

## **Activism and a lifetime of singing**

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### **Workshop**

When you sing, you can reach deep into yourself and communicate some of what you've got to other people, and you get them to reach inside of themselves. You release your soul force, and they release theirs, until you can feel like you are part of one great soul. (Seeger & Reiser, 1989, p. 180)

Activists have long known the importance that music and especially group singing can have in putting your message across, encouraging group cohesion and maintaining motivation to continue the 'fight'. Pete Seeger's songs have been with me since childhood: I sang them in primary school, not really knowing what they were about, then resurrected many of them through the years of student politics and again, to show support for the Kent Miner's striking in the 1980's. I taught my own children the songs of Ewan MacColl as we sang 'in the fishing' on the way to school and that 'no man has the right to own mountains' as we boldly rambled on Saturday afternoons. And now my grandchildren sing of convicts destined for South Australia and how ship building might allow Dad to buy a bike for Christmas, but then he is 'taken to task'. Songs are evocative and life-long.

We shall bring this conference on activism to an end by singing songs of freedom from across Europe and after learning the stories behind three songs we shall take our voices out into the streets where Watt Tyler and The Peasant's Revolt would once have marched.

**Question: What it means to be an activist and whose values we represent?**

Seeger, P., & Reiser, B. (1989). *Everybody says freedom*. New York: Norton