

## Join HenPals this Christmas and share a festive garland with people living in care

Throughout lockdown we've been running our HenPals initiative, asking schools and families to send letters, poems and artwork to the older people we support living in care homes.

This autumn we've teamed up with Seven Stories to extend HenPals and create a forest of festive community garlands that can be shared with people living in care.

With resources from *The Good Little Christmas Tree* by Ursula Moray Williams as inspiration, we're asking classes to create their own collage tree for a larger garland that will be shared with the care homes we support. Residents will take part in creative sessions with artists to add their own trees and decorations to your garland ready for it to be displayed this Christmas and bring some festive jolliness.

### Please find included in this pack:

- **Background to *The Good Little Christmas Tree***
- **Example collage illustrations from the book to help with ideas**
- **A step-by-step guide to creating your class garland by visual artist Rosi Thornton**



Once you've created your garland please email Kerry at [information@equalarts.org.uk](mailto:information@equalarts.org.uk) and we'll share it with one of the care settings we support in your local area.

As well as making your Christmas tree garland ask your residents or pupils to talk about decorating their Christmas trees at home. Is the tree real or artificial? Who buys the tree and from where? Are the tree decorations stored in the loft or in a cupboard, who decorates the tree, are there any arguments, is it a fairy or a star on top and are there presents round the base? Write their stories down and share them with us.

# The Good Little Christmas Tree by Ursula Moray Williams

Artwork for The Good Little Christmas Tree is Copyright the Estate of Ursula Moray Williams and reproduced by kind permission. The original artwork is held in the Ursula Moray Williams archive at Seven Stories.

## Using collage to create pictures

The Good Little Christmas Tree was published in 1943 during World War II. There were paper and ink shortages and difficulties with printing and publishing.

Despite these barriers, Ursula Moray Williams used the limited materials she had to hand to create paper collage images and line drawings that would become the main pictures in her book.

She created wide landscape images, which alternated with pages of black and white text, red title letters, and small black silhouettes at the bottom of each page.

As coloured paper was in short supply she sometimes had to paint the paper to the required colour before cutting it.



## Story synopsis

One Christmas Eve a peasant father walks home through the forest carrying a little Christmas tree for his children. After the children have gone to bed, the peasant's wife bakes some little brown cookies and hangs them from the branches of the tree with bright red thread. The parents wish they had tinsel and candles to decorate the tree, and presents to give, but they know the children are good and unselfish and will make the best of it; and so they go to bed.

That night the tree, which has seen and heard everything and wants to make the family happy, steps out of his pot and sets out through the forest in search of decorations to hang from his branches. He finds some goblins busy mining and exchanges some of his green needles for a few of their diamonds; he bargains with the wolves for some of their bright red toadstools.

He finds some beautiful icicles hanging from a bridge and takes some of these; he gives away some of his lower branches as firewood to a pedlar, in exchange for toys for the children.



With each new encounter he gives away more and more of himself, until eventually his branches are stripped bare and the cookies are all nibbled. Now he is ashamed to be seen. When he meets St Nicholas he begs the Saint to take all the shiny things off his bare branches and tie them on to the bushy tree that he is carrying, and give that tree to the peasant and his family instead.



However, with one touch St Nicholas restores the little Christmas tree so that he looks more splendid than ever, and they make their way together, with all the forest dwellers following in procession, back to the family's home.

The children, who are peeping out of the window, see them coming; they dash back to bed and hide under the covers, in case they don't get any presents at all!





# The Good Little Christmas Tree Activity



## Inspiration

Think about the things the Christmas tree finds to hang on his branches. Bright red toadstools, wooden toys, glittering icicles, and little brown cookies. They're all simple items, and many of them come from nature. As a first step, encourage participants to think about what other colours and sights they might find in the winter woodland: a yellow leaf, a glossy brown chestnut, the glitter of white snow or bright red berries. Use these suggestions as inspiration for decorating the trees.



## Materials

Paper tree template  
Sturdy card  
Magazines or newspapers for collaging  
Glue stick  
Scissors  
Single hole punch  
A long piece of string



## Collage Techniques

Collage is a great way of using various scrap materials to create texture and interest. Torn edges of paper are softer and let colours and textures blend together. Use a glue stick rather than liquid glue to get more control over your materials and layer them up in fun ways!

## Instructions

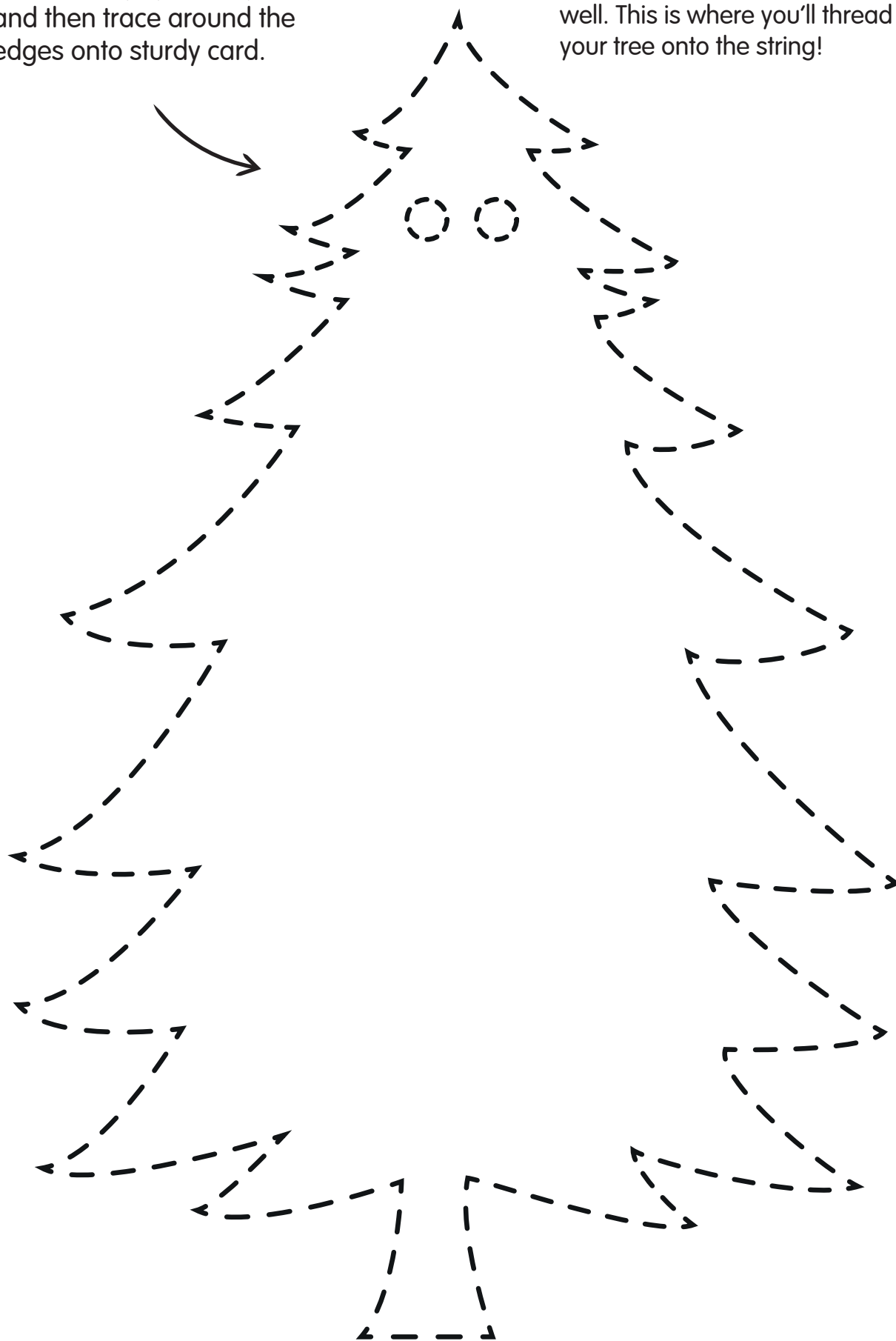
- 1 Using the template in this pack, cut out a tree shape from sturdy card. Every tree needs two holes at the top for the hanging string.
- 2 Now we'll use collage to make the colours of the tree. Look through the magazines and tear out colours you like. Arrange them onto your template to see how they look together. You could also paint paper to tear up like Ursula Moray Williams.
- 3 Glue down your chosen paper scraps onto the card, remember to do both sides. Try and aim for a mixture of plain and patterned papers to make your tree come to life.
- 4 Decorate your tree using different coloured paper scraps. Think about the colours you might find in the woodland for inspiration! You could add in Christmas greetings and wishes for those receiving your garland.
- 5 After letting your trees dry completely, thread the string through both holes so that they sit neatly like bunting.
- 6 Tie knot loops on the string between each tree, so that other decorations can be hung on the same garland.



# Tree Template

Cut out the paper template and then trace around the edges onto sturdy card.

Make sure to cut out the holes as well. This is where you'll thread your tree onto the string!



## More about Ursula Moray Williams

Born 19 April, 1911, in Petersfield, Hampshire. In 1918 moved to North Stoneham, Hampshire. Educated at home until the age of 17, then sent abroad with her twin sister Barbara for a year, to Annecy in Haute-Savoie. On returning to England, both twins joined the Winchester College of Art. Moray Williams only lasted one year at the College before leaving to start her career as a children's author. In 1931 she published her first book, 'Jean-Pierre', illustrated with her own artwork.

Her involvement with the Girl Guide movement, as a Brown Owl for her local Brownie pack, led to the publication of several activity and story books for Brownies, also illustrated with her own artwork. Following her marriage in 1935, she moved to Hampton, close to Kingston-upon-Thames, where she continued writing. During the Second World War, she and her family relocated to Claygate, near Esher and then, in 1941, to the Overbury estate, near Beckford, Gloucestershire. In 1945 Moray Williams moved again to Court Farm, Bredon Hill, Gloucestershire.

Williams authored over 60 books for children between the 1930s and the 1980s, and several of her early works were also illustrated by her, or by her sister Barbara. Over time however, she became increasingly reliant on professional artists, and her works have been illustrated by many well-known children's illustrators including Shirley Hughes, Faith Jaques, Pauline Baynes and Edward Ardizzone.

Moray Williams has also authored stories for reluctant readers and contributed to various anthologies and magazines. Williams died in October 2006, at the age of 95.