

Songs for May

Using folk arts in inclusive settings



Written by Emmie Ward

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English Folk Dance and Song Society

The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) is the national development organisation for folk music, dance and related arts, based at Cecil Sharp House, a dedicated folk arts centre and music venue, in Camden, North London. Cecil Sharp House is also home to EFDSS' Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML), England's national folk music and dance archive, which provides free online access to thousands of searchable folk manuscripts and other materials. EFDSS creates and delivers creative learning projects for children, young people, adults and families at Cecil Sharp House, across London and around the country; often in partnership with other organisations.

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Using this resource

Throughout the resource there is reference to the **Roud Folk Song Index**. This is a comprehensive online database with over 200,000 references to traditional songs found in both published and unpublished sources in the English language. Songs can be found by title, singer, place, etc., and variants of the same song can be identified using a unique numbering system. You will see references to the 'Roud number' next to the songs. For more information visit www.vwml.org.

Versions of the songs and tunes included in this pack can be found in **Vaughan Williams Memorial Library's online digital archive** which holds digitised versions of original manuscripts and other archival material, www.vwml.org. Please note: material on the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library website is not censored or expurgated and may contain material considered offensive by modern standards.

This pack contains the arrangements of three songs and one tune. This resource, with the accompanying audio tracks, is freely downloadable from the **EFDSS Resource Bank**: www.efdss.org/resourcebank.

This project has been made possible by a grant from Postcode Community Trust, a grant-giving charity funded entirely by players of People's Postcode Lottery. www.postcodecommunitytrust.org.uk

Produced by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), July, 2019

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Contents

Introduction: About this resource	4
Approach to Folk Unlimited sessions	5
Supporting frameworks	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sounds of Intent• Intensive Interaction• Sensory Stories• Objects of Reference	
Tips on supporting young people with complex needs	9
Song: <i>P stands for Paddy</i>	10
Song: <i>Hal an Tow</i>	13
Tune and Dance: <i>Helston Furry Dance</i>	16
Song: <i>Tree in the Wood</i>	19
Tutor Biographies	23

Introduction: About this resource

In 2019, EFDSS launched Inclusive Folk; a new seven-month pilot project developed to increase access to folk arts opportunities for disabled young people, their friends, family and carers. This project, led by Emmie Ward, with Joe Danks and trainee, Freda D'Souza, was made possible with the generous support of the People's Postcode Lottery, a grant-giving charity funded by players of People's Postcode Lottery. The project included *Folk Unlimited*, fortnightly Sunday afternoon sessions at Cecil Sharp House, outreach sessions at colleges and settings for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEN/D), the creation of this new free learning resource for the EFDSS Resource Bank, and training opportunities for music educators.

Participants had the chance to develop their musical ability and understanding of cultural heritage. Each creative, inclusive, multi-sensory session was themed to explore a different part of the UK, or further afield, looking at dance, music, song and stories from the region. From coal mining, and rapper dancing in the North East of England, to 'Hal an Tow' and the Helston Furry Dance in Cornwall, we looked at seasonal and geographical traditions.

This resource is based on repertoire used in this project to celebrate May, with audio, notation and notes. In the United Kingdom, as in most of Western Europe, the first of May, or May Day, marked the end of the harsh winter months and welcomed the beginning of spring. Using May as a theme for workshops offers many opportunities for dance, songs and tunes, and to explore the heritage of our May Day traditions.



Approach to Folk Unlimited sessions

At Folk Unlimited ('FUN'), the tutor team developed a formula of creative elements used in every session to enable all participants to contribute fully. This included different communication strategies for working with young people with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) and complex needs.

Setting the space

Tutors played folk tunes whilst people arrived and settled into the workshop space. By doing this, and welcoming people gently to sit in the circle of chairs, the space was set up for inclusive music making.

Welcome song

A welcome song or name song was a good way to begin the session. Where possible this was a folk song, or linked to folk repertoire. (See *P is for Paddy* p. 10)

Theme

A theme was chosen for each session and introduced using a multi-sensory approach, for example, with an object of reference (p.8), a sensory story (like *Tree in the Wood* p.19) or sensory exploration. For our May-themed session we used real flowers and leaves to represent the arrival of spring. Objects were put on a low table in the middle of the circle, or introduced and passed around to each person. We also used archival film or photos to introduce a theme, e.g. footage of the Helston Furry Dance in Cornwall.

Warm ups

It is safe practice to have a vocal and body warm up before singing and playing together. For example, breathing in and making different vowel sounds on the outbreath. If young people had their own sound, i.e. "ma ma ma" we included it in the warm up. For a May-themed body warm up we created a movement sequence about waking up, yawning, stretching, washing our face, hands, arms and then walking in the sunshine.

Dancing

Incorporating dancing and movement in each session is a great way to help process and understand folk music. It helps develop a greater sense of folk rhythms. We often danced freely to a tune before sitting down and playing along to it. You can use so many folk dance forms from the UK, such as ceilidh, morris, clog and rapper sword dancing and simplify them, so young people can participate even if they need support to move around or are wheelchair users.

Signing and communication

You can use some British Sign Language (BSL) or Makaton signing as well as gesture to support learning the words to songs. See *Tree in the Wood* (p. 19).



Intensive Interaction

We built in some time for communicating with young people using Intensive Interaction approaches. For example we often mirrored the movements and sounds young people made and used them in the context of a dance, tune or song. During sensory exploration such as looking at the flowers and leaves with the May Day session, we offered the item in a playful way that invites interaction.

Cross-cultural links

Making cross-cultural links between folk traditions celebrates the diverse cultural heritage of our community and the important place English folk has within it. Collaborations with groups who play music from different places can lead to great new music! For example, Kinetika Bloco, a youth samba band based in South London, visited Folk Unlimited during the May-themed session, creating a new carnival groove for the tune Helston Furry Dance.

Deconstructing folk songs

There are many ways to sing a song or play a tune together as a group. We accept that young people may not be able to learn all the words to a song or all the notes to a tune but there is still value in listening to the richness of the language, rhythm and melody in folk songs without trying to simplify it.

For example, if a song has lots of words in the verses, young people could focus on signing or singing the chorus (as in *P is for Paddy* p10.). This helps develop skills of turn taking,

learning to wait for the musical cue to join in at the chorus, and to finish as the tutors sing the verses.

Similarly, with some songs, we removed words to verses and played the tune instrumentally in between choruses, sometimes incorporating an improvisation with a participant's vocal input.

Some simple folk songs, including those in this pack, can be accompanied with instruments tuned to one chord or drone. You can use any instruments that can be specifically tuned to a drone note or chord e.g. single chime bars or xylophones with other notes removed, or you can prepare a chord on GarageBand.

We encouraged young people to build new arrangements by linking songs with soundscapes, words or sounds they contributed. *Hal and Tow* and *P stands for Paddy* worked very well with a spring soundscape.

Messy Map

Folk Unlimited sessions focused on folk arts and traditions from different regions of the UK, and further afield, i.e. Cornwall, Ireland, America and Africa. Below is a photo of the “messy map”. At the end of a session an object of reference (see page 8) was used to represent each region on the map. This was attached with Velcro. For example, a soft toy dragon represents Wales, a miner's hat for the North East, and fake flowers of Lily of the Valley for Cornwall.



Sounds of Intent

Sound of Intent is a music assessment framework for people with learning disabilities. The research team has developed a framework of musical development that covers a whole range of ability from just encountering sound as an entity through to being able to read and compose music. The framework is freely available to anyone who wishes to use it and can be useful in both planning and evaluating sessions.

It is divided in to three areas: Reactive (listening), Proactive (playing) and Interactive (playing music with others). For more information and to look at the free downloadable resources visit: <http://www.soundsofintent.org>

Intensive Interaction

Many people with a learning disability are at an early stage of communication development. They may not have learnt to use eye contact or take turns and do not understand some of the rules of communication. Intensive Interaction is a helpful communication technique for working with people at this early stage: You can incorporate these simple techniques within music and dance and sensory activities. Find out more here:

<https://www.intensiveinteraction.org>

Sensory stories

Sensory stories tell a story using words and sensory stimuli. Usually there are just a few sentences in a sensory story accompanied by a series of objects to interact with on a sensory level. The sensory stimuli do not just support the words in telling the story, if well chosen, they can tell the story in their own right. We used a sensory story for the *Tree in the Wood* song, which you will find later in this resource. For more information about sensory stories visit: <http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk>

Objects of Reference

An object of reference is any object used to represent an item, activity, place, or person. Objects of reference are used with individuals who find it difficult to understand spoken words, signs, symbols or photographs.

We used an object of reference to represent each theme we had explored. Repeated use of the objects can help some young people have the means to choose a favourite song or possibly make choices. For more information visit:

<https://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/page/using-objects-of-reference>

Tips on supporting young people with complex needs to play an instrumental music

- Think about where the instrument is in relation to the person and experiment with different placements.
- Hold the instrument for them or place it on a table to free up their hands, or offer a beater to hold in their hand.
- Sound makers can be placed where involuntary movements may brush against them and make a sound e.g. bells tied to arm of wheelchair or wrist or dangling from a hoop held close by.
- If the individual cannot use their hands to play an instrument they may be able to use their elbow, chin, knees or feet etc
- Give them time to explore the instrument in their own way and at their own pace.
- Encourage exploration; touching the instrument, possibly smelling it, looking at it as well as listening to the sound it makes.
- Try a wide range of instruments to see which are the easiest to play and which are the most enjoyable.
- Keep a record of all the different instruments that have been tried to get a picture of what works for the individual.
- Support people to use their voice as an instrument.
- Encourage making body sounds such as patting knees, clapping hands which may be a way of making sound that is familiar and within the individual's control.
- After playing, someone with more complex needs may become tired or distracted. Encourage building up playing skills but be sensitive to cues from the individual that they need a break.
- iPads can be used to great effect as accessible instruments using a number of free and low cost apps. We use GarageBand and ThumbJam, but there are many more options. Visit Drake Music for more guidance: www.drakemusic.org
- BIGmacks are bright hand-sized buttons that can record speech, music or any sound. They are easy to use and a simple way of enabling people to contribute sounds and music during a session.

P stands for Paddy

There are many versions of this song, which originates from Co Derry in Northern Ireland. The song was adapted into a name song to use at the beginning of the session. The song also works well chanted rather than sung.

We taught our groups to sign the first letter of each name in the chorus with BSL/Makaton finger spelling. E.g. 'P' for Paddy, 'J' for Johnny, 'W' for William.

You can sign the first letter of each young person's name and repeat a few times to give them a chance to pick it up. For example:

A stands for Ashanti

I stands for Ibrahim

M stands for Molly-O

And J stands for James.

For the many verses we used two approaches. Either we sang them or invited young people to accompany on instruments, or we just dropped out the words in the verses and played them instrumentally.

In terms of accompaniment, this song works very well with a one chord backing. We like to use Garageband for this. We also used individual tuned chimes.

In the chorus our young people could join in with the signs (for the first letter of each name) and begin to learn the words. Once they learnt these we could add in the sign for **man** i.e. 'Johnny' is the fairest **man**.

During the verses we also picked up on any sounds made by young people such as vocal or on tuned instruments and improvised together on these, then back to the chorus again later.

P stands for Paddy

Roud 419

Trad. Arr. by Joe Danks

VERSE

Gm Dm Gm Dm



As I went out one M - a - y Mo-m-ing to take a ple-a-sant walk I

5 Gm Bb Bb Dm Gm



sat my-self down by an old stone wall to hear two lov-ers talk To

9 Gm Dm Gm Dm



hear two lov-ers ta - alk my dear to hear what th - ey might say That

13 Gm Bb Dm Bb Dm Gm



I might know some more a-bout love be - fore i go a-way

CHORUS

17 Gm Dm Gm Dm



P stands for pa - ddy I sup-pose J for m - y love John

21 Gm Bb Dm Dm Gm



W - stands for false wil - ly oh but joh-nny is the fair - est man

P stands for Paddy

As I went out on a bright morning
to take a pleasant walk.
I sat down beside an old stone wall
just to hear two lovers talk
For to hear two lovers talk, my love
To hear what they might say.
So I might learn a little more, love
before I go away.

*P stands for Paddy, I suppose.
J for my love John.
W stands for false William O
But Johnny is the fairest man.
"Johnny is the fairest man," she said
"Johnny is the fairest man.
I don't care what anybody says
for Johnny is the fairest man."*

Well come on sit beside me, love
Beside me on the green
It's a long three quarters of a year or more
Since together we have been
Since together we have been, my dear
Together we have been
It's a long three quarters of a year or more
since together we have been **Chorus**

Oh I'll not sit beside you, love
Now or any other time
For I hear you love another little lass
and your heart's no longer mine.
"And your heart's no longer mine" she said,
"Your heart's no longer mine.
I don't care what anybody says
Your heart's no longer mine." **Chorus**

So I will climb a high, high tree,
And rob the wild Bird's nest.
Back I'll bring what I find there
To the girl I love the best
"To the girl I love the best," he said
"The girl I love best
Back I'll bring what I find there
To the girl I love the best." **Chorus**

Hal an Tow

Sung as a part of the May celebration in Helston, Cornwall. Hal-an-Tow is an ancient song, with mysterious words which might mean heel and toe as part of the dance, but no one is really sure.

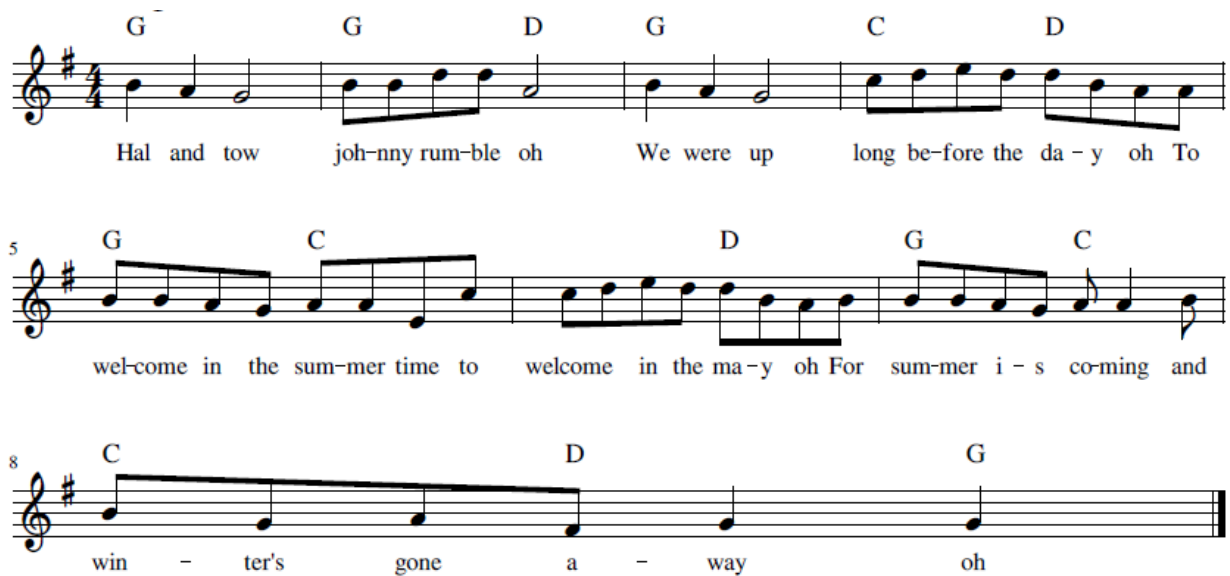
What we did:

- We made a spring soundscape to go with this song. With rain makers and shakers for rain, sun coming out was chimes and birds singing were little bird whistles sampled on to a Big Mack.
- We sang this song fast and rhythmically and accompanied with percussion.
- Young people accompanied with a one-note drone.
- We sang the song slowly and layered harmonies for young people to hear.
- When we taught the song initially it worked to sing it in call and response i.e. teacher sings on line for young people to sing back.
- We accompanied the song with actions i.e. making a big circle around our head with our hands for 'summer is a-coming'.
- We worked on the song with just the chorus but have provided an optional verse. We used the verse to play instruments and include students' words and sounds.
- There is a pause at the end of the line "to welcome in the **May -O**". We emphasised this pause, and the difference between this section and the faster bits, as well as the starting and stopping cues. Following these types of cues is very good for the group to develop their listening and playing together skills.

Hal an Tow

Roud 1520

Trad. Arr. by Joe Danks



G
G
D
G
C
D

Hal and tow joh-nny rum-ble oh We were up long be-fore the da - y oh To

5 G C D G C

wel-come in the sum-mer time to welcome in the ma - y oh For sum-mer i - s co-ming and

8 C D G

win - ter's gone a - way oh

Hal an Tow

Hal an Tow

Jolly Rumble-o

We were up

long before the day-o

To welcome in the summertime

To welcome in the May-o

For summer is a-coming in

And winters gone away-o

Optional verse

Since people were created

Their works have been debated

And we have celebrated

The coming of the spring

Helston Furry Dance

Helston Flora Day in Cornwall is one of the oldest surviving May customs. At the heart of the celebration is the processional dance through the town, called the Furry Dance, a tradition that goes back centuries. There is footage of the dance from 1921 to the present day on YouTube, which is a great way to give context to the dancing.



Helston Furry Dance, 1953 from the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library digital archive
<https://www.vwml.org/record/VWMLImageIndex/IM1511>

You can put a break in the tune (as we have in the resource recording of this tune) and experiment with different ways to fill it – giving soloists a chance to play a beat or contribute creatively. For example, we used the well-known Oggie chant: ‘*Oggie Oggie Oggie - oy oy oy!*’. Oggie is a slang term for a Cornish pasty and this cry is rumoured to have been called out when the pasties were ready!

Dancing tips

- Listening to the tune whilst seated, and a good rhythmic physical warm up (stamping feet, clapping hands etc) can help get ready for dancing.
- Emphasising the pulse and keeping a strong beat helps with moving in time and knowing when there is a change coming in the dance.
- It is often easy to adapt dances for wheelchair users and people with limited mobility, but make sure you give extra time to change position. i.e. if promenading in a circle, it is fun to change direction but you need to allow a count of 1-2 bars for the turn around. Choose tunes that are simple and can be flexible.
- The traditional Helston Furry dance is a processional dance and involves couples promenading and swinging each other, wearing a sprig of Lily of the Valley. This can be simplified to walking with your partner to the pulse, and a gentle slow swing holding hands or linking arms if possible.
- To create focused attention within the group and work with wheelchair users we used an adapted version of the Circassian Circle dance, see below. This dance works with many different tunes and also promoted interaction and eye-contact between the group.



The Helston Furry Dance

Helston Town Band



Dance instructions for Circassian Circle (adapted for Folk Unlimited!)

Everyone starts in a circle. It can create focus if everyone holds hands but if there are wheelchair users and people who need support to move, it is not necessary.

Musical section	Bars	Dance instructions
A1	1 - 8	Move into the circle
A2	1 - 8	Move back out on count of eight
B1& B2	1 - 16	Travel around the circle anticlockwise for 16 counts
Pause	1 - 2	Shout 'Oggie Oggie Oggie' 'Oi Oi Oi'

Tree in the Wood

This is a cumulative song that was first collected in Cornwall but has travelled extensively across the UK and America.

Tree in the Wood is a great song to accompany with sign language. You can use British Sign Language or Makaton signs, both are commonly used in SEN/D settings.

Here is a link to some websites where you can learn some BSL signs. <https://www.access-ambassadors.co.uk/top-10-websites-to-learn-british-sign-language-for-free.php>

For more information and advice about using Makaton signing, visit another EFDSS resource 'Songs of Rural Life', written by Cat Kelly:

<https://media.efdss.org/resourcebank/docs/RB222SongsOfRuralLifeSEN-CatKelly.pdf>

You can select key words to sign in the song, rather than whole sentences. For example, we signed the words in bold below:

All in a **wood** there was a **tree**
the finest **tree** you ever did **see**
the **tree** was in the **wood**

and the green leaves grew around, around, around,
and the green leaves grew around.

(For this section we clapped our hands and did not sign)

Young people had fun speeding up the song on the last verse when the cumulative song reaches its pitch.

This song works very well a capella, especially as your hands need to be free to do the signs!

Tree in the wood: sensory story

- Start by reading each line and linking it with something interesting to see, touch, listen to or even taste if appropriate.
- It's a good idea to cover as many senses as possible as someone might have a preference for one sense over another.
- Below, in italics, are ideas for things you can use for your sensory story:

All in a wood there was a tree

[Tree bark or a scent such as a pine scented bubble bath]

And on that tree there was a branch

[Large twig]

And on that tree there was a nest

[Scrunched up shredded paper, pasta nests (if food allowed)]

And on that nest there was an egg

[Egg shaker or mini chocolate eggs (if tasting permitted)]

And in that egg there was a bird

[Feathers, a toy bird]

And the green leaves grew around, around, around

[Fresh leaves crushed a little to release scent]


Tree in the Wood

Roud 129

Trad arr Danks/Ward

Swing


G C G G C G



All in a wood Th - ere sta-nds a tree Th - e f - i - ne - st tree You ev - er di - d see The

Rubato


5 Bm C Bm C G



* was in the * The tree was in the wood And the green leaves grew a -

Accelerando (Last Time Rit) Rubato Into Time

9 C D7 G



round a - round a - round and the green leaves grew a - round

Tree in the Wood

All in a wood there was a tree
the finest tree you ever did see
the tree was in the wood
and the green leaves grew around, around, around,
and the green leaves grew around.

And on the tree there was a branch
The finest branch you ever did see
The limb was on the tree
The tree was in the wood
And the green leaves grew around, around, around,
And the green leaves grew around.

And on that branch there was a nest,
The finest nest you ever did see.
The nest was on the branch
The branch was on the tree
The tree was in the wood.
And the green leaves grew around, around, around,
And the green leaves grew around.

And in that nest there was an egg
The finest egg you ever did see
The egg was in the nest
etc...

And in that egg there was a bird
The finest bird you ever did see
The bird was in the egg
etc...

And then that bird
It flew away
As far as any eye can see
The bird was in the egg
The egg was in the nest
The nest was on the branch
The branch was on the tree
The tree was in the wood
And the green leaves grew around, around, around,
And the green leaves grew around

Tutor Biographies

Emmie Ward



Emmie Ward holds a PG CERT in music and special needs using Sound Of Intent with Roehampton University. She is a folk musician and works as a freelance music and folk arts practitioner and teaches a range of classes for people with learning disabilities. She specialises in using a multi sensory approach to storytelling and music. Emmie has worked in a variety of settings including Day Centres, FE colleges and schools where she has worked as a teacher for many years. Projects have included *Everybody Dance Company* a millennium funded dance project with performers with complex needs and working on the show *Weighting* by Extraordinary Bodies, an inclusive, touring circus. Emmie also teaches on EFDSS *Get Your Folk On! Plus!* holiday workshops for young disabled people.

Joe Danks



Joe Danks is a percussionist, guitarist singer and composer from Nottingham, now based in South East London. He is a member of the band Ranagri (StockFisch Records), playing Bodhran, Tenor Guitar and percussion. In 2018 he was selected for one of EFDSS's Musicians In Museums residencies at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. His education work has seen him work with EFDSS, Hammersmith Irish Cultural Centre, London Symphony Orchestra, The BBC Family Orchestra and Nottingham Royal Concert Hall; amongst others. He is also director of Pulse Arts CIC, a company that takes person centered music practice into hospitals and hospices in London and East Anglia.

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