



A Sailor's Life

Unit 5: Long Distance Love

Key Stage 2

***Written by Hazel Askew and
Martha Burns Findlay***





The Full English Extra

The Full English Extra was an initiative to preserve and promote the folk arts, building on the success of EFDSS' flagship project The Full English, which created the world's largest digital archive of folk songs, dances, tunes and customs, and a nationwide learning programme that reached more than 16,000 people. The project was led by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Full English Extra saw the collections of Mary Neal, suffragette, radical arts practitioner and founder of the Esperance Girls Club, and folk dance educator Daisy Caroline Daking added to the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library online archive (www.vwml.org), alongside its collection of 19th century broadside ballads and songsters.

The Full English learning programme worked with three national museums – the Museum of English Rural Life at the University of Reading, the National Coal Mining Museum for England near Wakefield in West Yorkshire and the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London – combining folk arts and museum education to provide powerful new learning experiences for schools and music hubs.

Supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund



Produced by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), May 2016

Written by: Hazel Askew and Martha Burns Findlay

Edited by: Frances Watt

Copyright © English Folk Dance and Song Society, National Maritime Museum and Hazel Askew, 2016

Permission is granted to make copies of this material for non-commercial educational purposes.

Permission must be sought from EFDSS for any other use of this material.

EFDSS is a Registered Charity in England and Wales No.3050999

Long Distance Love

Sailors were often at sea for long periods of time – months or even years – leaving their wives and loved ones at home waiting for their return. For some women unwilling to be separated from their sweethearts they followed their men into the Navy either as passengers or disguised as male sailors.

For the wives of low ranking sailors, they lived difficult lives at home in Britain. The sailors were only paid once their ship returned to Britain. Therefore, the wives and children often had to find work to earn money for food and shelter. Sometimes the wives and children would even resort to begging in the streets.

Whilst at sea the men often spent their free time thinking about their loved ones at home. For those who were educated, they would write love letters to their sweethearts or if they could not write they would ask a friend to write their letters. They would also engrave silver coins and send these love tokens to their loved ones.

The Silver Token

This silver half-crown coin was engraved by a sailor named Peter Barns who gave it to his loved one as a love token. The writing reads, “When this you see, remember me”.

What else on the coin shows that this is a love token? Why do you think someone made a hole in the coin?

Activity: Pretend that you are a sailor at sea. Write 4-lined poem for a loved one back home who you have not seen for many months (such as a member of your family). Now make your own love token engraved with your poem and send it home.

Song 6 - Adieu, sweet lovely Nancy

This is a popular traditional song from Mr Copper, Rottingdean, Sussex, collected by Mrs K Lee in 1898.

The song is from the point of view of a sailor who is about to go to sea and will be leaving his true love, Nancy, behind. It is a beautiful song which probably works best as a listening and comprehension song, but could be learnt as an extension.

Lyrics

1. Here's adieu, sweet lovely Nancy, ten thousand times adieu,
I'm a-going across the ocean, love, to seek for something new.
Come change your ring with me, dear girl, come change your ring with me,
For it might be a token of true love while I am on the sea.
2. When I am far upon the sea you know not where I am.
Kind letters I will write to you from every foreign land.
The secrets of your heart, dear girl, are the best of my good will,
So let my body be where it might, my heart shall be with you still.
3. There's a heavy storm a-rising, see how it gathers round,
While we poor souls on the ocean wide are fighting for the crown.
There's nothing to protect us, love, or to keep us from the cold,
On the ocean wide, where we must bide like jolly seamen bold.
4. There's tinkers, tailors, shoemakers, lie snoring fast asleep,
While we poor souls on the ocean wide are ploughing through the deep.
Our officers commanding us and them we must obey,
Expecting every moment for to get cast away.
5. But when the wars are all over there'll be peace on every shore,
We'll return to our wives and our families and the girls that we adore.
We'll will call for liquor merrily, we will spend our money free,
And when the money it is all gone we'll boldly go to sea.

Comprehension Questions

Listen to the song.

- 1) Who is speaking in the song?
- 2) How does the sailor speaking intend to keep in touch with Nancy?
- 3) What is the weather like when he is at sea?

Activity: Writing a letter

- **TASK** – If you were a sailor at sea, who would you miss? Imagine you are at sea and write a letter to a friend or family member you who you have not seen for many, many months.

Glossary

- **Adieu:** goodbye or farewell
- **Change your ring:** swapping your ring with someone
- **Ploughing:** sailing
- **Cast away:** thrown off the ship by a violent storm



*Love token exhibition at Invicta
Primary Pop-Up Museum 2015*

*(Photo credit: EFDSS/Roswitha
Chesher)*

Adieu, Sweet Lovely Nancy



Here's a - dieu, sweet love - ly___ Na - n - cy, T - en th - ou - sand times a -



dieu. I'm a - go - ing round the_ o___ cean, To_ se - ek for some - thing



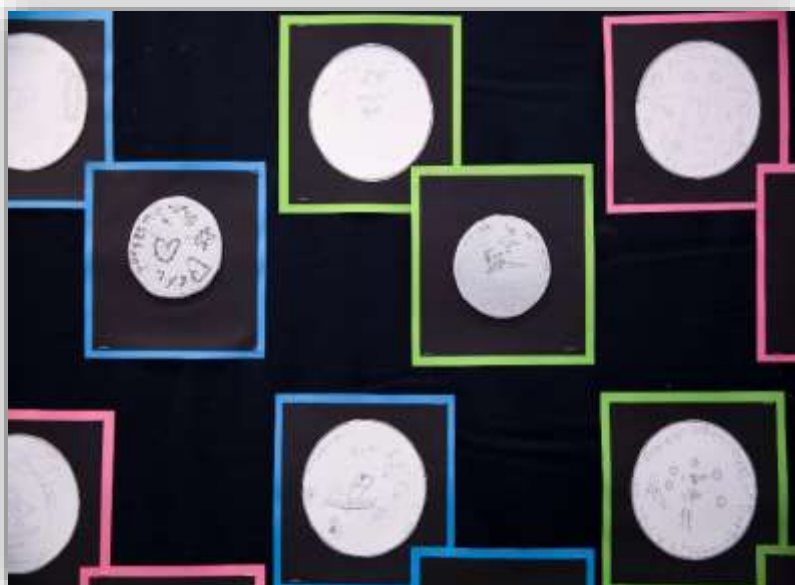
new. Come change your ring with me___ dear girl, Come



change your r - ing with me. For it might be a to - ken___



of true love, Whi - le I___ am on the sea.



Song 7 - Bold Riley

This is a traditional song which is like a sea shanty in form, but quite gentle. It probably originated from the West Indies, and has evolved into the version we have today. The call and response form makes it very easy to sing. As a class you could learn the refrains and the chorus, and perhaps have smaller groups or volunteers singing the verse lines. You could also have a go at writing your own additional verses in the same form.

Glossary

- **Judies:** girls
- **Whitestocking Day:** when sailor's girlfriends could collect their half pay whilst they were away.

Comprehension Questions

Listen to the song.

- 1) **Are the same amount of people singing all the way through? What do we call this? Call and response.**

Activity 1: Look at this lesson's object:

- What do you think it is?
- What does it have inscribed on it?
- Why do you think there is a hole in the coin?

Activity 2: Song writing and singing

- **Don't forget your warm ups!** See p7
- **Task** – Learn the refrain and chorus of the song as a class. Individuals or small groups could learn the verse lines to create a call and response.
- **Extension** – Try writing your own verse lines about the things you would miss if you were away at sea?

Activity 3: Design and art links

- **Task** – Can you draw or make your own love token?



Lyrics

1. The anchor is weighed and the rags all set,
Bold Riley O, Bold Riley,
Them Liverpool judies we'll never forget,
Bold Riley O has gone away!

Chorus:

*Goodbye, my darling, goodbye, my dear O,
Bold Riley O, Bold Riley,
Goodbye, my darling, goodbye, my dear O,
Bold Riley O, gone away.*

2. The rain it is raining all the day long,
Bold Riley O, Bold Riley,
The northerly winds they blow so strong,
Bold Riley O has gone away
3. Cheer up, Mary Ellen, and don't look so glum,
Bold Riley O, Bold Riley,
On Whitestocking Day you'll be drinking rum.
Bold Riley O has gone away
4. We're outward bound for the Bengal Bay,
Bold Riley O, Bold Riley,
Get bending, my lads, it's a very long way.
Bold Riley O has gone away



Explore The Full English digital archive

www.vwml.org/thefullenglishproject

Discover more learning resources

www.efdss.org/resourcebank