

talking history

TALKING SHOP

USING ORAL HISTORY TO INVESTIGATE PEOPLE'S WORK

A vast amount of information about the world of work can readily be found in the East Midlands Oral History Archive collections. Work is such a central feature of many people's lives that it is understandably a favourite topic for people to describe in oral testimony. As a result the archive has a wealth of information, descriptive, factual and anecdotal, on trades, industries, professions and employment of all kinds. This includes the trades and skills of employment found today and those practised over the last one hundred years or more. The details of many jobs no longer engaged in have been kept in oral recordings, so they have not been entirely lost.

As the EMOHA on-line Hosiery exhibition (<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/resources/hosiery/>) shows, the Leicester hosiery industry is well documented in the archive, across different collections. The mining industry is very well recorded in the Mantle Oral History Project Collection. This collection, comprising of recordings made from 1986 – 1992 in the Coalville and Whitwick area of Leicestershire, offers a unique view of the mining industry throughout the 20th century. Face workers, engineers, safety officers, coal sorters and those who looked after the pit ponies give voice to their experience of work. Mining was not necessarily a lifetime

Chrissy Thornhill is the East Midlands Oral History Archive's Cataloguing/Production Officer. She has recently finished cataloguing the Mantle Collection which is one of the Archive's best collections for historians studying people's working lives.



Staff of the North Evington Poor Law Infirmary in the late 1920s. The Infirmary became Leicester General Hospital in 1930.

career for some of these men; work in quarries, agriculture and the hosiery industry, for instance, was often exchanged for work in the pit, or the other way round.

The Mantle Collection also provides a wonderful documentation of farming life in North West Leicestershire, which went alongside mining during the 20th century. Different aspects of agricultural work and the changes in farming techniques, particularly during the Second World War, are recorded in the interviews.

The collections of the EMOHA contain a valuable record of the many different aspects of health work practised in Leicester during the last century. The Leicester Oral History Archive Collection, contains a large number of interviews with doctors, nurses, and health workers who worked at the Towers, General and Royal Infirmary Hospitals or in the community. Extracts from some

of these recordings can be found in the LOHA Compilation Collection, under such titles as "Midwife" and "Public Health". The Clive Harrison Collection also has interviews with nurses and health workers in Leicester prior to the formation of the National Health Service in 1948. Doctors chronicling their experience of general practice can also be found in the Mantle Collection.

Law and order enforcers, tram drivers, shop workers, travel agents, soldiers, canal workers, game keepers and bakers, to name but a few occupations, are all to be found in the oral testimonies held by the archive. If you would like to hear what they have to say please consult the EMOHA catalogue on www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue.html or contact me, Chrissy Thornhill, Cataloguing Officer on 0116 2525065.

THE PRINTER'S TALE

Printing has been a major industry in Leicester but is less well researched and documented than hosiery. Even within living memory, the industry has witnessed dramatic changes, from time consuming hand-operated processes to sophisticated computer technologies. EMOHA talked with Keith Dent, now retired, about his experiences in the trade.

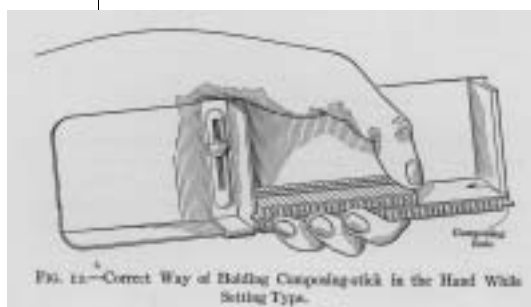


FIG. 11—Correct Way of Holding Composing-stick in the Hand While Setting Type.

At the age of 16, in 1952, Keith left school and began a five year long apprenticeship as a hand-compositor with C. Brook's

and Company, based at 16 Belgrave Gate in Leicester. "It was a printers and stationers. They had a shop on the main road, the main Belgrave Road, and a printers was at the back, which is like most printers were in those days. They were a family oriented business with a shop at the front selling, you know, stationery and all sorts of things. This was all before your WH Smiths and Osbornes..."

It was here that Keith learned his trade, starting with the most mundane of tasks.

"Day one you were given a brush and you were told to sweep the floor. That was your first job every morning. Pick all the type up off the floor if there was any there, even between the floorboards 'cos in those days type was made of lead, or lead, antimony and tin. And type was precious and it was valuable so we used to have to pick that up in the morning. Then eventually, I started to learn how to, what we say, compose. And I remember having to stand on a box, 'cos I wasn't very tall... I'm not very tall now but I was even smaller in those days... and I used to have to stand on a box just to reach the type cases 'cos they were on what was called frames. And those days they were wooden frames, and the metal ones were just coming out, but they were all wood frames and they were made for adults."

As a hand-compositor, Keith's job was to pick up individual letters, set them first in a

Mandy Morris is an outreach worker for the East Midlands Oral History Archive. She has recently been conducting a series of interviews for the Archive on the printing industry in Leicester.

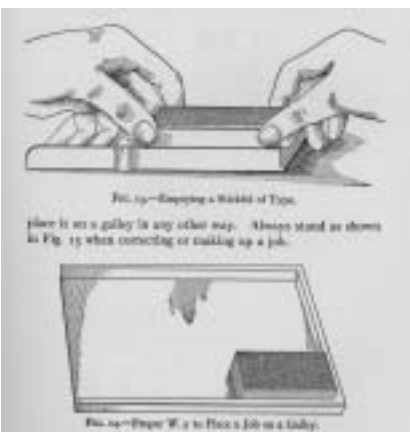


FIG. 12—Keeping a Whole Tray. Always stand as shown in Fig. 11 when correcting or taking up a job.

FIG. 13—Paper W. a to Place a Job in a Galley.

the lines of type before being printed. Accuracy was essential: you had to neatly space all the words and had to read the type upside-down and backwards at the same time! But things didn't always go smoothly. Sometimes, if you weren't careful, the type ended up on the floor...

"You used to have what they call a little load of pie then, printer's pie, which was a complete mess of different typefaces. You imagine different typefaces, and, I mean there was all these different point sizes that, say in those days, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, and on each one of them you'd probably got, even at C. Brooks and Co. that didn't have a big range of typefaces, in one chase you might have 4 or 5 different typefaces. So if you finished up with a nice little pile on the floor or on the stone, they'd all got to be sorted and put back into cases."

During his apprenticeship, Keith worked a typical 48 hour week. In addition he attended college two evenings per week, although the firm did let him go to college during the day to learn the practice, theory and layout of composing. "Other companies, they didn't allow the apprentices any time off at all. It was thought of in those days by some as cheap labour and it was used as such, and they used to have to go college at night."

Different jobs had different smells about them. Keith's father was an engineer and, he recalls, "you could smell an engineer". The print shop at Brooks had a particular smell of

paper, glue, ink and wood. "You've got your different varieties of paper. Good quality, bad quality, coloured paper, card... and then you've got the glue that the ladies used which was not your white glue nowadays, it was horses'

bone glue that was boiled up... I would think probably the solvents of the ink may have been a cause and paper had its own smell as well, and so did wood. You've got to remember that most of the composing room was wood and so wood has a smell of its own."

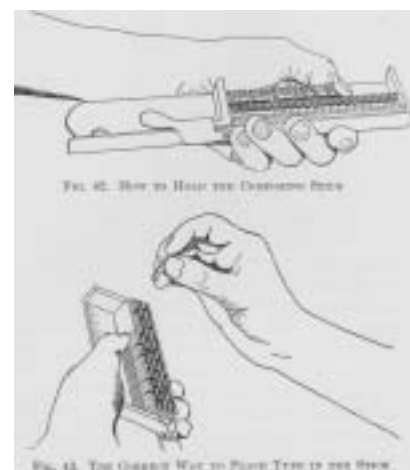


FIG. 14—How to Hold the Composing Tray

FIG. 15—The Correct Way to Pick Type in the Stone

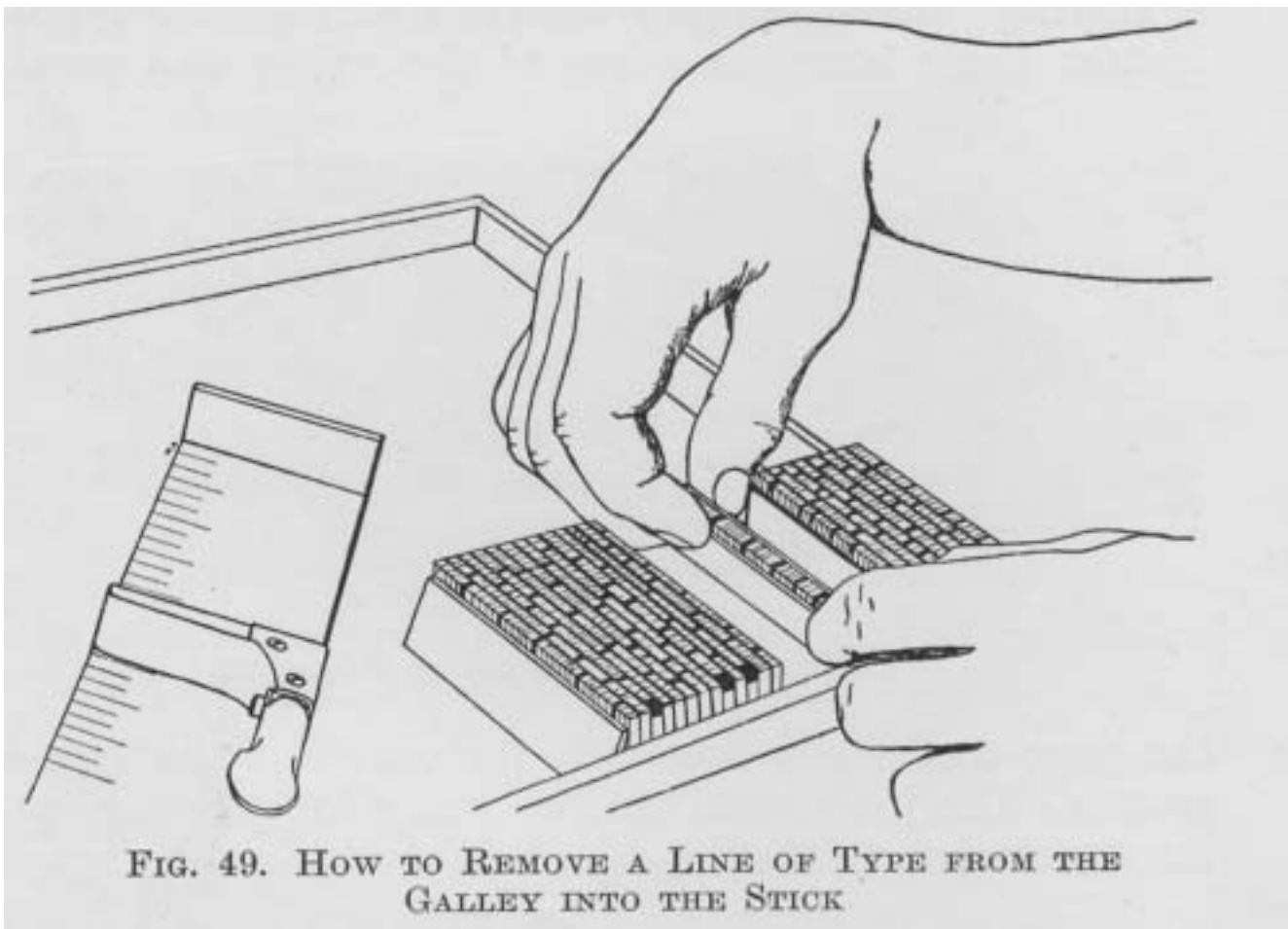


FIG. 49. HOW TO REMOVE A LINE OF TYPE FROM THE GALLEY INTO THE STICK

Brooks & Co. wasn't a big operator in the wider context of Leicester's printing firms, nor was Keith's next employer, E Hannibal & Co. on Pinfold Rd in Thurmaston, a company specialising in printing beer mats and record labels whom he joined briefly in late 1959. But the next company he worked for, J. C. Culpins on Gladstone Street and Melton Street, expanded rapidly as advertising agencies got off the ground, sending out copy to be set by specialist typesetters.

"I suppose Culpins... eventually built up to be one of the top typesetting/repro houses in Leicester but not big printing companies, you know. Each company had its own specialist, you know. I mean there was one, Raithby Lawrence off Slater Street, they were recognised as being one of the top letterpress companies. But then you had another one like H. Cable & Co was recognised as one of the top litho companies..."

It was also at this time that hand-composing was ousted by machine-composing, particularly with the advent of phototypesetting. But it wasn't until the early 1980s that Keith's work involved computers whilst working for a small firm in Loughborough. He remembers how an American company, A and M (Addressograph Multigraph), brought out a machine using new, basic computer technology. A and M supplied the typesetting machine, which held all the typefaces, whilst two monitors were keyed into it.

"You had to buy the typefaces and then load the typefaces up into the computer. So, you bought them from, you could only buy them from the company you got the machine from anyway. You'd buy them and then you would install the type and you used to get to a stage where you could only install so many anyway, so you had to leave some out or take some out and then if it were wanted you had to put it back in again."

Compared to the computers we are familiar with today, these early machines were not only laborious to operate, they were very expensive.

"And I remember the first scanner that we bought... not counting the typesetter, the actual monitors that we bought, which were really the computer because they had the hard disc with the monitors, they used to cost £6000 to buy. And the scanner, the first scanner we bought was £3000 and the actual typesetting machine was £25,000. So, now you can go and get a computer that'll give you a free scanner and a free printer for a thousand or less..." Today, printing has to contend with computer crashes. Perhaps not such a far cry from the printers' pie.

Mandy Morris

The illustrations used in this article are drawn from Frank S Henry, *Printing for School and Shop* and Joseph Stuart and AG Sayers, *Art and Practice of Printing*.

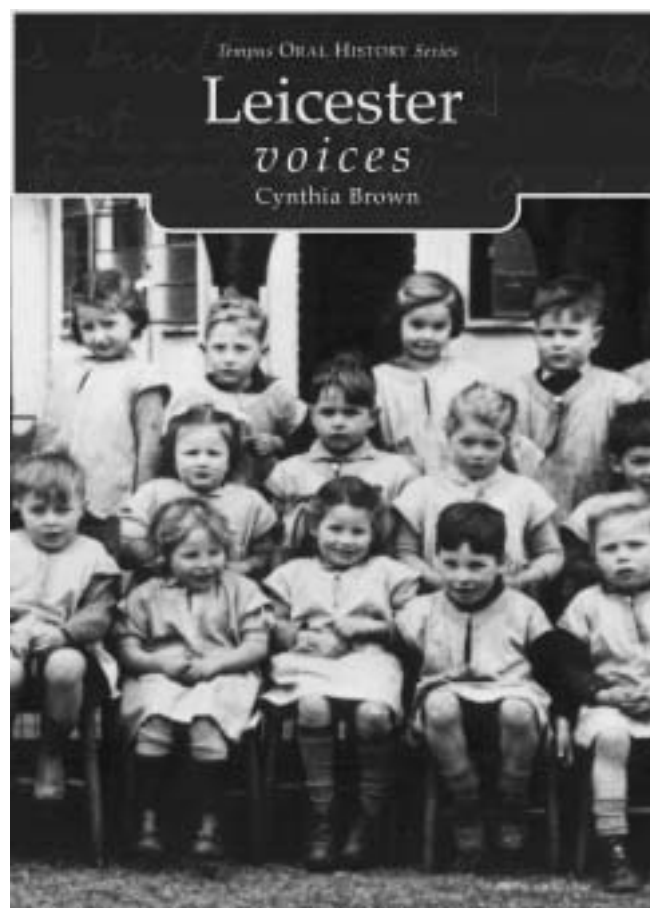
LEICESTER VOICES

By Cynthia Brown

Extracts from recordings in the East Midlands Oral History Archive feature in a new book, *Leicester Voices*, edited by EMOHA Project Manager, Cynthia Brown.

The book, part of the Tempus Oral History Series, is illustrated with a wide range of archive photographs, and covers such topics as health & housing, childhood, play and pastimes, shopping, local political campaigns, and migration to Leicester. It is a valuable addition to any local historian's bookshelf or indeed to anyone with an interest in Leicester. It is available in local bookshops, price £11.99, or from Tempus Publishing Limited, The Mill, Brinscombe Port, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 2QG.

talking history is pleased to be able to offer readers a taste of *Leicester Voices* by featuring some extracts and photos on this issue's theme of work.



Haymaking

My sister and I used to take the horses down to the blacksmith's at the bottom of King Richard's Road, it was then. And we'd wait there until the horses had been shod, and then bring them back to my Dad and he'd take them up to the fields. And when Dad was haymaking, Mother would pack a big basket of goodies, tea and everything, and my sister used to walk up to the fields and take it to him while Dad was mowing and getting the hay all ready. You'd have the hay rakes, about three to four times larger than ordinary garden rakes, and you'd rake all the grass into one complete row right across the fields, and then the next day you would go and turn it over so that the sun dried every bit of it before it was all gathered up, and then it would be put on the float, and we used to come

back to Sykefield Avenue and we got the huge haystacks there that Dad used to make with my cousin and my uncle and that.

Mrs C. Tebbutt

Sheer persistence

My first job was in Kendall's shop. They were all rainwear, in those days you took your umbrella in to be repaired or recovered. You didn't just discard them as you do now, and eventually I became manageress of that shop and three others, and then it was sold up and I was out of work. And this was in the 1920s when there was unemployment to the same extent as there is now [1980s]. I think I wrote about 80 letters eventually. Didn't get a job that way. But I used to spend every morning walking round and going and asking for jobs, and if they said no I'd go again and again. I wouldn't take no for an answer. Eventually I got a job at Herrington's in their showrooms through sheer persistence. And then eventually I got a reply from Kirby and West, and I got a top job there. I

stayed there 20 years. You've got to work at it, go and ask and ask! At Kirby and West I ran the wages office, and the purchase office, and any complaints from the works all came through me to the bosses. And I enjoyed it. You'd got to prove you could do your job, and cope with any difficulties that arose.

Mona Lewis



Taking in washing

At one time my mother took washing in, and I remember once I had to go and take this washing, it was on a Wednesday teatime, after school, and I took this washing to a lady on Ross's Walk. Now it was half a crown, two dozen or something like

Cynthia Brown is the Project Manager of the East Midlands Oral History Archive. Her other publications include *Cherished Possessions: a history of Leicester's museums* (2001); *The Story of the Saffron Lane Estate, Leicester* (ed.) (1998) and *Wharf Street Revisited: a history of the Wharf Street area of Leicester* (1995).



Tram traffic around the clock tower

that, and I was told not to leave the house until I had the half crown. And I got round and the lady had to wait for her husband to come home and give her the half crown. See, I was told not to come without it, because that was the middle of the week boost to my mum's money, and that was a lot in those days, you know, half a crown. And then I thought, we must be poor, having to wait for half a crown, you know, on a Wednesday.

Blanche Harrison

Apprenticed at the BU

I got in touch with the BU [British United Shoe Machinery Company], and they were taking on trainees, apprenticeships, so I went along there and they were quite glad for me to sign an apprenticeship, and my dad was as well, at the time. And I got put with a guy, he knew the job inside out, done it all his life, and he took me through the shop, but then came the age of 18, and I came out of the apprenticeship to go in the forces, because the way I saw it, if I went in at 18 I would be out at 20, whereas I could have been deferred until I was 21. But at 21 I would start coming on proper money, because you're only paid a pittance as an apprentice. After I came out of the RAF, the hosiery industry at that time paid very good wages, it was

probably the top wage, and it was using machinery again, which I'd been used to anyway, you see, so I very quickly picked it up. A knitter in the hosiery and knitwear, I did them both, socks and outerwear and things like that.

Colin Green

The art of driving a tram

There was a big art in tram driving. You've heard them talk about Spaghetti Junction. Well, it was like that on the Clock Tower with tram lines. You know, going different routes, trams going different places, some stopping, some coming back, and all that lark. Your first day on your own, you wondered to yourself 'how the hell am I going to sort this lot out?'. You see, some of the points you had to go through were automatic. You had to use your brakes and your power to open them, and others opened and shut on their

own. You had to get to learn all these. Of course it takes a little while, but you manage it in the end, after a lot of arguments and suchlike.

Mr A. Nicholls

Learn a trade

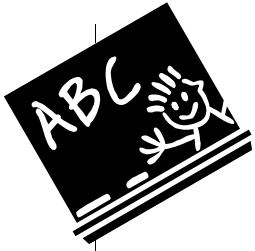
I must admit I didn't like school, I mean, really, they are the best days of your life, but you don't realise that when you're at school. I couldn't wait to leave to get to work. I went to Ellis Avenue School, and I left there at 14, and I'd always wanted to serve in a shoe shop, so I got a job in the Co-op in High Street, selling shoes, and the starting wage was 18s 6d a week. Well, that was quite good, but we had to work till half past six Fridays and Saturday nights. Well, none of my friends worked on Saturdays, not Saturday afternoons, and they didn't want to wait for me when we went out Saturday evenings, so I sort of got a bit fed up with that, so I left. I worked there a year, then my mother said to me 'learn a trade', she said, 'even if you don't stay in a factory, learn a trade'. So I learnt to be an overlocker. Then I did pressing, and that's sort of what I did for the rest of my life, while I worked.

Iris Smith



If you would like a copy *Leicester Voices* by Cynthia Brown write to the East Midlands Oral History Archive, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester and include a cheque payable to the "University of Leicester" for £11.99 + £1.25 postage (£13.24 total).

Or visit any good local bookshop and ask them to order it from Tempus Publishing.



TEACHER'S NOTES

Oral history offers a unique insight into the everyday lives of 'ordinary people' and is a valuable resource that enables children and older students to learn about the past through the first hand accounts of the people who actually experienced it.

For example, learners can discover what life was like for domestic servants between the wars, find out how it felt to start work in a hosiery factory at the age of thirteen, hear about the working life of a coal miner, or learn about the hardships of unemployment during the depression. Through these accounts, the ways in which the world of work has changed over the course of the twentieth century can be traced, and comparisons made with the present day.

Find out more:

The East Midlands Oral History Archive's catalogue is now online, and currently includes details of 263 recordings. To view the catalogue, visit the EMOHA website on www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue.html and search for more information about the various collections we have in our archive.

The EMOHA website also contains dedicated teachers' pages, online exhibitions, downloadable information sheets and bulletins for primary and secondary teachers, and adult learners. These resources can all be accessed from www.le.ac.uk/emoha/schools.html

For further information contact Sarah Ferrier, our Education Officer, on (0116) 252 5065, by email at sjf17@le.ac.uk, or by writing to Sarah Ferrier, EMOHA, Centre for Urban History, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH.

DISCOVERING CHESTERFIELD

Like many of our towns and cities, Chesterfield has been the home of varied nationalities and cultures from its early days, with Roman occupation being followed by Anglian, Scandinavian and Norman settlement.

Further immigrant groups and individuals followed in later centuries, among them the large Irish community which arrived in the mid-19th century. Connections with plantation slavery in the Caribbean and the Napoleonic Wars resulted in a small number of inhabitants of African origin early in that same century, the best known being the servant Mercury Mallows, and the French prisoner of war referred to as 'Paul (Black)'.

Meanwhile, in the early years of the 20th century Brampton Gospel Mission thrived under the leadership of Reverend Raleigh Alonzo Scott (alias 'Wallawatha'), a clergyman and former slave of mixed African and Native American ancestry, and the town was also home to the first business venture of Meshe David Osinsky who later won fame as Montagu Burton.

Most of the above history has been

documented and is now part of the record. Unfortunately, the experience of newcomers in the latter part of the 20th century has not received the same coverage.

The oral history project known as Chesterfield's Hidden History was set up by Derbyshire County Council's local studies staff of Chesterfield Library in 2001. It arose from a genuine concern that members of long-established ethnic communities who had lived in the town and its district for half a century or more were not being mentioned in official histories and only featured rarely in the press.

It seemed to us, and does still, that an important and substantial part of Chesterfield history was going unrecorded and that the vital contribution made by these individuals and their communities was being overlooked.

Local studies assistant librarian Geoff Sadler attended a one-day course tutored by Steve Hussey in Birmingham in September 2001 - jointly organised by the British Library National Sound Archive and the Oral History Society - following which information on the proposed



Chesterfield 's Hidden History on display in the library

CHESTERFIELD'S HIDDEN HISTORY

scheme was circulated and responses sought from individuals and communities.

Despite little initial interest by the local press, the response from individuals was good and a number of interviews were arranged. Relying on Steve Hussey's excellent tuition and following his good advice Geoff has carried out all the interviews so far.

What have we managed to do so far?

Ten interviews have been completed, of which eight have so far been transcribed. Each interviewee is guaranteed a copy of the tape and a full transcription of the interview. The experience of African-Caribbean individuals and families over a forty-year period has been matched by information on the large and thriving Italian community of Staveley in the 1950s and 1960s. We have also recorded some interesting insights from the White partners of happy and enduring mixed relationships in the area.

In October 2002 photographs of several interviewees and their families and key extracts from their reminiscences were put on display in Chesterfield Library where they have drawn a good deal of interest and favourable comment. This month also saw a successful launch event in the library, when Derbyshire County Council cabinet member Bob Janes was introduced to eight interviewees, and the possible future direction of the project was discussed.

From the outset we have stressed that the material gathered should be put to practical use, and permission to make use of the transcriptions of interviewees is obtained formally by

signature prior to interview.

Possible future options include displays of extracts and pictures on the Derbyshire County Council website, and in a wider context, more involvement with the East Midlands Oral History Archive and possibly the national movinghere.com site. Other possibilities include publication in newsletter, booklet or book form, audio and video promotions, and travelling displays.

A great deal has been achieved in a fairly short time but we could and should be doing much more. We still need involvement from the Chinese, Indian and Muslim communities, among others, and greater representation of different age groups, particularly younger people born here or arriving at an early age.

Chesterfield's Hidden History project arose from a genuine concern that members of long-established ethnic communities who had lived in the town and its district for half a century or more were not being mentioned in official histories and only featured rarely in the press.

In the near future we hope to make contact with the local community associations, either through the Black & Minority

Ethnic Consultative Group recently set up by Chesterfield Borough Council, or directly through the associations themselves.

Our long-term aim is greater involvement and participation by the associations and their members in the project, including publications and web pages. Other possibilities include the local Roman Catholic churches, which include several different minority ethnic groups in their membership.

Our aim throughout has been to run Chesterfield's Hidden History as a continuous project, and to make it as inclusive as possible. Meanwhile, the work goes on...

Ann Krawszik, Chesterfield Library

STUDY ORAL HISTORY

As well as making history, your recordings could now be helping to make historians! University of Leicester students are studying oral history as a part of their Master of Arts course. The new part-time Social History MA course launched in autumn 2002 by the Centre for Urban History is pioneering a unique approach by working with the staff, expertise and resources of the East Midlands Oral History Archive.

Students are studying the techniques and methods of oral history and are using EMOHA recordings to examine a century of social change in our region. Unlike most sources used by historians, such as the census, official records, newspapers or even diaries, oral history recordings enable the actual voices and emotions of individuals to be heard. The Archive gives the students an exciting insight into the reality of local life in the past and the chance to see beyond 'official history'. Recordings offer an alternative view of what it was like to experience such events as the Second World War, urban expansion, immigration or recession. They can also help to understand the social changes that occurred in the areas of work, education, leisure and class.

Professor Dieter Schott, acting director of the Centre for Urban History said: 'We are known for our high quality postgraduate courses and the inclusion of oral history in university education is an important development'. He also praised the commitment of the students on the course. Perhaps this is not surprising, as the MA in Social History has proved to be especially popular with lifelong learners from the East Midlands region.

For more information about the MA in Social History or the Centre for Urban History go to www.le.ac.uk/urbanhist or ring (0116) 252 2378 and ask to be sent a brochure for the MA.

ORAL TESTIMONY

A Valuable Method in the Development of Lincolnshire's Community Grid *for Learning*



Funded by the New Opportunities Fund and developed as part of the Lincolnshire Grid in conjunction with partner County Council Information and Communication Technology (ICT) projects, Lincolnshire's Community Grid *for Learning* (CGfL) is an internet based resource packed with information about and for the county. The overall project aim is to encourage and support access to and use of ICT. The CGfL portal offers information, education, culture and leisure opportunities for Lincolnshire, and conveys a real flavour of the county past and present. Much of the content on the CGfL is user-created as befits its role as a community resource; an exciting range of content has been submitted over the six months in which the CGfL project has been operational. It features web links, poems, pictures, photographs, recorded and transcribed interviews, research projects and war memories; it also has the capability to hold video.

Through the process of collating content for the CGfL, oral testimony has been gathered in a number of ways. One example is 'The Year the Queen Was Crowned', an event which took place in Boston. The project centered on a drama performance by a group of local teenagers, based on material produced by groups of older people the town who had submitted stories, memories and recollections of 1952 to Project Deviser and Leader John

Slater. This material (which was also subsequently made into a booklet) included songs, recipes, and games as well as memories of daily activities, social events and school days. The real names of the characters in the production were used which gave the players a sense of real life in the Coronation year; One of the cast commented, "1952 was very different, you really had to get involved in washing days – it took all day to do the washing...I'm really looking forward to seeing the old people when they come this afternoon. We have all got some of their names in the play when the register is taken, and I want to see who these people are." (Amy, 13)

Another successful way in which oral testimony is collected for CGfL content is by interviews. These tend to take place either on the spot at events, or by my being contacted by enthusiastic members of the community who might remember an event in Lincolnshire's history first hand, or who are happy to share their various memories with the rest of the county; currently, the CGfL features some fascinating recollections of wartime, the Coronation, and growing up in Lincolnshire. 'Stories from the attic' have also become a source of oral testimony on the CGfL. For example, a local woman recently passed me an audio tape of an interview with her grandfather, who amongst other things recalls his service in the First World War and his first job at a local factory.

Follow up content is currently being generated by this man's son (who is now in his 70s), as he is working on more of these audio recordings and is learning how to use a computer to transcribe them.

For collecting CGfL content, oral testimony offers communities a flexible way to capture memories, recollections and reminiscences whilst retaining an element of authenticity by the way in which the accents and local dialect that make Lincolnshire people unique are retained and stored through audio recordings. Oral testimony brings character to history, and the ways in which historical information from the community can be represented often prove to be informative and fun projects which bring together members of different local communities. Oral testimony provides an extremely useful method of creating community-driven content for the CGfL; much can be learned from the products of this approach, and these records are valuable resources for the county, its people and its history as well as for any interested parties beyond Lincolnshire. Functioning like a huge content repository, the CGfL stores all of these items on one easy to use portal where people can access the content for their own learning, research and interest.

All of the above examples can be found on Lincolnshire's Community Grid *for Learning* which is accessible on every People's Network Machine in Lincolnshire Libraries and also via <http://cgfl.netlinc.org.uk>

For further information contact the Community Editor at Lincolnshire County Council:
Tel: 01522 553890
Fax: 01522 553504
Email: Rachel.orme@netlinc.org.uk

Rachel Orme, Community Editor

KNITTING TOGETHER — A SIGN OF THINGS TO COME

After six months of identifying and digitising knitting related objects from the collections of museums in the East Midlands region, the Knitting Together interim website (www.knittingtogether.org.uk) has been updated to provide a preview of images that will be placed on the completed website (to be launched during 2003).

Led by a team at Leicester City Museums, the project has digitised over 250 objects ranging from stockings to knitting machines in preparation for the final website. Over the next six months further images will be added to this collection of virtual museum objects, including a number of archive photographs relating to the knitting industry. In addition to the preview images, the updated interim site also includes company histories and a taster interactive will be added shortly. The interactive will provide part of an online tour around Ruddington Framework Knitters Museum.

With the assistance of EMOHA and on behalf of the Knitting Together project, a volunteer from the Friends of Leicester and Leicestershire Museums, Millie Smith, has worked through the catalogue of oral histories recalling the knitting industry of times past. The process has led to a number of extracts being identified for digitisation and use on the final website. Site users will be able to hear individuals talk about



their experience of the industry and read a transcript of the interview extract. Knitting Together and EMOHA are now looking to record further interviews and are planning activity days across the East Midlands for 2003. Further details will be posted on the Knitting Together and EMOHA websites.

The events diary has recently expanded for the project as two events were held in December. Visitors to Newarke Houses Museum, Leicester, were able to enjoy a festive, activity packed day with talks about the history of hosiery and demonstrations of the Griswold knitting machine. We were also able to listen to a lecture by Professor Stanley Chapman at New Walk Museum, Leicester, highlighting the outcomes of his

research into the knitting industry over many years. Saturday 18 January 2003 will see the 'Get Knitted' exhibition open at Newarke Houses Museum. The exhibition will include a mix of domestic and factory made knitted garments, patterns and advertising. A centrepiece for the exhibition will be a colourful eighteenth century knitted masterpiece. The opening day will involve the 'Wild and Woolly' activity event (watch the Knitting Together website for further details!).

For further information, please either visit www.knittingtogether.org.uk or contact the Knitting Together Project Co-ordinator, David Orton, by emailing to ortod002@leicester.gov.uk or calling 0116 252 7322.

TALKS AVAILABLE

The East Midlands Oral History Archive offers a number of free talks to historical societies, community groups and other organisations. If you would like to book one of the talks below phone (0116) 2525065 or email emoha@le.ac.uk and specify which one you would like to hear.

- An introduction to oral history & the EMOHA.
- Country lives.
- Workless & hopeless: unemployment in early 20th century Leicester.
- Childhood - a look at the history of childhood.

- Toys and games in the twentieth century.
- Health and housing.
- Walnut Street - Past, Present & Future.
- Death and funeral customs.
- Wharf Street revisited.
- The story of the Saff - Saffron Lane estate.
- Coming to Leicester.
- The First World War.
- Leicester's Blitz.
- Women in the armed forces in the Second World War.
- Training in oral history.

EMOHA DIARY

Remember to check our on-line diary at www.le.ac.uk/emoha/news/diary.html. If you would like your events to be listed on the EMOHA website and in future EMOHA newsletters send details to the address below or email us on emoha@le.ac.uk.

January

Tuesday 14th (10.00 am): *Do you remember when?* A guided walk around the Wharf Street area organised by Footprints. Meet outside Age Concern, Humberstone Gate.

Friday 17th (7.15 pm): Geoff Pursglove, *Ashby Canal, past, present and future*. Organised by the Vaughan Archaeological and Historical Society, Vaughan College, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester, LE3 4BL.

Sunday 19th (2.00 pm): *Tomb Trail*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet Welford Road Cemetery Main Gates.

February

Saturday 1st (2.00 pm): *Castle Tour*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet outside Leicester Castle.

Tuesday 4th

- **7.00 pm:** Tony Fletcher, *History and Wildlife*. Broughton Astley Heritage Society, Alan Talbott Room, Broughton Astley Village Hall.
- **7.30 pm:** Wendy Freer, *Canal Boat Missions*. Organised by the Leicester Group of the Victorian Society. Meet Leicester Adult Education College.

Thursday 6th

- **7.00 pm:** Burbage Heritage Group *AGM + Video Presentations of Burbage and Hosiery Industry*. Millennium Hall, Britannia Road, Burbage.
- **7.30 pm:** Gerry Burrows, *Open All Hours*. Organised by the Melton branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society. United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Melton.

Sunday 9th (2.00 pm): *Belgrave Streets*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet outside Belgrave Hall.

Tuesday 11th (10.00 am): *Do you remember when?* A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet outside Infirmary Square.

Thursday 13th (7.15 pm): Brian Johnson, *County Cinemas*. Birstall and District Local History Society, Birstall Library, Wanlip Lane.

Friday 14th (7.15 pm): Mark Carne, *19th Century Enderby - A Changing Village*. Organised by the Vaughan Archaeological and Historical Society, Vaughan College, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester, LE3 4BL.

Sunday 16th (2.00 pm): *The Riverside in Winter*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet Newarke Bridge.

March

Sunday 1st (2.00 pm): *Castle Tour*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet outside Leicester Castle.

Tuesday 4th (7.30 pm): Jeff Marshall, *Francis Kilvert, Victorian Priest and Diarist*. Organised by the Leicester Group of the Victorian Society. Leicester Adult Education College.

Thursday 6th

- **7.00 pm:** Bern Gibney, *Hinckley and Bosworth Countryside Sites*. Burbage Heritage Group Millennium Hall, Britannia Road, Burbage.
- **7.30 pm:** Toni Smith MBE, *Incidents and Inquests Touching My Family*. Organised by the Melton branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family history society meet at the United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Melton.

Sunday 9th (2.00 pm): *A History of Christianity in Leicester*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet outside St Nicholas Church.


Tuesday 11th (10.00 am): *Do you remember when?* A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet St Margaret's Church.

Friday 14th (7.15 pm): Richard Rodger, *Victorian Towns*. Organised by the Vaughan Archaeological and Historical Society, Vaughan College, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester, LE3 4BL.

Saturday 15th (2.00 pm): *Dear Departed Ladies*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet Welford Road Cemetery Gates.

Sunday 16th (2.00 pm): *Romans, Saxons and Normans*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet Jewry Wall Museum.

Sunday 23rd (2.00 pm): *A little bit of everything*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet Jewry Wall Museum.



Oral History On CD

Copies of the East Midlands Oral History Archive's *Toys and Games: An Oral History* are still available to order.

This CD features 40 oral history extracts recalling Leicestershire childhoods throughout the twentieth century. The CD includes memories of Tin-a-Lurky, wartime games, tin soldiers, Sindy and Foggy Hounds and is guaranteed to bring back memories to everyone who listens to it.

To order the CD send a cheque to the East Midlands Oral History Archive, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester and include a cheque payable to the "University of Leicester" for £7 + £1 postage (£8 total). While stocks last teachers may also request a free support pack to accompany the CD.

April

Tuesday 1st (7.30): Clive Harrison, *The Development of Hospitals in Victorian Leicester*. Organised by the Leicester Group of the Victorian Society. Meet Leicester Adult Education College.

Thursday 3rd

- **7.00 pm:** Anthony Fletcher, *Know and Identify Wildflowers and Plants*. Burbage Heritage Group, Millennium Hall, Britannia Road, Burbage.
- **7.30 pm:** Robin Jenkins, *Caged Tigers and Leicestershire Men and Women in the Regiments*. Organised by the Melton branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society. United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Melton.

Saturday 19th (7.15 pm): Alan McWhirr, *Digging Up Leicester: A Reappraisal*. Organised by the Vaughan Archaeological and Historical Society, Vaughan College, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester, LE3 4BL.

BACK ISSUES AND MUCH MORE...

The East Midlands Oral History Archive has back copies of old newsletters to give away. We have a small number of copies of issues 2,3, 4 and 5 still remaining. So if you missed any of these issues send a stamped addressed envelope to the address below stating which issues you would like.



Remember we also have a popular series of information sheets about different aspects of oral history which are also available on request along with education bulletins for primary, secondary and adult teachers. See the East Midlands Oral History Archive website for further information and for PDF copies of all of the back issues and information sheets.

EAST MIDLANDS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVE

The East Midlands Oral History Archive is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to establish the first large-scale archive of oral history recordings for Leicestershire & Rutland. This includes the collections of the former Leicester Oral History Archive, the Mantle Archive from North West Leicestershire, the Community History archive of Leicester City Libraries, and the sound archive of BBC Radio Leicester, along with smaller collections donated by local organisations or individuals.

The recordings are deposited in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, and are currently being catalogued to make them more accessible. The project now has an online catalogue, and has produced a CD of edited extracts from the recordings on the theme of toys and games. EMOHA also aims to generate new oral history recordings through its own programme of interviewing, and by providing advice, training and

support for community groups, museums and heritage organisations, students and other individuals who are interested in developing their own projects.

EMOHA is a partnership between the Centre for Urban History at the University of Leicester, Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Museums and Library Services.

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ALL YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT MINIDISCS....

People you know are using them, you've heard the quality is great, you think you might want one, but... they're not cheap, there's new jargon to learn, and it's almost impossible to decide which model to go for. Confused? Welcome to the EMOHA minidisc column.

A minidisc recorder isn't much bigger than the disc itself – see the photo above. This makes it light, portable, but a bit fiddly to use, particularly if your fingers aren't too nimble. The sound quality is very good. There is little of the hiss we associate with cassette recorders, and many models enable you to label recordings and divide them into separate tracks.

The system cuts out frequencies the human ear can't hear, which reduces the space needed to store the information, and means these little discs can contain 74 minutes of sound and, if the recorder has MDLP (Mini Disc Long Play), you'll be able to get 148 minutes of good quality recording on one disc costing under £1.

Prices for these portable models vary from £100 to £200. However, cheaper models *may not be able to*

Colin Hyde is an outreach worker for the East Midlands Oral History Archive. He has been conducting oral history interviews for over 10 years using first reel-to-reel recorders then cassette and has now moved over to mini-disc.

record from a microphone, only from a 'line' input (CD player, cassette deck, etc.) Please, don't expect a shop assistant to point this out to you – specify that you want to record sound using a microphone.

However, these recorders do not come with microphones, so this will be an additional expense, microphones costing from £15 upwards. You can connect minidisc recorders to cassette recorders, CD recorders, computers, and other minidisc recorders using adaptors which are generally cheap and available from shops such as Maplins.

Also, you may notice that recent minidisc models are 'Net MD', which means they can play and record to and from a computer via a 'USB' link.

The models on sale in the High St seem to be mainly Sony and Sharp, although there are others such as Panasonic. Interviewers at EMOHA have used a Sharp MT877 (£180), a Sony MZ-R900 (£180-200) and a Sony MZ-R700 (£150). As newer models have now appeared to replace these it is general specifications rather than particular model numbers that should guide you. All of the units we have used have been good but we have come down on the side of the Sonys for recording interviews as the review on our website explains. The two Sony models

above are very similar but the MZ-R900 has more features than the MZ-R700.

Of course, there are also disadvantages to minidisc recorders. Not many people have minidisc players, so unlike cassettes or CDs, you can't expect to be able to listen to them everywhere, and you often have to copy them to cassette or CD. The machines themselves do seem fragile and the buttons and display screens are often very small. However, I have been won over by the quality of the recordings, ease of use, and the ability to edit the recordings afterwards.

For further information:

- <http://www.minidisc.org/> - a 'community portal' for users and a good place to start.
- <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/news/mini.html> - EMOHA reviews a Sharp and a Sony

