

PLAY FAVOURITES...

Which toys, books and songs do you have in common with your relatives?

The following extract is taken from 'The Memories of Clara Barraclough: An account of life in Saltaire 1894 onwards (an oral history held by the Saltaire Collection):

"We had a library at school and there was always a demand for favourite books such as 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', 'Alice in Wonderland', 'East Lynne', 'Ben Hur', 'Tom Brown's Schooldays', etc. We never had any homework to do and so had plenty of time to read, especially in the winter, when it was too dark and cold to play out. All the family would sit round the fire in the evening, father usually reading the Telegraph or Argus (there were two separate papers in those days) and the children would perhaps be reading or playing games such as 'Snap', 'Snakes and Ladders' or 'Tiddley Winks'..."

As children, we played outdoor games such as hopscotch, skipping, marbles and a game called 'buttoney ball' for which we raided our mother's sewing boxes for buttons, which were placed in a chalked circle on the pavement near a wall. Then we took turns at bouncing the ball in to the circle and against the wall, catching it on return. If we knocked a button out of the circle, the button was ours.

One very popular game usually played in the school's playground was 'bingo'. About a dozen girls would form a ring holding hands and one girl in the centre, then they'd move around singing lustily.

*There was a dog in a farmer's yard
And Bingo was his name-o
B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O
And Bingo was his name-o*

Second verse sung individually, B with an I, I with an N, N with a G, G with an O, B-I-N-G-O and Bingo was his name-o. The girl who finished the last letter then replaced the one in the centre and the game started all over again.

We girls played with rag dolls, wooden hoops and shuttlecocks and battledores, whilst the boys had iron hoops and whips and tops and marbles. The toys were very primitive in those days compared with the sophisticated and expensive playthings of today, but we were none the less happy with them."





Saltaire Stories
Past, Present and Future

TASK: Draw your family tree with as many of your relatives' favourite toys, pieces of music or books – start those conversations... Don't forget to include your own and make sure you look them all up!

