEVEL

At Early level we will focus on Social Subjects, Literacy and Expressive Arts outcomes.

The activities will explore songs, rhymes, games, and movement. They will compare games in the past with games played by children now.

They will also provide opportunities for pupils to create a new song, game, and dance.

To introduce types of historical evidence, through discussion of children's games, past and present

RESOURCES:

- Sway Document
- Recordings of Stanley singing various street songs (embedded in Sway Document) or you can access them here: <u>All the boys in London</u>; <u>Flea, Fly, Flo!</u>; <u>Eenie Meenie</u>

LEARNING POINTS:

- I can Identify at least two different types of evidence which can provide information about the past, for example, pictures, family stories and artifacts.
- I can recall past events from my own life or my family's life, for example games we play, places we lived.

OUTCOMES

Social Subjects Experiences and Outcomes

ACTIVITY:

The following activities are presented in this Sway Document.

- 1) **Class discussion:** Which games do you play in the playground? At home? By yourself? With friends? What kinds of games did people play in the past?
- 2) **Sharing:** Ask the learners if their parents, guardians, or older relatives have told them about games they played or songs they sang in the playground.
- 3) **History Detectives:** Learners are to be 'detectives' who are using clues to figure out what kinds of games people played in the past use photos to see if they can figure out what the children are playing

4) Introduce Stanley Robertson's CD - Rum Scum Schoosh

Talk about how Stanley's recordings have made sure we don't lose these street songs and how the CD is evidence of the kinds of games and songs children used to play. Just like the photos and stories from their parents/guardians/grandparents are all evidence.

5) Listen to recording of Stanley singing 'All the Boys in London'

Talk about the fact that children used to sing songs as they played with ropes. This particular song was sung when 'caain Lundies' – turning two ropes at a time. They were swung inwards alternately.

- Have the learners tried skipping or seen others skipping?
- Why do they think children sang songs while skipping?

6) Listen to recording of Stanley singing Flea, Fly, Flo!

Introduce that this was a clapping game, then ask learners to try singing and clapping along! Watch the video of some clapping games and have learners try some. Then they can try to make up their own clapping game to accompany Flea, Fly, Flo.

7) Listen to recording of Stanley singing Eenie Meenie

Discuss when this rhyme might be used – e.g. when picking who is 'it' when playing catch. Take some time to help children learn the rhyme, before putting learners into groups and using the rhyme to pick who is 'it'!

- 8) Class Reflection: Reflect on the activity by asking learners:
- Would you like to play any of the games people used to play?
- Do you think you might use Eenie Meenie in any of your games?

To explore events and characters in texts and use what I learn to invent my own, sharing these with others in imaginative ways.

RESOURCES:

- Sway Document
- Recording of Stanley singing Quartermaster's Store embedded in Sway

LEARNING POINTS:

- I can invent my own texts to share with others
- I can communicate and share texts in different ways

OUTCOMES

Literacy

Experiences and

Outcomes

ACTIVITY:

The following activities are presented in this Sway Document.

1) **Recap:** Remind learners about Stanley's CD of street songs. Discuss why they think he made the CD – talk about the CD: as evidence of what people did in the past; telling people about how things used to be; a source of ideas for them. Talk about why Stanley made the CD.

2) Listen to recording of Stanley singing Quartermaster's Store:

Talk about what they heard – do they know what spats and bowler hats are? What is a quartermaster (a regimental officer, responsible for looking after supplies)? What else did they notice about the song (e.g. rhyming words)?

3) **Drawing Task:** Ask learners to draw the quartermaster's store with the rats in spats and bowler hats and lots of cheese – up to their knees! Share pictures when complete.

4) What else might be in the Quartermaster's store?:

Ask learners to choose other animals that might be in the store, before asking them to think of words that rhyme with those animals (ideas are provided on the Sway Document if required).

Create new verses for the song from their ideas and sing the new verses together.

5) Draw pictures to illustrate their new verses

- 6) Class Reflection: Reflect on the exercise by asking learners:
 - What was your favourite verse?
 - What have you learned today?

To make a personal link to the past by exploring items or images connected with important individuals.

RESOURCES:

- Sway Document
- Counters to use as pennies and quoits to use as horseshoes
- <u>Clip of Stanley talking about games he played</u> (embedded in Sway Document)

LEARNING POINTS:

• I can use knowledge of the past to demonstrate a difference between my life today and life in the past.

• I can talk clearly to others in different contexts, sharing feelings, ideas and thoughts.

OUTCOMES

Social Subjects
Experiences and

Outcomes

Literacy

Experiences and

Outcomes

ACTIVITY:

The following activities are presented in this Sway Document.

- 1) **Recap:** Do the learners remember the Rum Scum Scoosh CD and why Stanley recorded it? Talk about their favourite songs and rhymes from the CD.
- 2) **Show photos of children playing games in the past:** Do the learners recognise any of these games? Do they still play these games?
- 3) Listen to Stanley talking about the games he played as a boy. Use the questions on Sway to discuss the games he played. Have they ever played games with horseshoes or pennies? Talk about how games have changed /stayed the same.

- 4) **Drawing:** Learners should draw a line down the centre of their paper. On one side they should draw a picture to illustrate games that Stanley played and on the other side they should draw games that they play.
- 5) **Group work:** Ask learners if they can make-up a new game using pennies or horseshoes? (They could use counters for pennies and quoits for horseshoes.)

Ask learners to share their games and pick two or three to play with the rest of the class.

- 6) Class Reflection: Reflect on the exercise by asking learners:
 - What games did you draw and why did you choose them?
 - Which of the new games did you like best?



To have the opportunity and freedom to choose and explore ways to move rhythmically, expressively and playfully.

RESOURCES:

- Sway Document
- Recording and Words to Dance Tae Yer Daddy in Cant and English embedded in Sway Document or you can <u>access a recording here</u>.
- Recording and Words to 'Fa Learned Ye Tae Dance?' embedded in Sway
 Document or you can access a recording here

LEARNING POINTS:

• I can perform a range of simple, repeated, intentional movements and gestures.

 I can choose and explore ways of moving rhythmically, expressively and playfully.

OUTCOMES

Expressive Arts
Experiences and
Outcomes

ACTIVITY:

The following activities are presented in this Sway Document.

- 1) **Introduction:** Explain that Scottish Travellers, Stanley Robertson's community, used to sing and tell stories around the camp fire when Stanley was a boy. Explain that everyone would have a 'party piece'; some would tell a story, others would sing or play a tune. Explain that Scottish Travellers also have their own language, *The Cant*, and sometimes they would speak in Cant when Stanley was young.
- 2) **Listen to Belle Stewart singing Dance Tae Yer Daddy:** Encourage learners to sing along (words and song embedded in Sway Document).



3) Discuss The Cant:

- Do any of the learners speak another language?
- Did they know that Scottish Travellers had their own language?
- Did they know/guess what the words meant?
- 4) Listen to Stanley singing 'Fa Learned Ye Tae Dance?': (embedded in Sway Document) Encourage children to sing along.
- 5) **Discuss:** what type of dance does the song makes learners think of? Watch video of Scottish country dancing (embedded in Sway Document). Talk about basic steps with learners (e.g. skipping round in circles, swinging by the arm, pas de basque etc.)
- 6) **Group Task:** Learners to make up a simple dance for 'Fa Learned Ye Tae Dance?'. Learners can then share their dance with the rest of the class.
- 7) Class Reflection: Reflect on the exercise by asking learners:
 - Did you enjoy making up a dance?
 - Do you think it's important to have different languages?

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Booklet Photographs and Images: With thanks to Grace Banks (private collection) for the cover image. Other credits/sources appear with each entry. All Sway images have creative commons attribution or come from the collections held by the Elphinstone Institute or Grace Banks.

Advisory Group Members:



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"WITH THE ORAL TRADITION YOU'VE GOT EVERYTHING - YOU'VE GOT A WHOLE ANCESTRY THAT COMES THROUGH YE"

STANLEY ROBERTSON





