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Living Voices Resource Pack

Days Out and Holidays

- **Beach and Seaside**
- **Picnics**
- **Travelling**
- **Scottish Holidays**
- **Travel Further Afield**

Living Voices is a national programme run by the Scottish Poetry Library (SPL) and Scottish Storytelling Centre (SSC) using storytelling, poems and songs to engage and stimulate groups of elderly people, particularly in care homes, in conversation, creative activity and reminiscence.

The familiar patterns and rhythms of well-known songs and poems spark engagement, pleasure and reminiscence, often where participants may otherwise seem to be withdrawn or unresponsive.

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Living Voices Resource Pack: Days Out and Holidays Introduction

Materials in this pack can be used to inspire conversations about days out and summer holidays when the sun is shining (well hopefully)!

Instructions
The pack includes a few carefully selected poems, stories and songs, but we have included lots more suggestions of poems you can find on the Scottish Poetry Library website and from other sources. Try using these poems too – and visit your local library to see what they have that you can use.

Select a poem or story, and use the conversation topic/activity ideas to help you lead a discussion.

Use the lists of objects, photographs, playlists and songs to help you select other things to use in the session.

Remember to select what you will use before the session so you can bring a suggested prop or photograph to accompany the poems and stories you will use. We have also provided a small selection of images that reflect the themes explored for your use.

If you don't have lots of time, don't try and fit everything into one long session; you can run separate activities instead – just using a couple of items from the pack.

Conversations
You can use this pack to start conversations about lots of topics. Examples:

- What people in the group did on days out and holidays? Remember some people will have experience of holidays and travel to exotic destinations; and others may not have been able to afford to take time off or travel, so try and include everyone.
- Planning and getting there – the expectation & excitement, planning, packing; travelling (good and bad experiences – travel sickness, trains, people packed into a small car, sitting at the back of the bus).
- Why did people travel? Some may have travelled extensively for work; others may have travelled for leisure. Think about the different reasons people might have travelled – for work, for holidays, for a hobby like following a sports team.
- Foreign travel (if appropriate to your group). Where (and why) did people go – were experiences positive or negative – do they remember their first trip abroad, the dis-jointed feeling of being in a new place; do people have a second language, or know a few words in another language?
- Food: tastes, favourites, flavours, for example ices at the beach or sandwiches on picnics. Consider extending conversation into exotic foods tried and tasted when abroad.
- Bicycles, cycling clubs and cycling holidays.
- Bad weather – rainy picnics, chilly beaches, camping in the rain

- …midges!
- Many people may have worn a knitted swimsuit – and this is often a popular topic of conversation.
- Contemporary issues – the expense of foreign travel; environmental issues around travelling abroad and so on.
- If you want to use this topic to inform your future work with residents it can frame a conversation about day trips you could arrange with them to local attractions.

Remember:

- Don't feel you need to use everything in the pack, and of course you may want to add your own choice of poems, songs or story.
- If you cannot find the right poem for your group in the pack, we have included a list of other ideas and where you can find them.
- We have included a selection of other ideas for poems you can use, many are on the Scottish Poetry Library website.
- Remember, it's good to share your opinions and tell personal stories to get conversation started – sharing a little of yourself puts people at ease and encourages them to participate. We have included ideas in the pack.

Concerned about telling stories and reading poems?
Remember there is lots of good advice in the Living Voices Handbook. Try our websites too:

- The Scottish Storytelling Centre has regular workshops on storytelling; programme details are available on the TRACS website.
- The Scottish Poetry Library New to Poetry webpage has useful advice and reading guides, including tips for reading a poem the first time.

Look around both websites – there are lots of resources, advice and ideas.

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Travelling and Transport

The Boy in the Train

By Mary Campbell Smith

About the poem: *This poem about visiting a grandparent is often popular with groups. You might want to tell your group it is so well-loved that it is displayed on the wall at Kirkcaldy station! The 'queer-like smell' in the last verse is the smell from the lino factories – some may remember what this smells like, you could talk about other distinctive smells people associate with a place e.g. fish at Aberdeen docks, the smell of the breweries in Edinburgh.*

Whit wey does the engine say 'Toot-toot'?
Is it feart to gang in the tunnel?
Whit wey is the furnace no pit oot
When the rain gangs doon the funnel?
What'll I hae for my tea the nicht?
A herrin', or maybe a haddie?
Has Gran'ma gotten electric licht?
Is the next stop Kirkcaddy?

There's a hoodie-craw on yon turnip-raw!
An' seagulls! – sax or seven.
I'll no fa' oot o' the windae, Maw,
Its sneckit, as sure as I'm leevin'.
We're into the tunnel! we're a' in the dark!
But dinna be frichtit, Daddy,
We'll sune be comin' to Beveridge Park,
And the next stop's Kirkcaddy!

Is yon the mune I see in the sky?
It's awfu' wee an' curly,
See! there's a coo and a cauf ootbye,
An' a lassie pu'in' a hurly!
He's chackit the tickets and gien them back,
Sae gie me my ain yin, Daddy.

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Lift doon the bag frae the luggage rack,
For the next stop's Kirkcaddy!

There's a gey wheen boats at the harbour mou',
And eh! dae ya see the cruisers?
The cinnamon drop I was sookin' the noo
Has tummelt an' stuck tae ma troosers. . .
I'll sune be ringin' ma Gran'ma's bell,
She'll cry, 'Come ben, my laddie',
For I ken mysel' by the queer-like smell
That the next stop's Kirkcaddy!

A personal story: Do you have a story you can tell about travelling? Perhaps **when all goes wrong…**Day trips and holidays are often remembered fondly, but we all know it's not always that way – and this can be a source of lots of conversation and entertaining and engaging personal anecdotes – especially if there is a happy ending. Perhaps you have a story you can tell e.g. lost luggage; getting lost; traffic jams.

Supporting photo(s) for the poem and story:

- A picture to illustrate your personal story.
- Picture of a steam train.

Supporting sensory item for the poem:

- Cinnamon drops (do people remember them; or do people like them).

Conversation topics:

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Seaside

At the Seaside

by Robert Louis Stevenson

When I was down beside the sea
A wooden spade they gave to me
To dig the sandy shore.
My holes were empty like a cup,
In every hole the sea came up,
Till it could come no more.

About the poem: *This poem describes something that might be familiar to anyone who played on the beach as a child, or watched children play – the way sea water fills holes you dig on the beach. You can use it as a way into conversation about beach visits, holidays and activities.*

A personal story: Talk about your memories of the seaside - day trip or holiday. You might include how you travelled, what you took, descriptions of the beach, the view the people. What did you do – sunbathe, build sand castles, paddle or swim? What else was there to do – could you buy an ice cream, go on donkey rides, visit the funfair, drink a cocktail at sunset? Think of the sights, sounds, and smells of the beach and weave them in to engage the senses.

Sensory activity: If you can find really big shells that can be held close to people's ear – you can 'listen' to the sea by holding them to your ear; this can be a good combination for the seaside-themed poem and story.

Supporting photo(s) for poem and story: Pictures of beaches from the 50's, 60's, 70's, and 80's.

Supporting props(s) for poem and story: Pebbles and shells from the beach or a bucket and spade (you can put your pebbles and shells inside for people to find).

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A traditional story: The Mouse at the Seashore

A mouse told his mother and father that he was going on a trip to the seaside. “We are very alarmed,” they cried. “The world is full of terrors. You must not go!” “I have made my decision,” the young mouse replied firmly. “I have never seen the sea, or the sand, and it is high time that I did. Nothing can make my change my mind.” “Then we cannot stop you,” said father and mother mouse, “but do be careful.”

The next day, in the first dawn light, the mouse set out on his journey. Before the morning had ended he found trouble and fear. A cat jumped out from behind a tree. “I will eat you for lunch,” said the cat. The mouse ran for his life but left behind a part of his tail in the cat’s mouth. By afternoon the mouse had been attacked by birds and dogs. He had lost his way several times. He was bruised and bloodied. He was tired and frightened.

That evening the mouse slowly climbed the last hill and then he saw it – the sea shore spreading out before him. He watched the waves rolling onto the beach, one after the other. All the colours of the sunset filled the sky. “How beautiful,” he thought, “I wish that father and mother were here to see this with me.”

The moon and stars began to appear over the ocean. The mouse sat silently on the top of the hill. He was overwhelmed by a feeling of deep peace and contentment.

Story notes: *This story has been adapted by **Janis McKay** for Living Voices (this version © Janis McKay). Use it to link your session themes, moving conversation from travel and journeys onto the destination – in this story, the beach.* ***Conversation ideas:***

- *Long journeys and the expectations/excitement of the promise of fun at their end.*
- *Watching the sea, and the sunset, and the waves.*
- *A hard and difficult journey…was it worth it in the end?*

Conversation topics:

Picnic

Picnic

by Judith Nicholls

George, lend a hand
and spread the cloth,
the sand is everywhere!
Just look at that,
you'd never think
it took hours to prepare!

WAKE UP GRAMP!
Your food's all out,
get it while you can!
Have a lemonade before
it warms up in the sun.

What is it, Mum?

There's…

ham with sand,
and spam with sand,
there's chicken paste
and lamb with sand;
oranges, bananas,
lemonade or tea;
bread with sand

all spread with sand –
at least the sand comes free!
We've crisps with sand
and cake with sand –
it's grand with lunch or tea –
crunch it up,
enjoy it love,
at least we're by the sea!

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About the poem: *This poem is a nice way to link between two themes of conversation for days out – seaside and picnics. Anyone who has been on a picnic should recognise the challenges of finding sand (or soil) in your food. You can lead your group into conversations about picnic foods (favourites, any dislikes); picnics enjoyed, or even the bad sides of picnics – sand and grit in the food and bad weather…*

A personal story: Can you tell the group about a picnic you have enjoyed (or not!) – it might have been on a day trip or holiday. You might include memories of how you travelled, what you ate, descriptions of the venue for the picnic and the people you went with. Think of the sights, sounds, smells and tastes and weave them into your story to engage the senses.

Supporting props(s) for the poem and story:

- A checked picnic cloth or blanket.
- A toy, or real picnic basket.

Supporting sensory objects for the poem and story:

- Picnic-style sandwiches.
- Strawberries.

Conversation topics:

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Holidays

My Heart's in the Highlands

By Robert Burns

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North;
The birth-place of Valour, the country of Worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe;
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

Farewell to the mountains, high cover'd with snow;
Farewell to the Straths and green vallies below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe;
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

About the poem: *Many people had holidays in Scotland – camping, cycling, and youth hostelling. This song by Robert Burns with its strong nostalgia for the Scottish landscape can evoke memories of the landscape and wildlife of the highlands.*

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A personal story: Tell the group about your favourite holiday. It might have been a camping holiday in Scotland; a week on the beach in the med; an adventure in an exotic county. Where did you go? What did you do? What did you see? Who did you go with? What made it special; and why do you remember it fondly?

Activity idea: share holiday stories: If your residents are able, ask them to bring pictures of places they have been and share a story about their favourite holidays too. This can be combined with the map activity on the 'Travel Further Afield' pages.

Supporting photo(s) for the story:

- A picture of your favourite holiday to illustrate the story (it does not need to show people – it can show a tourist sight or destination).

Supporting props(s) for the poem and story:

- A real, or toy, suitcase.
- Toy caravan.
- Things people take on holiday – sunglasses, hat, beach towel, guide books, bike pump, maps, walking boots/socks, and flask.

Supporting sensory objects for the poem and story:

- Sensory object – sun cream to smell.

Conversation topics:

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Travel Further Afield

Ozymandias

By Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
“My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

About the poem: *This is part of a longer poem by the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. It was a popular piece for learning for recitation; people may remember it well, and particularly this section.*

In the poem Shelley imagines a visitor from ancient lands, and spectacular ruins of ancient civilizations. Try reading it with pictures of Roman, Greek or Egyptian ruins to capture people’s imaginations. It can prompt conversation about exotic places people have visited… or places people wish they ***could*** *visit (real and imagined!).*

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Discussion idea: Where and why have people travelled? People travel for many reasons, holidays, work, to follow a sports team.

Discussion idea: If you could go anywhere, where would you like to go? Answer the question yourself, with reasons, description, and imagination as your personal anecdote. Use this as a lead into talking with the group about where they would like to go, if they could go anywhere in the world. It might be somewhere nearby that has sentimental importance or it might be the other side of the globe, it doesn't matter where people imagine going as long as they have opportunity to tell us.

Take it further: Visualisation: If you feel confident doing it you could try a visualisation activity as part of your discussions about holidays. You could do this with the suggested personal story or the discussion activity. Start with your theme:
What was your favourite holiday/day trip?

or

If you could go anywhere where would you go?

Ask the group to close their eyes and listen as you gently lead them in imagining where they would like to go. Here are some starting ideas:

> *"Imagine… where in the world are you… You're standing, looking around… what do you see? what do you smell… what's the weather like?... Do you feel warm, or…? Look down… what are you wearing today?... Do you feel excited"*

Activity idea: A map of travels: Use a large map of the world or of Scotland. Get some luggage tags and record people's thoughts and memories of the places they have visited. Pin them to the map to make a display or record of your conversations. If you have a reminiscence room or similar this can be displayed and used again.

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Living Voices Resource Pack: Days Out and Holidays Images

1. Boats at Royan

Use with poems about beaches and seaside; talk about: seaside villages, colours used by the artist; boats.

2. Landscape with Tourists at Loch Katrine

For conversations about Scotland and Scottish Holidays, use with 'My Heart's in the Highlands'. Includes people doing lots of different activities - you can talk about these.

3. Camping

Use for conversations about camping holidays, might accompany conversations about the highlands and image 2, above.

4. Boys on a Train

Use with the poem 'The Boy in the Train'.

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1. **Boats at Royan**, by Samuel John Peploe (1910)

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2. **Landscape with Tourists at Loch Katrine**, by John Knox

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4. Camping

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5. Boys on a Train

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Living Voices Resource Pack: Days Out and Holidays

Holidays and Days out playlist – consider for background music on cd/mp3 or to sing	
• 'Daytripper', The Beatles	• 'I Do Like To Be Beside the Seaside', Florrie Ford
• 'Donkey Riding'. Michael Mitchell	• 'Summer Holiday', Cliff Richard
• 'Trains & Boats & Planes', Dionne Warwick	• 'The Railway Station Porter', Sandy Scott
• 'Daisy Bell' (Daisy Daisy)	• 'Nellie the Elephant', Mandy Miller
• Songs to sing on the back of the bus, for example: 'Ten Green Bottles', 'Ye Cannae Shove Yer Grannie', 'What Shall We Do With The Drunken Sailor', 'She'll Be Comin' Round The Mountain'	
Holidays and Days out– ideas for supporting photographs	
• Aeroplanes	• Cycling couples
• Trains	• Sunbathers
• Cars	• Sandcastles
• Buses	• People Paddling
• Piers	• Donkeys/donkey rides
• Lidos	• Beaches & Promenades
• Zoos/ zoo animals	• Circuses
• Foreign holiday destinations (anywhere you know your group has been?)	• Popular holiday destinations in Scotland
Holidays and Days Out- ideas for supporting objects	
• Suitcase (pack your photos and objects in!)	• Maps and Postcards from holiday places
• Cough/travel sweeties	• Travel timetables and tickets
• Bucket and Spade	• Sun Hat
• Beach mat	• Sun Cream
• Shells/Pebbles/Driftwood	• Stick of Rock
• Thermos Flask	• Picnic Hamper (or toy one)
• Picnic foods (sandwiches; fruit; cakes)	• Seasonal Summer Flowers (perhaps wild like you might pick at a picnic)
• Guide books	• Globe/ World Map
• Spices	• Raincoat
• Holiday souvenirs	• Sunglasses
• Models/toys/ornaments of animals seen in the zoo, e.g. monkey, giraffe, panda	

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More Ideas

Other poems that have been used by Living Voices:

Travel

- **Skimbleshanks the Railway Cat,** T. S. Eliot, *Old Possum's Book of Cats*, verses 1 or 3 may be best for reading aloud.
- **The Night Mail**, W. H. Auden (you can view a recitation by John Grierson on YouTube)
- **Sir Patrick Spens**, this poem by an anonymous author may be familiar – about the risks of sailing, www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/sir-patrick-spens
- **From a Railway Carriage**, Robert Louis Stevenson, www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/railway-carriage

Seaside

- **Maggie, Milly, Molly and May,** E E Cummings, is easy to find online and may be well remembered.
- **Donkey Ride**, J.K. Annand, from *A Wale o Rhymes* (Macdonald, 1989) and *Bairn Rhymes* (Mercat Press, 2003).
- **Little Sea House**, Hamish McLaren, a house by the sea. www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/little-sea-house

Picnic

- **The Picnic**, by Edwin Morgan – romance and rain on a picnic. www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/picnic

Holidays

- **The Packing Poem**, by Pam Ayres, from *Surgically Enhanced* (Hodder and Stoughton, 2006).
- **Favourite Place,** by Liz Lochhead, about holidays in Scotland www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/favourite-place

Other sources to find your own poems:

- In 2012 Book Week Scotland celebrated people's favourite places in Scotland. The Scottish Book Trust website many poems and stories written by members of the public and authors (www.scottishbooktrust.com/myfavouriteplace).

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