



Age UK
Cultural Commissioning project:
Hidden Stories

Poems written
by Annice Thomas

It's
been a
great
joy...

It's been a great pleasure putting pen to paper and writing poetry for Age UK.

I've been a social worker for many years and have had the opportunity to work with a diverse group of people from all walks of life. I've always had a love of history and have written poetry from the age of 10 years old.

It's been an amazing experience for me to combine my interests of history and poetry.

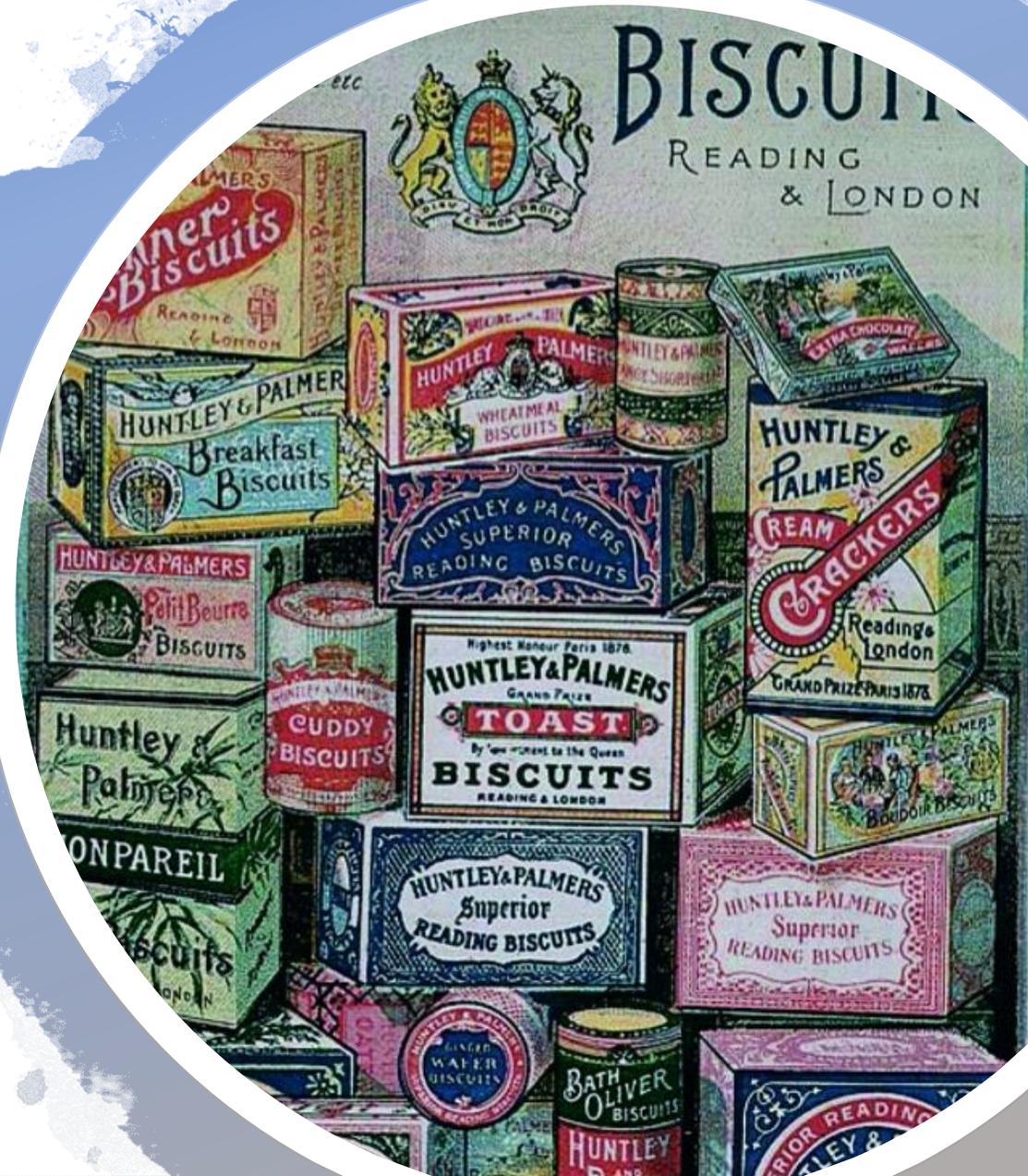
This project has really brought me great joy and reward as I've been able to laugh and share with my dad who recalls many happy memories with his friends at The Majestic Club in Reading.

I would like to dedicate these poems to the people of Reading and to my loving dad.

Annice Thomas

Reading Proud

Reading, the largest town in England's history
Is full of interest, excitement and mystery
Michael Bond's Paddington Bear
Saving money for the next train fare
The well-known Berkshire, "Biscuit Town"
Reading "Biscuit Men" could not be kept down
Football and biscuits were not the only game
Without Sutton Seeds, gardens wouldn't be the same
The hardworking red brick makers
Are all Berkshire champion breakers
Terracotta, red bricks and tiles
Reading was infamous for miles and miles
Reading streets steeped in English heritage
Buried at The Abbey
Lies William The Conquers relative
The doors of The Battle Hospital
Have seen many over the years
The NHS is proud to heal
and deflate patients fears
People of Reading do stand proud and tall
The many B's of Reading
Your history has made a difference to one and all



Migration: A tribute to my dad

In 1962 I stepped off the aeroplane
Into the cold, fog and constant rain
I was 16 years old a head full of black hair
I missed the warm St Vincent sunshine
The taste of Georgie mangoes and sugar apples
Were simply magnificent and divine
I swapped my life on Calder Hill
For the British weather and bright daffodils
I settled into the British way of life
Working hard and kept away from trouble and strife
Learning to drive at 18 bought myself a Ford Prefect
Driving from High Wycombe to Reading
The music and dancing at The Majestic were perfect
I married at 21 had a family of my own
Became a qualified Engineer and bought my first home
58 years since I left sunny St Vincent
I'm now a great grandad and no more hair left to comb

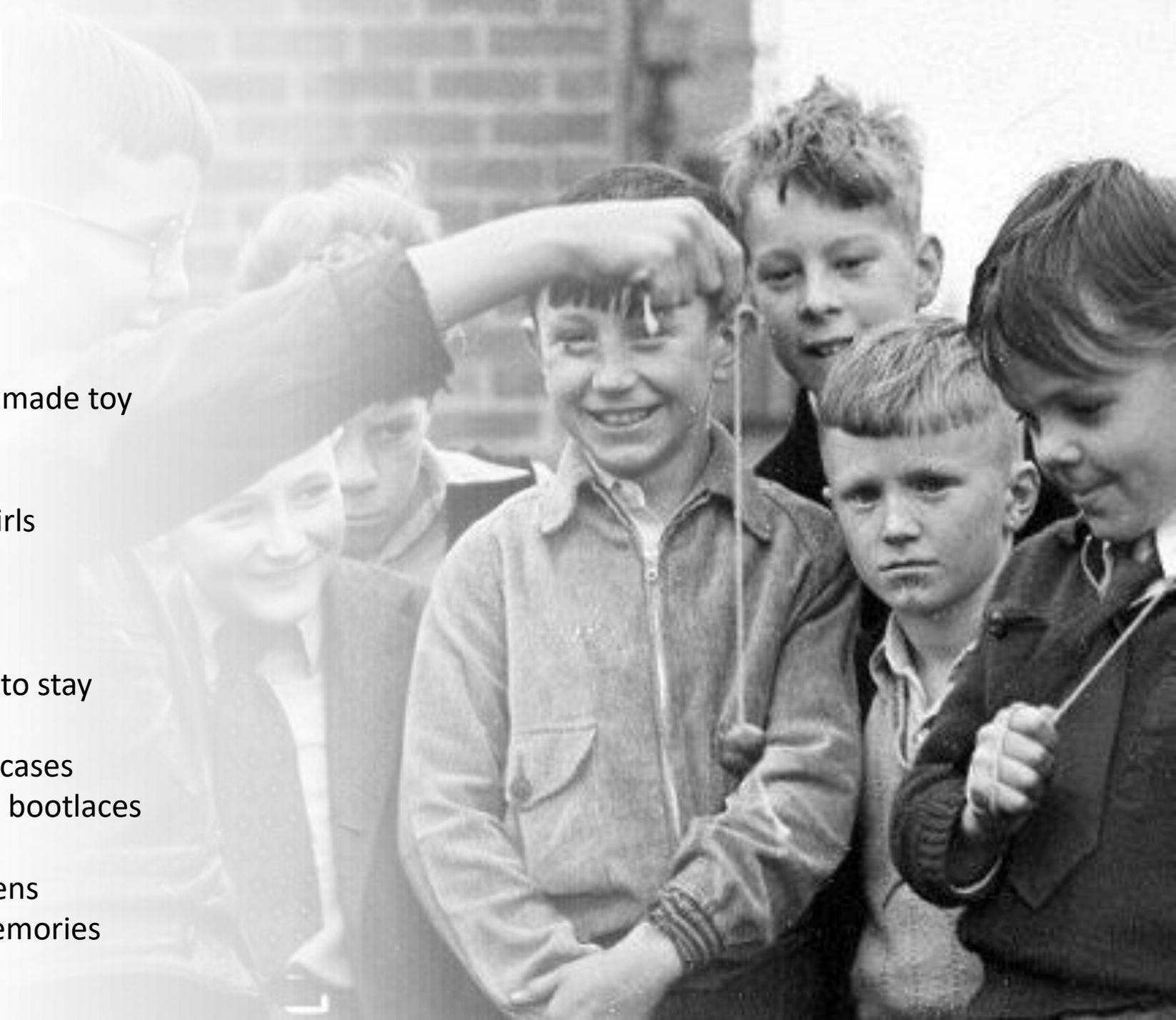


Fun and Carefree

Imaginations were in a spin
Building soap carts, what a win!
Collecting old pram wheels
Was so much fun
Eating bread and scrape on the run
Making soap carts was such a joy—
Didn't cost a penny, it was the best homemade toy

Collecting stamps from around the world
Was a great interest for many boys and girls
Examining stamps one by one
Collecting stamps by the ton
Feeling close to countries far away
Wishing our men folk would come home to stay

Our fingers would bleed from the prickly cases
Threading conkers through old string and bootlaces
Running through crunchy autumn leaves
Smashing champion conkers to smithereens
These simple games bring back happy memories
Kept our minds busy, fun and carefree



Home Life

The old brown and green ration books
Meat and two veg sometimes overcooked
Milk bottles frozen on the doorsteps
Washing in the bath shirts, socks and vests
Terry nappies drying around the blue paraffin heater
Eyes glued to the Black and White TV
Coronation Street and of course Blue Peter
Whilst having a nice cup of Brooke Bond tea

First cars made us full of pride
Ford Anglia, Morris Minor
Hitchhiking to catch a ride
Times were hard, times were tough
Still we made it through the rough
Hopping on the Reading trolley bus
Riding to work through the old Biscuit Town
Working hard was normal life for all of us

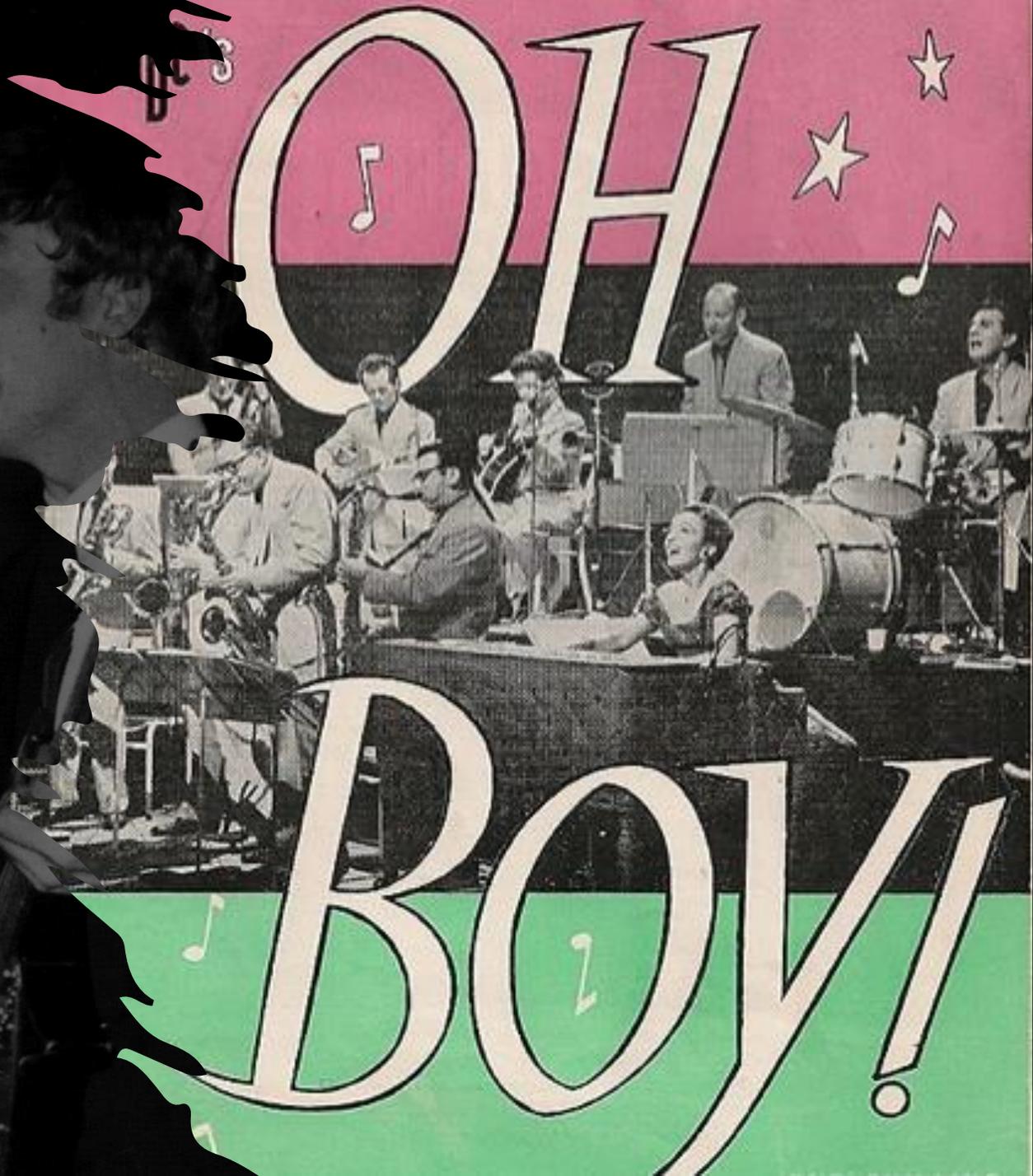


Back in the day...

It started with the Oh Boy! show
To the Majestic Dancehall we would go
Cliff, Elvis, Bill Haley and Buddy Holly
Little Richard's "Good Golly Miss Molly"
The music kept us free and alive
Rockabilly and dancing jive

Then came The Swinging Sixties
Those good old rock n roll years
Dancing the night away
We had no time for tears
Bouffant hair and wearing kitten heels
Teddy Boy hair and driving Triumph wheels

Tom Jones and Dusty took our breath away
The Beatles were here to forever stay
Those were the good rock n roll days
We were happy in a merry haze
The music of our youth, freedom and time
We were happy and lost in our young prime



The Reading West Milkman

My first job as a milkman in 1964

I delivered bottles of milk to many a door

Arising in the early hours of the morning

Hearing the birds sing and dawn calling

Keeping quiet was always a test

I tried not to rattle bottles, I did my best

My hands frozen to the bone

But I loved delivering milk to family homes

Up and down Reading West Streets

Up and down on my old cart seat

Collecting the empty bottles standing in a row

For 10 years I watched babies thrive and grow

Chatting to folks, collecting payments

I loved being a milkman

On Reading West pavements



All poems written
by Annice Thomas
for Age UK



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