





# FOLKEAST FESTIVAL

Suffolk  
**COUNTY MUSIC**  
Service



## Folksong Resource Pack for Primary Schools and Families 2026-27

 **Suffolk**  
County Council

Supported using public funding by  
  **ARTS COUNCIL**  
ENGLAND

  
**Norfolk & Suffolk**  
**Music HUB**

# What's in the Folksong Resource pack?

- ❖ 6 Folksongs, from Suffolk and beyond - 2 New for 2026-7
- ❖ Teaching notes for each song
- ❖ Chord patterns to go with each song
- ❖ Violin and viola/cello open string patterns to go with each song
- ❖ Activity ideas for each song
- ❖ Historical and cultural background for each song
- ❖ An invitation for pupils and their families to sing and play along with us at FolkEast 2026

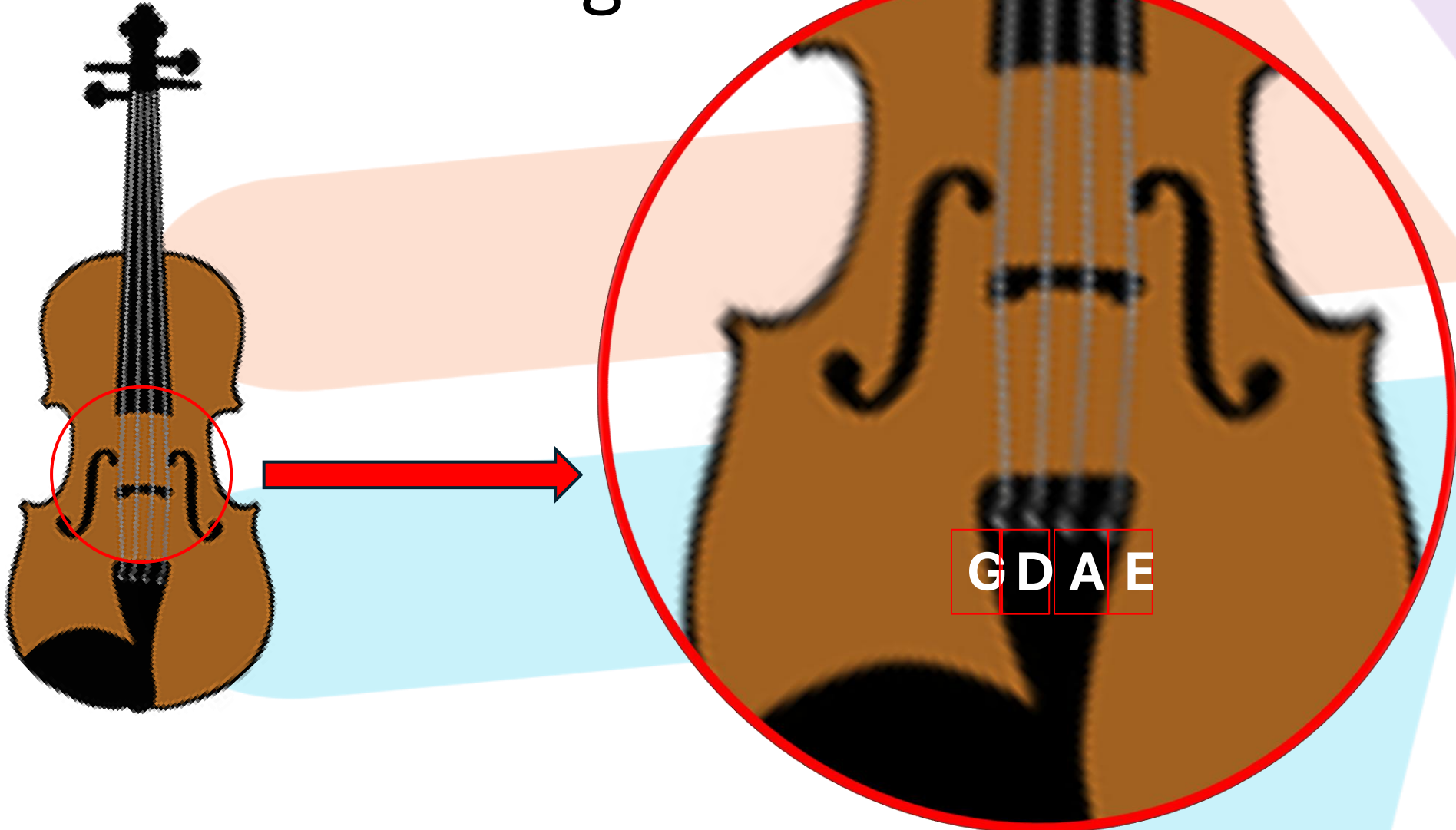
# Violins and Violas

## (Instruments using bowed strings)

Instruments using bowed (and plucked) strings are much used in folk music – they're light to carry around and they can be played anywhere.

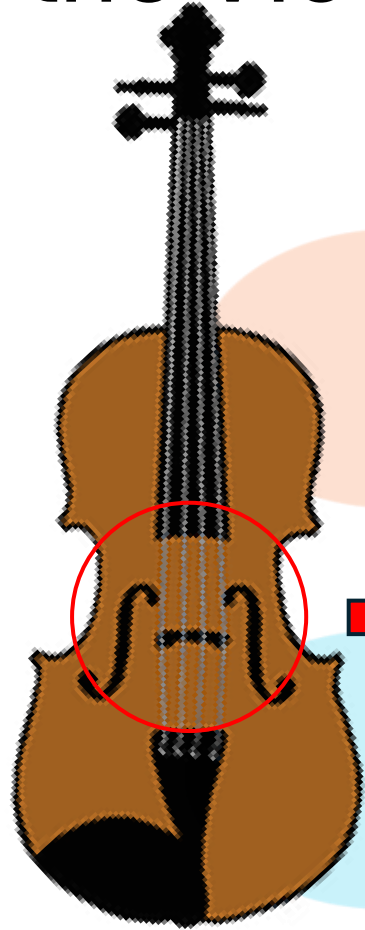


# Meet the Violin - string names



G D A E

# Meet the Viola - string names



C G D A

# Where did Folk Songs Come From?



In England, like other countries across the world, before TVs or radios, people would gather and sing songs to tell stories, celebrate happy times like harvests and weddings, or even to remember sad events. These songs weren't written down at first; instead, they were passed down by singing them to each other, from parents to children, at home and in the community.



Think of it like a musical game of telephone. Each time a song was sung, it might change a little bit, picking up new words or a slightly different tune as it travelled from village to village. These songs often talked about everyday life – things like working in the fields, animals, magical creatures like fairies, or brave heroes, and included local legends.



English folksongs are like musical stories that have been sung and shared for generations, giving us a peek into what life was like long ago. They're simple, often catchy, and they belong to everyone!

# Let's Get Singing!

Singing is a “whole body” activity. Our voice is a muscle, and the operation of it requires support from and a lack of tension in many other muscles in the neck and torso. We warm up for singing in the same way as an athlete warms up for sports, and for the same reasons.

You can see some of the exercises below demonstrated here from 1:40 to 6:10 [Homeward Bound - an East Anglian Sea Shanty for KS2/Primary - YouTube](#)

## **Physical warm-ups for children might include:**

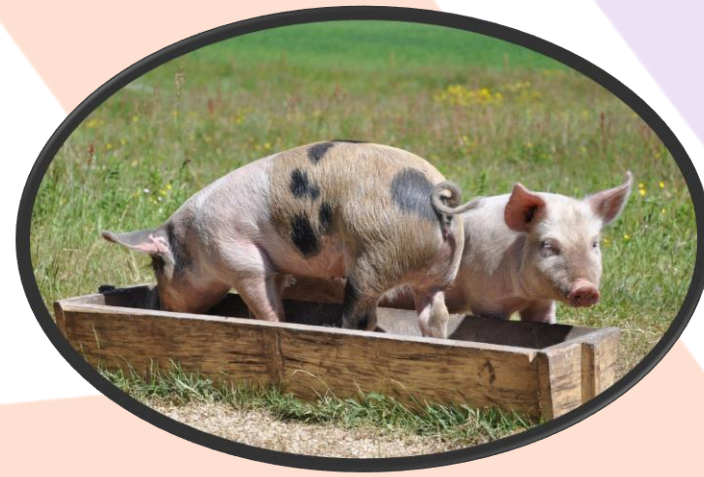
- Body shakes
- Running on the spot and then stretching into a ‘pose’
- Focus claps (for attention)
- Stretches – ‘butterfly’ arms stretching out and wide, stretch both arms high,
- Posture check – feet shoulder width apart, knees a little bent ( ‘soft’ – not locked straight), shoulders back and relaxed, arms relaxed at sides, standing tall (‘pulled up’ as if by a string on the top of your head)
- Breathing exercises – breathe in (count 4 to start then increase), hiss out in a steady stream of air
- Gurning (pull silly faces), wiggle tongues (write your name with your tongue), chew imaginary gum or toffee

## **Voice Warm-ups might include:**

Gentle exercise to warm up the voice and extend the usable range.

- ‘Sirening’ – hum on an ‘**ng**’ sound ( as in ‘**sing**’) and stretch the voice up and down – imagine your voice is a ball of putty/goo/gum in your hand and stretch it smoothly up and down. Gradually increase how high the sirens go.
- Sing scales to funny words and tongue twisters e.g. ‘Flippy Floppy Bunny’, ‘Red Lorry Yellow Lorry’, ‘Popocatepetl’ (Copper Plated Kettle), ‘Bumblebee’ (Butterfly), ‘The Penguin Song’ or sing up and down to numbers 123454321
- Sing arpeggios and melodies with ‘leaps’ – e.g. ‘Papa’s got a Head (like a Ping Pong Ball)’.
- Finish with an easy well-known song

# Whose Pigs are These?



Whose pigs are these?  
Whose pigs are these?  
They are John Cook's,  
I can tell'm by their looks,  
And I found them in the vicarage garden.

This song is an old English rhyme, with a recorded version dated as early as 1770 in *Merry Songs and Ballads: Prior to the Year A.D. 1800*, which mentions "John Cook's Hogs". It is sung around the country, but comes from Gloucestershire, England, because of the mention of "spots," pointing toward the Gloucester Old Spot pig breed.

It can be customised to fit any kind of pig found in Suffolk, too!



# Whose Pigs are These (trad) 3- or 4-Part round (entry points ★ )

Chord: D major  
Home note D

Whose Pigs are these?      Whose pigs are these?      They

This line of music is in D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It consists of two measures. The first measure contains the lyrics 'Whose Pigs are these?' and ends with a quarter rest. The second measure contains the lyrics 'Whose pigs are these?' and ends with a quarter note. A blue star is placed above the first measure, and another blue star is placed above the final note of the second measure.

are John Cook's I can tell 'm by their looks, And I

This line of music is in D major and 4/4 time. It consists of two measures. The first measure contains the lyrics 'are John Cook's' and ends with a quarter note. The second measure contains the lyrics 'I can tell 'm by their looks, And I' and ends with a quarter note. A blue star is placed above the final note of the second measure.

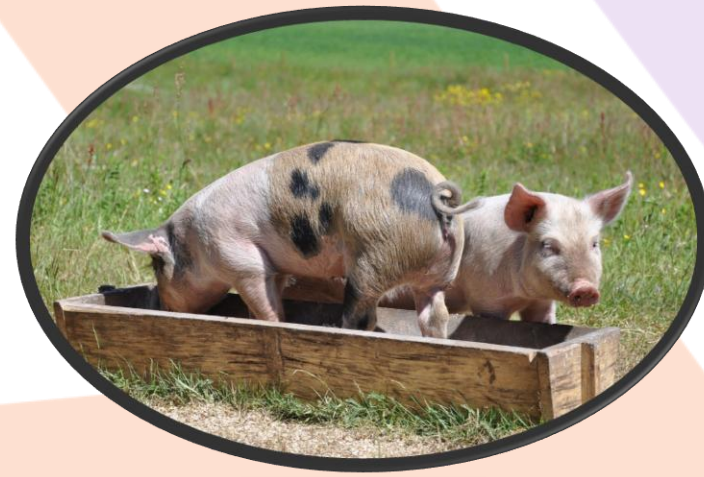
found them in the Vic - a - rage gar - den

This line of music is in D major and 4/4 time. It consists of two measures. The first measure contains the lyrics 'found them in the Vic - a - rage' and ends with a quarter note. The second measure contains the lyrics 'gar - den' and ends with a quarter note.

# Whose Pigs are These?

Partner with:

Oats and Beans and Barley Grow  
Riggidy Jig ( and away we go)



Whose pigs are these?  
Whose pigs are these?  
They are John Cook's,  
I can tell'm by their looks,  
And I found them in the vicarage garden.



...They are Tom Pott's,  
I can tell'm by their spots...

...They are Bill Spear's,  
I can tell'm by their ears...

...They are Sally Dale's,  
I can tell'm by their tails...

...They are Farmer Hunt's,  
I can tell'm by their grunts...

...They are Geoff Potter's,  
I can tell'm by their trotters...

## Teaching the song:

Play a passing game with the class in a circle.

Count 4 beats (1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4 etc) - pass the beanbag/ball/cup on the strong beat – the first of each 4 beats

When they can do this, the teacher /song leader sings the song (1 verse only) passing the beanbag on the strong beat – i.e., the highlighted words

Whose pigs are these?

Whose pigs are these?

They are John Cook's, I can tell'm by their looks,

And I found them in the vicarage garden.

Run the game passing 2 beanbags starting at different points around the circle – extend to 3 or 4 if this is too easy!

After several cycles playing the game, the children should be able to remember the melody and sing the song using most of the lyrics with you (most of them repeat, which helps)

Add extra difficulty to the game – for each 4 beats use this pattern :

1 Whose	2 pigs are	3 these	4 (silence)
PASS	Clap	Clap	PICK UP

If they need a little extra help, use prediction of rhyme or context - for example, sing 'They are John Cook's, I can tell'm by their..... (add gestures if necessary until they give you the rhyming word 'looks') I found them in the Vicarage..... (garden)

This is a great alternative to 'call and copy' type learning. Give it a go!

# Riggidy Jig - partner song for 'Whose Pigs are These'

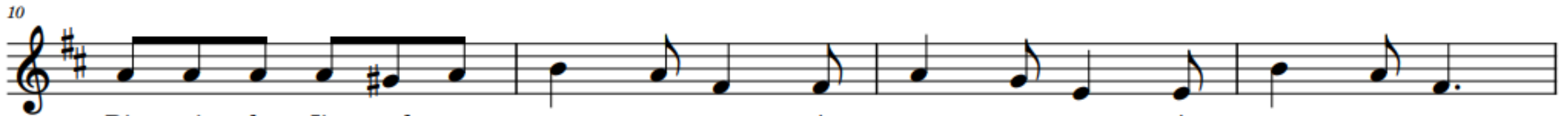
Chord: D major  
Home note D



As I was wal - king down the street, Down the street, down the street, a



Friend of mine I chanced to meet, Hi Ho Hi Ho Hi Ho!



Rig - gi - dy Jig and a - way we go, A - way we go, A - way we go.



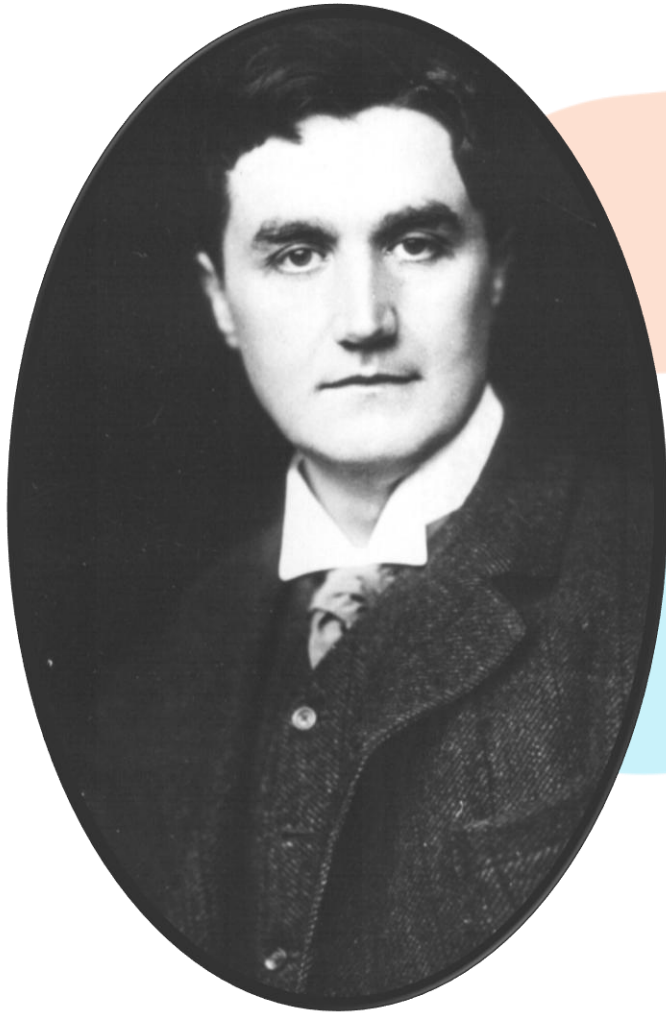
Rig - gi - dy Jig and a - way we go. Hi Ho Hi Ho Hi Ho!

# Activities for 'Whose Pigs are These'

- Get to know 'Whose Pigs are These' really well – then split into 2 groups and sing as a 2-part round. Extend to 3 groups or 4 groups for an extra challenge
- Play with the text and create your own version using the rhyming structure. You could have escaped cows, elephants, snakes – anything! You could find them in the kitchen, in the car, in the bath..... you choose!
- Add accompaniment using untuned instruments – be pigs, stomping on the first beat of each bar (WHOSE), pick out rhythm patterns to repeat and make ostinati (Are John Potts'; Whose Pigs are these?)
- Add accompaniment using tuned instruments on G and D (drone on the first beat of each bar or make ostinati out of lyric patterns such as 'whose pigs are these?' using a combination of GBD (the chord on which the song is based).
- Sing this song as a partner song to 'Oats and Beans and Barley Grow'
- Sing this song as a partner song to Riggidy Jig chorus (Riggidy Jig and away we go)
- Mix and match from the ideas here to make a much longer piece of music – e.g., sing the 1<sup>st</sup> verse, add untuned accompaniment to the second, add tuned to the third, sing one of the partner songs, then put it with Whose pigs – try 2 partner songs at once with all the instruments in and decide how to end it. Voila! Class orchestra 😊

# Homeward Bound – a Sea Shanty from East Anglia

How Western Classical composers have helped preserve the folksong tradition in the British Isles



Just over 100 years ago, the English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams decided to use traditional folksongs in the music he wrote for orchestras, choirs and soloists.

Vaughan Williams: English Folk Song Suite: 1. March:  
Seventeen come Sunday

He travelled all over the British Isles, listening to and writing down songs which local people sang to him. One of the areas he visited was East Anglia (Suffolk and Norfolk) and in 1905 he visited the fishing port of King's Lynn in Norfolk where he heard and wrote down this Sea Shanty, 'Homeward Bound'.

Here's how  
Vaughan  
Williams wrote  
down the lyrics  
and melody of  
the song he  
heard sung to  
him.

4.214  
(2) Our anchors weigh'd

verse I

other verses

Don't you see we're homeward bound on't you

BRITISH MUSEUM



Our anchors weigh'd our ~~anchors~~ sails unfulc'd we're bound to cross the water world 215 5

Don't you see we're homeward bound (verse)

When you arrive at Liverpool Docks, you'll see the girls come down in flocks  
one to another you'll hear them say, 'O that comes Jack with a mouth open

When we arrive at the Dog's Bell' the very best liquor they do sell  
In comes the landlord with a smile, saying drink my lady it won't you while

Now you may is well up to part, there was the broad home the cheer  
In comes the landlord with a frown, get up my lad, let Bill sit down

# Homeward Bound

Collected by Vaughan Williams

Trad

Traditional arr Rayner

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It consists of four lines of music, each with a measure number (1, 6, 10, 14) at the beginning. The lyrics are written below the notes. There are checkmarks above the final notes of each line. The lyrics are: "To Low-es-toft Docks we bid a-dieu, to Suke, and Sal, and Ki-tty too, Our an-chor's weighed, our sails un-furled, We're bound to cross the wat-ery world, Don't you see, we're home-ward bound, don't-you see, we're home-ward bound. Don't you see, we're home-ward bound Don't you see, we're home-ward bound!"

To Low-es-toft Docks we bid a-dieu, to Suke, and Sal, and Ki-tty too, Our  
an-chor's weighed, our sails un-furled, We're bound to cross the wat-ery world, Don't you  
see, we're home-ward bound, don't-you see, we're home-ward bound. Don't you  
see, we're home-ward bound Don't you see, we're home-ward bound!

Chord: D major  
Home note D



# Homeward Bound

To Lowestoft Docks we bid adieu,

To Suke and Sal and Kitty too.

Our anchor's weighed, our sails unfurled,

We're bound to cross the watery world;

Don't you see we're homeward bound,

Don't you see we're homeward bound.

# Lowestoft Docks Activities:

- Add body percussion ostinato (boom, cha, boom boom cha)
- Add sung or played DRONE on D – and then DRONE on A sung to the lyrics ‘Lowestoft Docks’ on beats 1 and 2 with rests on beats 3 and 4
- Make an instrumental introduction to the song using both Drones on D and A. Add classroom percussion using work rhythm patterns from the song e.g., Bid Adieu, Lowestoft Docks – add the patterns gradually and build up the layers. This can also be used a ‘break’ in the middle of the song e.g. between repeated verses.

You can learn how to teach this song – and sing along with it – on the Suffolk County Music Service You Tube Channel

[Homeward Bound - an East Anglian Sea Shanty for KS2/Primary](#)

# Song 1

## Pleasant and Delightful

(also known as The Larks they sang Melodious/  
The Sailor and his True Love)

This is a very old song! It's thought that it dates back to the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and there are lots of different versions of it. It was a well-known and popular song in East Anglia (although it has been popular in the West Country too) – so much that it became an anthem in both the East Suffolk singing pubs, the Blaxhall Ship and the Eel's Foot at Eastbridge.

The theme of the sailor returning from sea with a ring or other token so that his true love would recognise him when he returned is a popular one and this song exists around the country and in the USA with many different sets of lyrics.

This story song uses a simple verse and chorus structure, so it's easy to learn and remember.

Recently, this song has been sung by the folk group 'The Longest Johns', who are performing at Folk East 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzWKmh5MRCw>



All letters in boxes are the chords to play

# Pleasant and Delightful

The Larks they Sang Melodious/The Sailor and his True Love

English Trad

## VERSE 1

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is accompanied by guitar chords indicated by letters in boxes above the staff. The lyrics are written below the staff.

It was plea - sant and de - light - ful on a mid - sum - mer's morn,  
and the green fields and the mea - dows were co-vered in corn.  
And the black - birds and thru-shes sang on e - ver - y green spray,  
And the larks they sang me - lo - di - ous At the daw - ning of the day.  
CHORUS: And the larks they sang me - lo - di - ous, And the larks they sang me - lo - di - ous,  
And the larks they sang me - lo - di - ous at the daw - ning of the day.

Chords: G, C, D, G, C, D, G, C, D, G, C, D, G, C, D, G, C, D, G.

## For teachers: One way to teach this Verse and Chorus song.....

Start with the chorus – sing it ( or listen to it on the Longest Johns’ You Tube version) many times.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzWKmh5MRCw>

Draw the shape of the melody in the air while you are listening to it. – do this a few times and use a different colour in your imagination each time so that you end up with a rainbow shape in your head. Or you could do it on paper with coloured pencils, felt tips or highlighters.

Listen critically to the chorus – There are 2 phrases, based on the last line of each verse each time. Identify what the lyrics are. Then CHUNK the chorus into its 2 phrases, each of which can be split into two pieces themselves:

1. The 5 bars 20-25 ‘And the larks they sang melodious, and the larks they sang melodious’
2. The last 5 bars 25-29 ‘And the larks they sang melodious at the dawning of the day’ – the same as the last phrase of the verse each time!

Ask the pupils to listen to each phrase in turn many times – pitch pattern the phrase with your hands and pupils copy so that they understand and learn the pitch contours (how the pitch changes)each time. When they are confident enough, they can listen to each phrase in turn and sing it back.

When they have learned the whole chorus, concentrate on verse 1. Play ‘call and copy’ (you sing a phrase -or listen to the recording- and they copy it back) for each phrase in turn, correcting any mistakes until it’s accurate.

When they’ve mastered the ‘verse call and copy’, style, you sing the whole song (or listen to the recording) , with pupils singing along in their heads with the verse and then joining in out loud with the chorus.

Repeat this activity a few times, then ask pupils to sing the whole thing with you or the recording (quietly, so that they can hear the guide version above themselves) correcting any inaccuracies along the way.

Now try singing or listening to the other verses and asking pupils to sing the new chorus lyrics each time.

# Pleasant and Delightful – Longest Johns Livestream version

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzWKmh5MRCw>

- It was pleasant and delightful on a midsummer's morn  
When the green fields and the meadows were covered  
in corn  
And the blackbirds and thrushes sang on every green  
spray  
And the larks they sang melodious at the dawning of  
the day

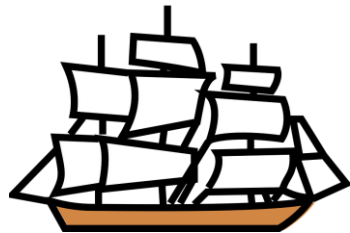
{Chorus}

And the larks they sang melodious,  
And the larks they sang melodious,  
And the larks they sang melodious,  
At the dawning of the day.

- Now a sailor and his true love were a-walking one day  
Said the sailor to his true love, "I am bound far away  
I'm bound for the East Indies where the loud cannons  
roar  
I must go and leave you Nancy, you're the girl that I  
adore

{Chorus}

I must go and leave you Nancy  
I must go and leave you Nancy  
I must go and leave you Nancy  
You're the girl that I adore



- Well, the ring from off her finger she instantly drew,  
Saying, "Take this, dearest William, and my heart will go  
too."  
And as they were embracing tears from her eyes fell  
Saying, "May I go along with you?", "Oh no, my love,  
farewell."

{Chorus}

Saying, "May I go along with you?"  
Saying, "May I go along with you?"  
Saying, "May I go along with you?"  
"Oh no, my love, farewell."

- "Fare thee well my dearest Nancy, no longer can I stay  
For the topsails are hoisted and the anchor's aweigh  
And the ship she lies waiting for the fast-flowing tide  
And if ever I return again, I will make you my bride"

{Chorus}

And if ever I return again  
And if ever I return again  
And if ever I return again  
I will make you my bride.



# Activities to do with this song

- Accompany the singing with a *drone* - playing notes D and G with the pulse of the music.
- Accompany the song with untuned percussion playing pulse or rhythm (try using the phrase 'pleasant and delightful' to generate a rhythm).
- Add more verses (the chorus changes each time, based on the last phrase of each verse)
- Invent your own verses
- Add harmonies to the chorus
- Make an introduction to the song using tuned and untuned instruments – you could set up the drone and a pulse on untuned instruments before the song starts. This could also be used between verses
- Add an instrumental break between verses – use the GD drone and untuned percussion pulse to support a new tune composed using the notes GAB DE ( G pentatonic scale)
- Listen to other versions of the song – either recorded, or performed live ([Pleasant and Delightful Beth's Notes Songs & Resources](#)) compare and contrast against the Longest Johns Version.
- Listen to more classical versions which English and other composers have used in their music [The Sailor and Young Nancy](#)

[The Sailor and Young Nancy \(English folk song arr. E.J. Moeran\)- The Christopher Wren Singers](#)

# Song 2: Shawneetown ('Hard on the Beach Oar')

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'Shawneetown' is a great example of how folk songs can be adapted and changed— it's by the 1970's American folksinger and writer Dillon Bustin, who took lyrics sections from two 100-year-old boatmen's songs and made them into something new with a melody he composed.

Shawneetown in Illinois was a trading centre; boats would be floated down the river Ohio heavily laden then rowed or hauled back (bushwhacked) against the current. Bushwhacking means moving a boat along the water's edge by pulling the bushes.



# Hard on the Beach Oar (usually known as Shawneetown)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITUQbqU6ZyM>

Some rows up, but we floats down  
Way down the Ohio to Shawnee Town  
**And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**

Whiskey's in the jug, boys and wheat's in the sack  
We'll trade them down to Shawneetown and we'll bring the  
rock salt back  
**And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**

Oh, them good old boys, they talk so loud and long,  
They're wide as a barrel and they're twice as strong  
**And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**

The water's mighty warm boys, the air is cold and dank  
And the cursed fog it gets so thick that you cannot see  
the bank

**And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**

Now the current's got her, and we'll take up the slack  
We'll sail her down to Shawneetown and we'll bushwhack  
her back

**And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**

Some rows up, but we floats down  
Way down the Ohio to Shawnee Town  
**And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**

**And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**

# Shawneetown

All verses broadly use the same melody as the chorus

4 CHORUS D

and it's hard on the beach oar She moves too slow

7 D A D

Way down to Shaw nee town on the O hi\_\_\_\_\_ o

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITUQbqU6ZyM>

# Haul Away Jack

Parter song for 'Shawneetown'

Rayner

Chord: D major

Home note D

Heave and a ho and a haul a-way Jack! Roll the bar - rels up the ramp and stack them on the rack!

The first line of musical notation is in treble clef, D major (one sharp), and 4/4 time. It consists of three measures. The first measure contains the lyrics 'Heave and a ho and a haul a-way Jack!' and features a half note D4, followed by quarter notes E4, F4, G4, and A4. The second measure contains 'Roll the bar - rels up the ramp and' and features quarter notes B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, and A5. The third measure contains 'stack them on the rack!' and features quarter notes B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, and A6. The line ends with a double bar line.

5 Heave and a ho and a haul a-way Jack! Roll the bar - rels up the ramp and stack them on the rack!

The second line of musical notation is in treble clef, D major (one sharp), and 4/4 time. It begins with a measure rest labeled '5'. The first measure contains the lyrics 'Heave and a ho and a haul a-way Jack!' and features a half note D4, followed by quarter notes E4, F4, G4, and A4. The second measure contains 'Roll the bar - rels up the ramp and' and features quarter notes B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, and A5. The third measure contains 'stack them on the rack!' and features quarter notes B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, and A6. The line ends with a double bar line.

# Hard on the Beach Oar (usually known as Shawneetown) -Short version with partner song

Some rows up, but we floats down  
Way down the Ohio to Shawnee Town  
**And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**

Now the current's got her, **and we'll take up the slack**  
We'll sail her down to Shawneetown and we'll bushwhack  
her back

**And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**

Some rows up, but we floats down  
Way down the Ohio to Shawnee Town  
**And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**

**And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**  
**Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio**

Partner song :  
Heave and a Ho and a  
Haul away Jack!  
Roll the barrels up the ramp and  
Stack them on the rack!

Actions for partner song:  
2 arm heave and pull x 2  
Reach for rope, clap 'Jack'  
Rolling folded arms  
Hot potatoes (stack fists)



# One Teaching Technique for Shawneetown

## Active listening/use of repeated melody

- Ask pupils to find the pulse of the song while they listen to it being sung (ideally by the teacher) and tap it on their knees with their fingers.
- Vary the place pupils tap the pulse – heads, ears, chin, thighs etc – and listen multiple times while tapping. Change the place pupils tap within the song to keep their focus. Make a pattern of body percussion and repeat it while listening to the song.
- They will be learning the song by ear (as folksongs would always have been learned) while they are doing the pulse activity.
- After running the pulse activity many times, ask the pupils to tell you what the words are to the bit of the song they can hear again and again (the chorus – ‘And it’s hard on the beach oar...’) – listen again to the song and join in with the chorus each time.
- Listen to the melody of the verse each time (not the words) – is it the same tune as the chorus (yes!)
- To save time, put the lyrics up at this point, because the melody to the verses is already known (as is the chorus) so it’s easy to sing.

# Activities to do with this song

- Add body percussion pattern – stamp, stamp, clap clap clap
- Play the body percussion pattern on untuned percussion – perhaps low sounding drum for the stamps and something higher pitched (jingles? Tambourine? Woodblock?) for the claps
- Add a drone on 2 notes (1 and 5 of the scale the song belongs to)
- Sing the song call and response – solos singer or small group for the verse, whole group for the chorus
- Add harmony to the chorus with voices or only play the instruments in the chorus not the verses to add texture ( layers)
- Add the partner song (Heave Ho) either by itself as an introduction , or a break in the middle of the song – or have a group singing it at the same time as Shawneetown (adding harmony and texture)
- Make a line dance to go with the song - here's one you can do to 'Cotton Eye Joe'  
[Cotton Eye Joe - Line Dance](#)

# Song 3: The Herring's Head



The "Herring's Head" is a traditional folk song – it's sung all around the UK but it's really relevant to Lowestoft because of the Herring fishing industry which used to be there.

It's a cumulative song – each verse adds to the previous one, so the song gets longer and longer!

Each new verse adds a different part of the herring – and a new use for something we might otherwise throw away (the eyes – puddings and pies (or a light that shines.....)).

Songs about fishing, like this one, tell us about how fishing was important through history as fish was a main food source especially around the coast.

Other versions of this song exist around the country – many coastal counties have their own regional variations, changing either the melody or the lyrics (or both).

Although this song has a serious message (fish is important – so don't waste any!), it's designed as a comedy song to entertain people.

All letters in boxes  
are the chords to play

# The Herring's Head

Version in A - following Round Index 128 and EDFSS Version

English Trad

A E A

What shall we do with the Her - ring's Head? Turn it in - to loaves of bread!

6 A E

Her - ring's Head, loaves of bread and all such things

10 A

Of all the things that are in the sea, the Her - ring's the king of the fish for me!

15 A E A

Bunk - y - do - da - li - do, Bunk - y - do - da li!

A

What shall we do with the herring's head?

A

E

A

Turn it into Loaves of Bread!

A

E

Herring's Head! Loaves of bread and all such things.

A

Of all the fish that live in the sea, the herring's the king of the fish for me

A

E

A

Bunky do-da-li-do, Bunky do-da-li

Violin/viola strings to pluck:

A Chord: A E

E Chord: E

# The Herring's Head – a Cumulative song - lyrics

## Verse 1

What shall we do with the herring's head?

-Turn it into loaves of bread –

Herring's head, loaves of bread,  
and all such things

Of all the fish that are in the sea  
The herring's the king of the fish for me

Bunky do da li do, Bunky do da li

Keep adding a new line for each verse, the final verse will look like this

## Verse 6

What shall we do with the herring's fins?

-Turn it into baking tins

Herring's fins baking tins,  
Herring's belly something smelly,  
Herring's eyes a light that shines,  
Herring's tails ships and sails,  
Herring's Head loaves of bread, and all such things.

Of all the fish that are in the sea  
The herring's the king of the fish for me  
Bunky do da li do, Bunky do da li

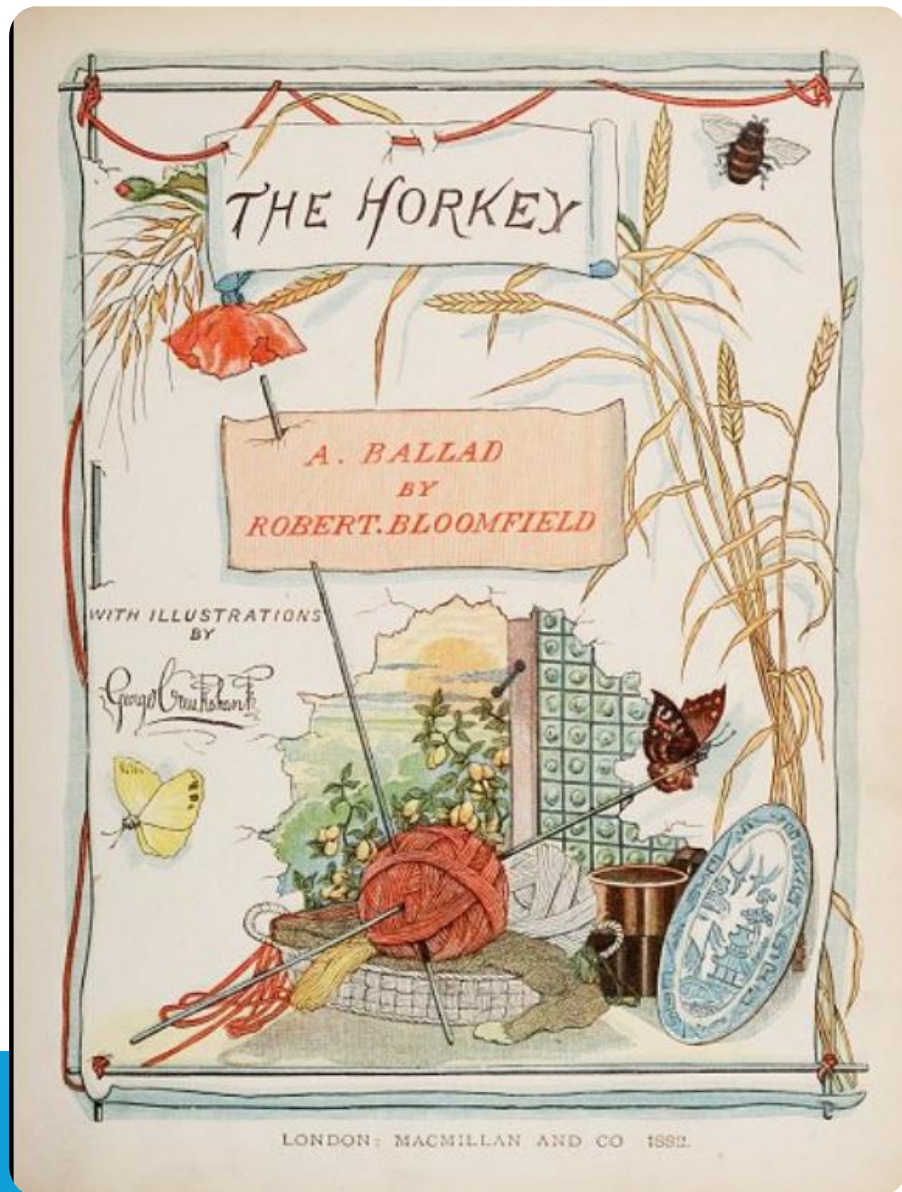
# One Teaching Technique for The Herring's Head .....

Combination of Active listening/Call and copy/Inner singing voice

- ✓ Listen to the chorus – ‘Of all the fish that are in the sea.....bunky-do-da-li’ and tap the pulse quietly e.g. fingers on knees.
- ✓ Learn the nonsense words first – call and copy - listen to each phrase in turn and then sing back
- ✓ Next add ‘Of all the fish that are in the sea’ – learn it call and copy, adding ‘the herring’s the king of the fish for me’ when the first phrase is secure – then listen to and sing back the whole long phrase.
- ✓ Play the whole song, finding the pulse and encourage joining in with the chorus each time(‘Of all the fish that are in the sea.....bunky-do-da-li’
- ✓ Ask who can remember all the bits of the herring and what they did with them. Make a flow diagram of lyrics – mapping the whole song might take a few listenings (which means that the song will be internalised and sung using the inner singing voice each time as they listen)

# Activities to do with this song

- Make the song longer by adding more things you can do with bits of the Herring
- Make your own 21<sup>st</sup> Century 'Sustainable Shopping' version of the song highlighting ways to use up leftovers (for example, What shall we do with the Parsnip tops? Make them into miniature mops! What shall we do with the Carrot peelings? Make orange paint and paint the ceilings!)
- Add accompaniment – using a DRONE on tuned instruments (Alternate A and A/E)
- Add some harmonies from 'of all the fish that live in the sea'
- Dramatise the song – add actions, like pointing to the head when singing about the head, or taking solos/ singing as small groups for different parts of the song
- [Herrings-and-Hops.pdf](#) from the English Folk Dance and Song Society is a useful resource for pupils with SEND (backed up with You Tube performances) but also useable for KS1 and KS2 pupils. [The Herring's Head](#)



## Song 4: An Essex Horkey

- A 'horkey' was the annual harvest celebration of a rural community in the East of England in times gone by (Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex) and is a word rooted in East Anglian dialect.
- It was often held in an empty barn, or in a large room in a farm or a pub.
- The harvest celebration always included a feast, songs and dancing, and was a time when the whole village could come together after the hard work of the harvest.
- Celebrations like this were common in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but by the 20<sup>th</sup> century they hardly happened at all.
- One poem written in 1802 by Robert Blomfield says, *'In Suffolk husbandry, the man who goes foremost through the harvest with the scythe or sickle is honoured with the title 'Lord', and at the Horkey, or harvest home-feast, collects what he can for himself or brethren from the farmers and visitors to make a 'frolic' afterwards (largesse spending). Leaving the hall after the feat they all shout 'largess' so loudly that it is heard in all the farms around.'*
- John Greaves Nall, in his *Glossary of East Anglian Dialect*, originally published in 1866, thought that the word 'horkey' referred to the hallooing that followed the feast and was connected with the Norse *hauka*, to shout, that is also a root of the words 'hawker' and 'huckster'
- This version of a Horkey is based on one sung by a singer called Beryl Cowan and recorded by folksong collectors in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

# An Essex Horkey Song

Verse adapted from the singing of Beryl Cowan by the East Anglian Traditional Music Trust

Trad

A jol - ly good song and jol - ly well sung, And jol - ly good com - pan - e - ver - y - one,

Clap your hands and throw your hats high, We'll sing you a - no - ther song by and by.

This song can be accompanied entirely by one chord (in this case, just D ) without using G chord – this is the lowest key we would recommend singing in for children, but you could also use E chord or F chord to accompany if you wished to sing it a little bit higher.

## One Teaching Technique for this song – Active listening and Prediction

- Ask pupils to find the pulse of the song while they listen to it being sung ( ideally by the teacher) and tap it on their knees with their fingers.
- Vary the place pupils tap the pulse – heads, ears, chin, thighs etc – and listen multiple times while tapping. Change the place pupils tap within the song to keep their focus. They will be learning the song by ear (as folksongs would always have been learned) while they are doing the pulse activity.
- After running the pulse activity many times, ask the pupils what the actions are they can hear in the song ( clap your hands and throw your hands high) – ask them to do the actions with the teacher while the teacher sings the phrase
- Use prediction of rhyme to learn the lyrics to the last phrase after ' clap your hands and throw your hands high, we'll sing you another song by and .....(by)
- Use prediction of rhyme to learn the lyrics for the first two phrases - ie teacher says ' A jolly good song and jolly well..... ( sung) and jolly good company .....everyone
- Learn the melody to each phrase, one by one – teacher sings, pupils copy – address any inaccuracies of pitch or rhythm by re-singing the correct version and repeating until correct

# An Essex Horkey with Oats and Beans and Barley Grow

## Partner Songs

Trad

Voice

A jol - ly goo song and jol - ly well sung, And jol - ly good com - pan - y e - ver - y - one,

Voice

Oats and beans and bar - ley grow. Oats and beans and bar - ley grow. Do

Vo.

Clap your hands and throw your hats high! We'll sing you a - no - ther song by and by.

Vo.

you or I or A - ny - one know how oats and beans and bar - ley grow?

Singing the partner songs in this key (D) is probably both the highest and lowest you would want to sing with children in this case – Oats and Beans then goes up to a high D and Essex Horkey down to a low A.

## Activities using the Essex Horkey Song

- Add accompaniment using tuned instruments
- Sing this song as a partner song to 'Oats and Beans and Barley Grow'
- Adapt this song by using the existing melody and writing new verses to personalise for your school – e.g. start 'It's Harvest time, and ..... .
- Make your own dance pattern to use as a dance break within the song.
- Try learning a folk dance (could be a circle dance, could be a partner dance (for example, a jig [English Folk Dance and Song Society - Tune example: Jig](#) possibly using Circassian Circle or an adaptation of it [Circassian Circle](#) (this one uses 4 phrases of 8 bars so 4 times as long as the basic Essex Horkey we have here) A circle dance could be as simple as: circle left 4 steps, circle right 4 steps, walk forwards 4 steps, walk backwards 4 steps.
- Include an element of percussion within the dance for this song - like Morris Dance sticks. You could use claves, drumsticks – or sturdy dowelling rods which can be tapped by an individual or a partner. The simple circle dance above might then go: Circle left 123 tap sticks, Circle right 123 tap sticks, forwards 123 tap sticks, backwards 1 2 3 tap sticks.

# Instruments you can use to accompany the songs:

- Voices (harmony)!
- Violins, violas/cellos(same string names as violas)
- Recorders/penny whistles
- Guitars/ukuleles/harps
- Tuned Percussion (boomwhackers, xylophones, glockenspiels, hand bells, chime bars)
- Keyboards/pianos/accordions/melodeons/harmoniums

- Other instruments you may have in schools – Eb/Bb clarinets, flutes, Eb/Bb brass – ask your instrumental teacher which notes to play with each song.
- Untuned percussion (anything that doesn't play a named note)
- Body percussion
- Junk percussion
- Kazoos..... 😊



# A violin / viola of your very own!

At FolkEast 2026, young people 12 years and under can come to the Suffolk County Music Stand and paint a violin or viola to their own design, to play at one of our community workshops over the weekend. We'll teach you how.

You can then take your customised instrument away with you, to keep and play at home.

**Paint it, Play it, Keep it**

# **You're invited to join in the fun with us at FolkEast**

- 🎵 Paint a violin / viola to your own design and take it home
- 🎵 Play your violin / viola at our community workshops
- 🎵 Join in the music with us at our other community workshops



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# Keep in touch with Suffolk County Music Service !

## Suffolk County Music Service

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IP12 4SS

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Email: [county.musicservice@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:county.musicservice@suffolk.gov.uk)

[tracey.rayner@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:tracey.rayner@suffolk.gov.uk)

For ongoing updates, information and news relating to the work of Suffolk County Music Service, visit the website or follow us:

[www.suffolkcountymusicservice.co.uk](http://www.suffolkcountymusicservice.co.uk)



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