



## Light the Lanterns

a timed exercise

by Sho Botham

It was the May 13. Light the Lanterns day. Children from the past came to the castle gardens to prepare, paint and finally light the lanterns. They hung their lanterns amongst the pink roses and white oriental lilies. The fragrances blended into a heady scent that was all around them.

The children wore nightgowns similar to the ones they wore when they left the castle. Embroidery Anglaise, fine lawn cotton and muslin were the most popular. All of the nightgowns were white. They all looked freshly laundered for the occasion.

No one knew where the children came from. Each year they appeared as if by magic on Light the Lanterns day. They painted intricate patterns in bright colours on the many lanterns. When they hung their last lanterns up amongst the flowers it was time to gather together to sing the lantern song. Every child knew the words. They gathered together in a large circle holding hands across the centuries. Bare feet stepped softly on long grass sprinkled with wild flowers. No footprints were left.

Children's voices rang out filling the air with crystal clear sounds. Only once the children's voices were heard could the villagers come to witness the children singing, lit by the once a year lanterns in voices that were for this night only.

As the singing came to an end lanterns began to flicker. One by one they went out. The circle of children let go of hands. White lilies blended with white nightgowns as the children returned once more to where they came from. In a short time only the dark lanterns with their coat of brightly coloured paints were left hanging amongst the flowers waiting to be absorbed into the garden ready for next year's Light the Lanterns day.