BALLADS

Ballads originated as poems said, or even sung, aloud by travelling minstrels. Traditional ballads are made up of quatrains (four-line verses) with a clear rhythm (iambic tetrameter, trimeter) and alternate lines rhyming.

Ballads are often about important events, usually heroic deeds or tragic events like shipwrecks and mine disasters. Another common theme is love gone wrong.

Here is the beginning of a ballad based on the sinking of the fishing boat *New Nuts* on 7 January, 2003.

The Ballad of Bobby Lambe

It was the year two thousand, three, Jan. seventh, to be exact, That Bobby Lambe, adrift at sea, Was victim of a sad mishap.

His fishing boat, *New Nuts* by name, In search of the *Altair*,
Was swamped – with none aboard to blame –

By waves that filled the air.

Jennifer Hind, "Ballad," *The Royal Gazette*, Bermuda, 2003.

Use stories printed in *your newspaper* as inspiration for a ballad. Clip out the article and paste it in the space below and write the ballad next to it. Your ballad may be about a tragic event or the career of a sports hero.