

Youth Talk

using oral history to investigate young people

The vast changes in the understanding of the terms “youth” and “adolescence” during the twentieth century are illustrated in the oral testimonies held by the East Midlands Oral History Archive. People’s life stories reveal a growing age of “youth” where once there was hardly a pause between childhood and adulthood. The extension of education, later entry into the world of work, statutory raising of the school leaving age and most importantly, the changing cultural activities of young people, all contributed to the extension of the period of life defined as “youth” and to the rise of a “youth culture”.



Oral history offers a wonderful insight into the leisure activities of adolescents. From the early years of the 20th century the arrival of youth groups, such as the phenomenally popular Boy Scout movement and its sister organization the Girl Guides, are described by former members in oral testimony. Also mentioned is membership of other youth organizations and activity - led groups, such as church brigades and walking groups. The spoken record also reveals a growing



array of entertainment activities for young people and shows how these activities changed in nature and importance as the twentieth century progressed. Events such as the travelling Fairs and Wakes diminished in popularity, as dance halls and cinema became the increasing preserve of youth by the 1930s and 1940s, and as a distinct youth culture grew in the 1950s and 1960s.

Perhaps the most popular past-times for youth are the rituals of courtship. The elaborate nature of these and the changing and



constant strands involved in attracting the heart’s desire, are a common theme in oral testimony. Memories of local places used by courting couples and the form of behaviour demanded by custom are well remembered. The archive even holds a whole recording dedicated to Leicester’s local courting rituals.

As adolescent wages increased, young people became selective consumers and could subsequently be targeted as part of the growing consumer society. People describe their first earnings, how their wages were spent and their shopping habits and leisure activities as adolescents. For young women particularly, war work during both World Wars was especially economically liberating.

Two examples of material that may be of interest on the theme of youth are from the Leicester Oral History Archive Compilation Collection:

- ◆ Courting Days.
(Ref: 426, LO/046/C46)
- ◆ Entertainment.
(Ref: 392, LO/012/C12)

For listening appointments please telephone 0116 2525065.

The Experience Corps

Volunteering for the over 50s

East Midlands Oral History Archive Project Manager, Cynthia Brown, recently gave a presentation on the work of the Archive at a recruitment day for the Experience Corps at the National Space Centre in Leicester.

The Experience Corps has been set up by the Home Office to encourage people over the age of 50 to use their skills and experience for the benefit of their local community by doing voluntary work. It works



Whoever you are, whatever skills you've got to offer, we know someone who needs your help.

closely with local organisations and charities to match volunteers to appropriate opportunities

If you would like further information about the Experience Corps, contact Bridget Cattell, the local Animator, on 07786 934293, or email her at bridget-cattell@experience-corps.co.uk. If you are interested in doing voluntary work for EMOHA, then contact us direct to discuss what we can offer.

Launch of Historical Directories Website



Digital Library of
Historical Directories

The Digital Library of Historical Directories, a New Opportunities Fund project based at the University of Leicester, has recently made a large range of historical directories available on-line. Visit the website at www.historicaldirectories.org to access this exciting and important resource for local and family history, urban history and historical geography.

Directories of counties and towns are among the most important sources for local and genealogical studies. They include lists of names, addresses and occupations of the inhabitants of counties and towns and also provide a wealth of detailed historical and topographical information, with successive editions reflecting changes in the localities over a period of time.

High quality digital reproductions of a large selection of these comparatively rare books, previously mainly found in specialist libraries and record offices, are being made freely available online to anyone with an Internet connection.

This online national collection is bringing together a greater number and range of directories than any

one library could provide. By March 2004, 500 books will be available on line, from the University Library's own English Local History collection and also from other important regional collections.

National coverage will be provided for three date bands: the 1850s, 1890s, and 1910-1920, with one digitised directory from each period selected for each county and main county town.

The 1850s were the decade when directories began to be published more widely and with information at parish level. The years around the turn of the century coincide with the popular 1901 census website, though the decision to include volumes from the decade before the 1901 census, and from the decade 1910-1920, avoids duplication of coverage. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this choice will allow users of both websites to be able compare different historical sources. The intense current interest in World War I also gives a potentially large audience for directories from the period 1910-1920.

Examples of some very early directories, from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, will

also be included, together with a more detailed chronological sequence of directories from the Leicestershire area.

The Historical Directories website features a fast and powerful search engine. Family surnames, occupations, addresses and other key words or phrases can be located easily and quickly to their exact places on pages within the digitised texts.

Those who will reap the benefit of these historical sources include not only academic local, economic and social historians, but also school students, amateur genealogists and members of the public. Particular target audiences will be school students at Key Stage 3, university students of history, family history societies and researchers working on their own.

The Historical Directories website will be further developed and also promoted later this year as part of a number of major national initiatives through the National Grid for Learning and the new People's Network/UK Online centres in local public libraries.

Ralph Brown

Britain — a diverse society

EMOHA to produce citizenship resources for schools

Oral history recordings held in the East Midlands Oral History Archive offer a unique record of Britain as a diverse society in recent decades. They not only provide factual information about migration and settlement, but convey the feelings and reflections of interviewees in a way which written records cannot.

EMOHA is pleased to announce that it has been awarded funding from the East Midlands Museums Libraries and Archives Council (EMMLAC), under Phase 2 of the Museums and Galleries Education Programme, to develop Citizenship materials for use at Key Stage 3. The award will be used to draw on these recordings to produce an audio CD and teachers' resource book to support the Citizenship Unit 'Britain – a diverse society?'. The CD and support materials will comprise a range of oral history extracts and will enable students and teachers to explore the diversity of their local communities, to consider the benefits and challenges of living in a diverse society, and to understand the importance of respect for others.

The materials will be developed in consultation with partner schools and the Centre for Citizenship Studies at the School of Education, University of Leicester. The CD and teachers' resource book will also act as a stimulus to further oral history work within the classroom itself, by encouraging and supporting new interviewing by students on the themes relevant to the Citizenship Unit. In addition to interviewing older generations, the students themselves will be able to tell their own stories in their own words, rather than



Asian migrants arrive in Britain from Uganda in 1972.

having these mediated by adults. The teachers' pack will include basic guidance on the techniques of collecting, processing and interpreting oral history, and teachers will also have access to the programme of training offered by the East Midlands Oral History Archive.

Two copies of the resources will be provided free of charge to every secondary school in the East Midlands, relevant curriculum advisors, and postgraduate centres for teacher training in the region. A copy will also be deposited in the five regional Record Offices, and offered free of charge to all East Midlands museums, to support their own work on Citizenship with schools. Remaining copies will be made available to other organisations through EMMLAC.

Going to the flicks!

Who went to the cinema in Nottingham and why?



Mark Jancovich, Lucy Faire, Sarah Stubbings, *The Place of the Audience: Cultural Geographies of Film Consumption*, BFI (British Film Institute) Publishing; ISBN: 0851709427.

A new book, based on archival and oral history research conducted in Nottingham, investigates changes in cinema audiences over the course of the twentieth century.

The authors argue that the film industry has deliberately adapted the experience of cinema going to

respond to competition from television and video, and also to broader social changes.

In the early Twentieth Century a typical cinema programme would include a number of films of varying lengths, but the introduction of television forced the cinemas to focus more exclusively on the feature film in order to provide something different. Similarly, competition from video raised the demand for greater choice which resulted in the move to multiplexes. It is likely that these changes will continue as satellite/cable and DVD make their mark on the way in which people watch films.

Hinckley Oral History

the lost book rediscovered

At the beginning of 1994 the East Midlands Oral History Archive's own Colin Hyde was requested by Hinckley College to compile a book based on the memories of people from the Westfield Community Centre.

Colin conducted a large number of interviews and then worked with students from Hinckley College to transcribe and edit them into a book. Michael Clifford was then commissioned to take the manuscript and turn it into a book. However, before this work was completed, the powers that be withdrew the funding, and the book was shelved.

Fast forward nine years to 2003 and Michael is now running a fascinating website devoted to the history and culture of Hinckley. Recently, the shelved work was accidentally brought to his attention, and he decided that it was time for the book to finally see the light of day. A website was developed and the book is now available for everyone to see free of charge, on-line. Simply visit www.hinckleygold.co.uk and click on the "History" button.

The book itself contains the memories of Hinckley people. While the majority of people lived in or near Hinckley for most of their lives, several arrived in the town during the Second World War and a few retired to the town more recently. As a result, although most of the stories are about Hinckley, there are also a few whose only connection with the town is that the story teller has ended up there.

The book mainly concentrates on the first half of the century up to and including the Second World War. The original interviews are held by the East Midlands Oral History Archive. Here is a small selection of extracts:



What young people got up to...

On a Saturday night and a Sunday night in those days there'd be a parade up and down Castle Street and along Regent Street of people. Sunday you could see plenty of people walking round Burbage or wherever - a real parade. That was where a lot of the courting was done, up and down Castle Street, along Regent Street. You dressed in suits, you'd wear a Trilby probably, earlier still everybody wore a cap to go to work.

Mr Milton (Ref: 0300, WF/007/H06/A/B)

There were dance halls but a lot of them were just little hops. The Palladium was there when I was about eighteen, that was at the top of Castle Street. You never asked a boy for a dance, never, they always asked you. Well, you didn't if you were brought up properly, you didn't ask a boy to take you out, so you were more or less held back weren't you, you didn't get him if he weren't interested in you did you? Unless one of your girlfriends were cheeky enough to go and tell him.

We done the quick step, the waltz, we did the tango in those days and the really old fashioned ones like the barn dance and the military two-step.

Mrs Berridge (Ref: 0298, WF/005/H03)

There was the Palladium, Regent, Odeon and Danilo, there were four. The Odeon was the favourite, the one where we used to go mostly. When the Regent and the Danilo opened the Palladium closed down because people didn't seem to go. That was right at the top of Castle Street in New Buildings. If we couldn't get in one we'd rush down to the other to get in there. You used to get the Pathe pictorial then a big film then a comic film like Laurel and Hardy. You were there two and a half hours.

Mr Moore (Ref: 0299, WF006/H04/B)

The talkies come on late you see but in them days you used to go and there were silent films and you used to have Mr Denton, who was an old Hinckleyan and Mr Oldham who was playing the piano, and one stage when there were a cowboy film on, Denton and Mr. Oldham fell out you see. So Denton got up... he'd got the violin and hit him over the head with it and busted his violin, so they'd got no music then.

Mr Attenborough (0305, WF/012/H12)

To read more memories of Hinckley visit:

www.hinckleygold.co.uk

Youth Culture in the 1950s and 1960s



Colin Hyde, one of EMOHA's researchers, has been conducting a series of interviews about being a teenager in Leicester in the 1950s and 1960s. These interviews range from those who grew up in the Second World War and experienced the rationing of the post war period, to those who had "never had it so good" during the pop culture explosion of the 1960s. The interviews cover three periods: the last years at school, the "mid-teens" where you either got a job or went on to further education, and the late-teens of work, a career, National Service or parenthood.

Many interviewees said that, while at school, their money, gained from parents, paper rounds, or Saturday jobs, was spent on sweets, records, or saving up for a bicycle. Ambitions at school varied, but it was accepted by everybody that there were plenty of jobs available, and if you didn't like one you could easily find another: "Cos you know jobs in those days were so easy to get, they were ten a penny, jobs, they really were, you never had to worry about a job, and when you were in a job you felt secure." People worked in hosiery factories, as electricians or hairdressers; each serving an apprenticeship. However, the world was changing, although careers advisers did not always understand how, as one interviewee discovered: "I mentioned that I was interested in commercial art and they fished around for about half an hour and found me something... they'd got

no idea what commercial art was, they pulled out... they said, yes, we've got something for you here, you know, it's six pounds a week, you know, pasting posters up for Mills and Allen... and that was the nearest that they could get to the commercial art field at that time, unfortunately."

By their mid-teens many of the interviewees were working and starting to go out in Leicester. The Palais, on Humberstone Gate, was a main dancehall in Leicester: "There were no drink in the Palais in the early days, there was no bar there. There was a lot of rock and roll they used to have in the afternoons, on a Friday afternoon, 'cos a lot of the lads that worked in the hosiery and engineering had Friday afternoon off you see, and they'd have a Friday afternoon hop... so it wouldn't be beer that started fights, it wouldn't be drink, it'd be you know, somebody chatting somebody else's girl up

or something like that." However, other than the Palais there were only the cinemas and cafes, and post-war Leicester was almost universally reckoned to be a 'dead' town for youngsters.

Over the years a variety of different looks came and went – teddy boy, beatnik, mod, hippy – and teenagers had a choice of the style they wanted to adopt, and the crowd they wanted to hang out with. The coffee bars and cafes of Leicester reflected these varying tastes. The El Casa on Castle Street had bikers upstairs and a more beatnik crowd downstairs, while The Chameleon on King Street attracted an arty crowd and provided a chance for one woman to make a change in direction in her life: "I suppose a lot of the people I was mixing with were much better educated than me, much, much better educated than me. Quite a lot of them were students, quite a lot of them were a lot older, but I felt that I'd got more in common – although I hadn't got an education – I felt that I'd more in common with them, generally, in the things that I was interested in. Um, so, you know, sort of, working at The Chameleon I think, in some ways, perhaps, must have been the life saver for me, although I perhaps didn't recognise it so much at the time – it's perhaps in retrospect I

see that.”

Leicester’s main small venue for pop and rock was the Il Rondo on Silver Street. The roll call of bands who played at the Il Rondo runs like a Who’s Who of early/mid sixties pop and rock. The Yardbirds and The Animals played there before passing into rock history along with less well remembered groups like the Graham Bond Organisation. Interviewees also recalled The Beatles coming to De Montfort Hall: “I did actually go to queue up for the ‘craic’, for the fun, I didn’t actually go to get a Beatles ticket, not to say that I didn’t want to see them, because, again, I was zipped into the same excitement that everyone else was, I’m not denying it... from the Boys Brigade, from the guys at school, they’d know somebody or some guy who was having a party at the weekend and you’d go there and it was Beatles, Beatles, Beatles, all night long, with some exceptions in between but it was predominantly Beatles at that point. The interest in it was overwhelming.”

As the sixties progressed, some teenagers travelled by train to clubs in Manchester, Sheffield, London, and Nottingham. The newly opened M1 meant that London was easily accessible by car, while more locally, a motorbike offered endless possibilities: “A favourite, and we did it for a long while... five or six of us... on a Friday night we’d go over to Melton, been messing about with your bikes all week and you’d go out and have a burn up on a Friday night. We always used to end up in Melton. We used to tear round the centre of Melton, ‘cos Melton has changed, again, to what it used to be... not causing any great trouble, a lot of noise, and then all of a sudden the police’d turn up, there was always a police car, and he’d chase you out of Melton. I mean, he hadn’t a hope in hell of catching you on your bikes, but as soon as you got out the city we’d carry on, they’d

turn back. It used to be like that every Friday night.”

Some interviewees were worried about the effects of the arms race, while others were unconcerned. Most were aware of what was happening politically (TV helped bring pictures of the news into the house), but few were politically active as teenagers, although that sometimes changed as they got older. There was a widespread feeling of ‘living for today’ which was seen as both a reaction against the grey austerity and conformity of the immediate post-war years, and to the threat of nuclear war. Drugs were available if you knew where to get them, but few people did and their use wasn’t common. There also seemed to be a casual attitude to contraception (the Pill wasn’t widely available until the late 1960s) which sometimes led to unplanned pregnancies and hastily arranged marriages. There are also some fond memories of the summer of 1967 where, for a

moment, the hippy dream made it seem as if the world could be a happy place.

By the time my interviewees reached their twenties they were either set to leave Leicester behind for a taste of the wider world, settle down with a family and/or a steady job, or they were only just finding their feet and starting to make a place for themselves in the world. More than for perhaps any generation before, the opportunities available to the teenagers of this period were increasing beyond the dreams of their parents. Whether this resulted in people expanding their minds through education, drugs, or simply staying at home, they all had one thing that had been denied to many of their parents – the choice to do what they wanted.

Extracts used in this article are from interviews with Shirley Aucott, Malcolm Mason, Michael Plimmer, and John Nixon.

The Foursights



Liverpool may have had *The Beatles* and London the *Dave Clark Five* but Leicestershire was not left out during the Beat Boom. *The Foursights*, pictured above at Countesthorpe Village Hall, gigged up and down the county and even ended up getting signed to EMI!

For those who missed them the first time round you can hear extracts of the band on the Leicester Overseas website at www.leicesteroverseas.com/Foursights.htm. Coincidentally, this site happens to be maintained by Tim Airey who was the bass player in The Foursights. Does anyone out there remember seeing them play?

What was where?

Entertainment in 1960s Leicester

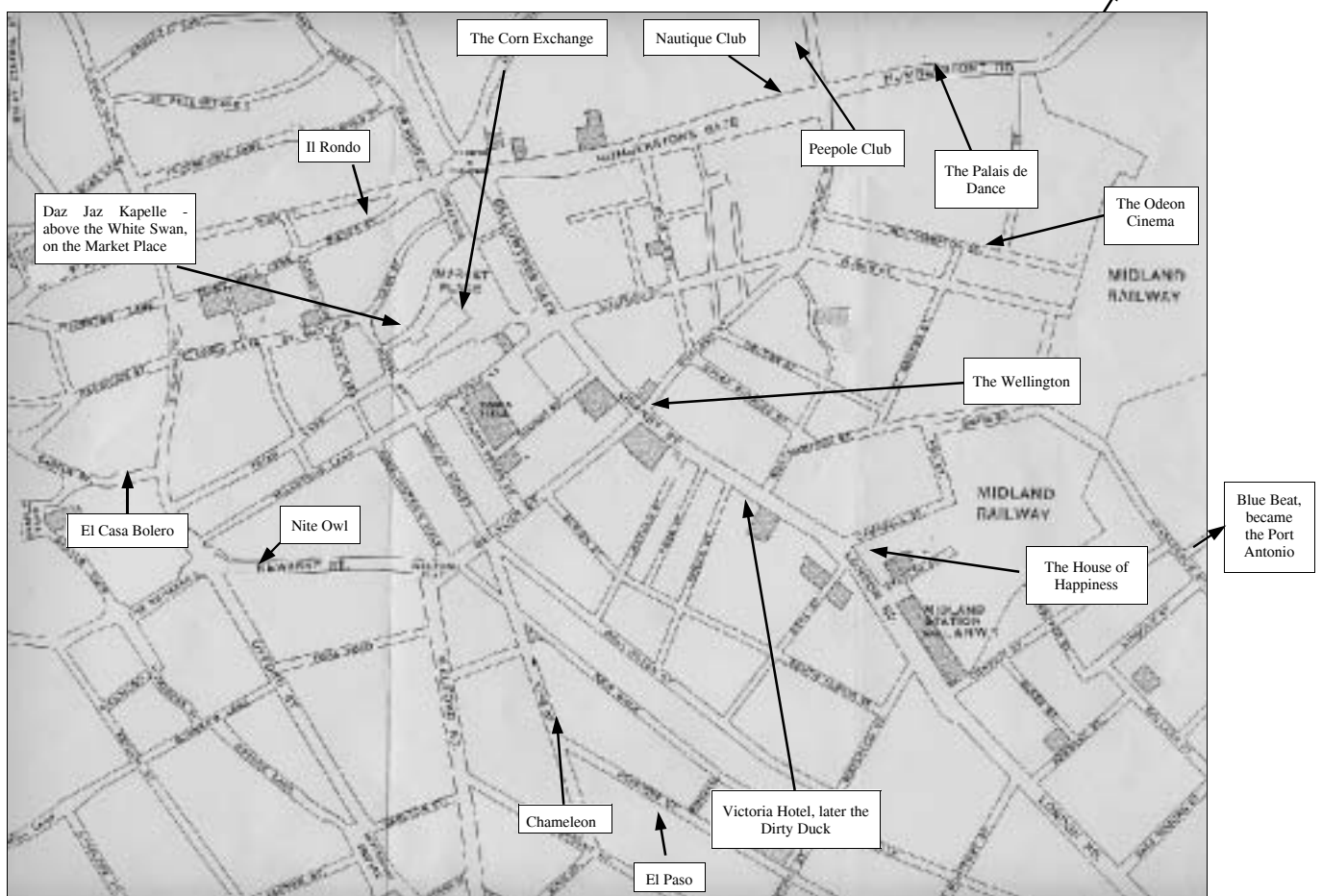
In the course of the interviews Colin Hyde carried out about growing up in Leicester in the 1950s and 1960s a number of clubs, pubs, and coffee bars were mentioned. Some of these are shown on this map (which is from 1911 if you're wondering where Charles Street is!).

It was only in their late teens that most interviewees started using pubs, and people mentioned preferring the coffee and soft drinks of places like the Chameleon, run by Pete Joseph, the El Casa, or the El Paso - cafes which stayed open after the pubs

closed. Among others, people also remembered the Blue Beat club on Conduit Street, run by Alex Barrows who later started the House of Happiness on Campbell Street.

Night clubs such as the Burlesque or the Night Owl became more popular as the 1960s progressed, and they opened up the opportunity to dance all night, even if it meant sneaking out so your parents didn't know. Aspiring disc jockeys could earn good money playing records until six in the morning.

Many of the clubs mentioned here didn't last very long, and almost all of the coffee bars have disappeared, but they form an important part of the landscape of Leicester in the 1950s and 1960s, and we would like to invite readers to contribute their memories of favourite cafés, clubs, and pubs of the period. Tell us what they were like, who frequented them, why you went there; and if you have any photos we would be delighted to have a copy.



Other popular meeting places included The Cadina coffee bar, Bruccianis at the Turkey Café, The Mikado Coffee House on the Market Place and the bowling alley at Lee Circle. Can you remember any others?

Black Power House

Postcards and Plane Crashes

How Redmile Archive discovered the value of oral testimony

Redmile in the Vale of Belvoir is home to the Redmile Archive, a repository of the village's history. In 2001 the Archive organised *Redmile Remembered*, an exhibition which generated interest from descendants of Redmile families scattered across the world. The event prompted family historians in New Zealand and America as well as several in the British Isles to send information and photographs relating to Redmile. All of this information will be added to a new exhibition which will take place in St Peter's church, Redmile, over the weekend of May 17/18th.



Since the last exhibition, Linda Brockway of Redmile Archive has been busy researching and gathering more material and photographs. One interesting find has been the postcard pictured on this page. Showing houses on Drift Hill, Redmile, it was found at a postcard fair and initially did not seem to be of any great interest. However the message on the back of the postcard opened up a trail of oral history, reminiscence and research. The postcard was sent from Elsie c/o Mr D. Weston, Redmile on 2nd August 1917 and contained the intriguing phrase. "I saw a biplane and touched it on Sunday".

Linda cross-referenced this oral testimony with the school log books which are held in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. This stated that "A plane flew low over the school and excited the children", but neglected to mention that some of them had bunked off as a result!

Around a week after finding the postcard, Linda Brockway went to collect pictures from a local farmer and mentioned this message. The farmer recalled how his father had recounted the tale of the plane crashing, and of the pilot walking up to the village to call his base, Cranwell, for help (on the Post Office telephone). The pilot was apparently court-martialed for leaving the aircraft, as flying was still a fairly secretive military undertaking.

Linda plans to continue this investigation by finding the Cranwell station log books in the Public Record Office to see if this incident shows up there. Interestingly no mention is made of the event in any of the local papers, but this is unsurprising as during wartime plane movements would be kept secret.

After the last exhibition Linda was also contacted by a 91 year old lady in Melton who on investigation turned out to be the grand-daughter of the David Weston mentioned in the postcard. She remember the plane crash, remarking: "Oh yes we all went running out of school at dinner time to look at the plane and got into trouble with Mr Ratcliffe (headteacher) when we got back." Elsie who wrote the card was her cousin.

This research trail demonstrates the wealth of material that exists in the Redmile Archive and shows how something as small as a postcard from a child can draw us into researching big public events like the First World War. It also shows how oral testimony, whether passed down through the generations or collected first hand, can often tell us things that are left out of the official and written historical record.

Anyone willing to loan pictures, documents or offer information on this incident or any aspect of Redmile's history should contact Linda by phone on 01949 843572 or email: redmile.archive@care4free.net. Any item that is loaned is copied once for the exhibition as soon as possible and returned promptly.




The third *Redmile Remembered* exhibition will take place in St Peter's church, Redmile, over the weekend of May 17/18th 2003. Opening times are 10am - 4pm and admission is free. Refreshments will be available all day.

If you are unable to visit the exhibition you may wish to visit the Archive's website at:

<http://www.redmile.archive.care4free.net/>

Research Notice Board

Can you help any of these people 

What did you get up to in Newarke Houses Museum?

Newarke Houses Museum is 50 years old in May. To commemorate this occasion, the museum is putting together an exhibition of archive photographs of the museum over the last fifty years. Part of the exhibition will consist of a collection of visitors' memories of the museum over the last fifty years.

Visitors to the museum often comment on what they remember from their last visit, especially if it was many years ago. Newarke Houses Museum would like to hear from people if they have a memory of the museum that they would like to share which may be included in the exhibition.

Please contact the Newarke Houses Museum and tell us your story, by post: Newarke Houses Museum, The Newarke, Leicester LE2 7BY or telephone 0116 225 4980.



The official opening of Newarke Houses Museum in 1953.

Love Outside of Marriage
Testimony Films, who specialise in making oral history films for Channel 4, ITV and the BBC, would like to interview people who found love outside marriage during the first half of the century. They are primarily looking for stories from the 1930s - 1950s (ie. from people who are aged seventy plus) which reflect this kind of experience.
If you or anyone else you know would be able to help contact Melissa Blackburn at Testimony Films, 12 Great George Street, Bristol BS1 5RS, 0117 925 8589, Melissa@testimonyfilms.force9.co.uk.

Do you remember the Poll Tax?
A Leicester based group are investigating the campaign that was conducted against the Poll Tax between 1991-1993. If you were affected by this policy, campaigned against it, or even strongly supported it, get in touch.
Contact Tristram on 0116 252 5064 or email polltax@pigironjoe.biz.

Also of interest 

And the winner is...
Our thanks to everyone who took the time to return the questionnaire we sent to people on our mailing list with the last Newsletter, or who responded to our website version. The responses were very positive, and will help us to plan future services. The winner of the questionnaire prize draw was Mrs Ann Beaufoy, who received a copy of 'Leicester Voices'.

Tuppence a Cup by Barbara J. Parker (1999)
Available from Mrs Parker, 25 Limehurst Avenue, Loughborough, Leics., LE11 1PE, price £2 plus £1 postage. Please make cheques payable to 'Mrs B. Parker'
An autobiographical account of family life in Loughborough.
The book focuses on Barbara's parents decision to open a shop and cafe in Nottingham Road in 1919.

East Midlands Oral History Archive

The East Midlands Oral History Archive produces a weekly email bulletin in addition to 3-4 postal mailings a year. It is free to subscribe to either of these mailings.

I would like to subscribe to the following:

- Subscribe to *talking history* Subscribe to the EMOHA email bulletin

Comments, suggestions and questions on the work of the East Midlands Oral History Archive:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please fill in and return to:

East Midlands Oral History Archive
Centre for Urban History
University of Leicester
Leicester
LE1 7RH

EMOHA Diary

Remember to check our on-line diary at www.le.ac.uk/emoha/news/diary.html. If you would like your event 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.

May

Thursday 1st (7.30 pm): Mick Rawle, *Enclosure and the Village Labourer*. Organised by the Melton branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society. Meet at the United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Melton.

Saturday 3rd (2.00 pm): *Castle Tour*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet outside Leicester Castle. £3.00/£2.50.

Tuesday 6th (7.00 pm): Fiona Ure, *Best Remedies*. Broughton Astley Heritage Society, Alan Talbot Room, Broughton Astley Village Hall.

Wednesday 7th

- **12.30 pm:** Matt Tompkins, *Land distribution among medieval and early modern peasants, 1400 - 1600*. Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

- **2.00 pm:** *An historical guided walk around the University of Leicester*. Meet Fielding Johnson Building, University of Leicester.

Thursday 8th

- **7.00 pm:** Mark Carne, *Recording your Churchyard/Burial Ground*. Burbage Heritage Group, Millennium Hall, Britannia Road, Burbage.

- **7.15 pm:** Christine Thornhill, *Children's Books and Magazines*. Birstall and District Local History Society, Birstall Library.

- **7.15 pm:** *Divine and Dine*. Organised by the Vaughan Archaeological and Historical Society, Vaughan College, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester, LE3 4BL.

Saturday 10th (7.00 pm): Barrie Ingham, *A Diver's Perspective of the Mary Rose*. Brockington Building, Lecture Theatre, Ground Floor, Loughborough University.

Wednesday 14th (12.30 pm): Liz Tacey, *Women and property laws in the*

nineteenth century. Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Thursday 15th (7.30 pm): *The Town That Wright Built*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet Countesthorpe Road Car Park, South Wigston. £2.50/£2.00.

Sunday 18th (2.30pm): *Tomb Trail*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet Welford Road Cemetery Main Gates. £2.50/£2.00.

Tuesday 20th (7.45 pm): Sarah Williams, *Symington's of Market Harborough*. Organised by the Wolds Historical Organisation at The Windmill Inn, Brook Street, Wymeswold.

Wednesday 21st (12.30 pm): Anne Murphy, *Lotteries in the 1690s - Investment or Gamble?* Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Tuesday 27th (7.30 pm): *A Meander Up and Around Lower New Walk*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet King Street/New Walk. £2.50/£2.00.

Wednesday 28th (12.30 pm): Sam Elliott and Anne Mitchell. *The Urban Young*. Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

June

Monday 2nd (7.30 pm): Richard Clark, City Archaeologist, *Recent archaeological investigations in Leicester*. Community History at the City Rooms on Hotel Street, Leicester.

Tuesday 3rd (7.30 pm): *A Meander Up and Around Upper New Walk*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet Granville Road/New Walk. £2.50/£2.00.

Wednesday 4th (12.30 pm): Jeanette Fowler, *Politics, policies and perceptions: BCG vaccinations from the 1940s*. Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Thursday 5th

- **7.00 pm:** *A walk around Lutterworth Road and Lower Workhouse Lane*. Burbage Heritage Group, Millennium Hall, Britannia Road, Burbage.

- **7.30 pm:** Dr Simon Pawley, *Non-conformity and dissent*. Organised by the Melton branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society. Meet at the United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Melton.

Saturday 7th

- **10.00 am - 4.00 pm:** *Earl Shilton Local History Day*. Bring your photos and memories of the village. Age Concern, Earl Shilton.
- **2.00 pm:** *Castle Tour*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet outside Leicester Castle. £3.00/£2.50.

Wednesday 11th (12.30 pm): Clare Townsend, *County versus region? Migrational connections in the East Midlands, 1700 - 1830*. Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Thursday 12th (7.15 pm): Stewart Warburton, *Flushed With Pride: Leicester's Sewage System*. Birstall and District Local History Society, Birstall Library.

Wednesday 18th (12.30 pm): Aldwin Roes, *Colonialism and development: the socio-*

economic transformation of colonial and post-colonial Africa. Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Thursday 19th (2.30 pm): *Leicester and Literature*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet Town Hall Square. £2.50/£2.00.

Sunday 22nd (2.30 pm): *Tomb Trail*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet Welford Road Cemetery Gates. £2.50/£2.00.

July

Thursday 3rd

- **7.00 pm:** Anne Robinson, *Archer Cottage and the Archer Family*. Burbage Heritage Group, Archer Cottage, Burbage.
- **7.30 pm:** Sarah Williams, *The Victorian Lady*. Organised by the Melton branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society. Meet at the United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Melton.

August

Monday 4th (7.30 pm): Norman Pilgrim, *Leicester's First Railway*. Community History at the City Rooms on Hotel Street, Leicester.

September

Thursday 4th

- **7.00 pm:** Fiona Ure, *Best Remedies - Kill or cure medicine from the past*. Burbage Heritage Group, Millennium Hall, Britannia Road, Burbage.
- **7.30 pm:** Mr PJ Brownlow, *Health and Life in 1863*. Organised by the Melton branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society. Meet at the United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Melton.

Thursday 11th (7.15 pm): Richard Knox, *Roman Leicestershire: What Archaeology Tells Us*. Birstall and District Local History Society, Birstall Library.

Tuesday 16th (7.45 pm): Arthur Denny, *Livery Companies*. Wolds Historical Organisation, The Windmill Inn, Brook St, Wymeswold.

October

Thursday 2nd

- **7.00 pm:** Dawn O'Shea, *Concordia Theatre and its connections with Burbage*. Burbage Heritage Group, Millennium Hall, Britannia Road, Burbage.
- **7.30 pm:** Gareth Mark King, *The Village Names*. Organised by the Melton branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society. Meet at the United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Melton.

Thursday 9th (7.15 pm): Clive Harrison, *QMS Wignall: His Great War Diaries*. Birstall and District Local History Society, Birstall Library.

Tuesday 21st (7.45 pm): Keith Challis, *Reading the Landscape; the origins of Laxton, England's last Open Field System*. Organised by the Wolds Historical Organisation at The Windmill Inn, Brook Street, Wymeswold.

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.



Leicester
City Council

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Starting Young

conducting oral history interviews with children

The East Midlands Oral History Archive's Education Officer, Sarah Ferrier, has been working to encourage school children to take part in oral history projects. Oral history enables students to develop a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding, and can offer schools the opportunity to establish links with the wider community. The Archive has produced a series of information sheets and education bulletins which explain how to use oral history projects to achieve a number of curriculum and other educational results. For further information, contact the Archive or visit our website at www.le.ac.uk/emoha/schools.html.

You may even be interested in recording children's oral histories. Children's testimonies offer a very different perspective on the world from that of adults, but interviewing them also presents a number of challenges. In this article Sarah offers a number of tips and suggestions based on her experience of interviewing seven to eleven year olds:

G e t t i n g permission:

it is important that permission is obtained from the person with overall responsibility for the children, such as the head teacher, if it is

carried out in a school setting, or the children's parents/carers. It is usually a good idea to have another responsible adult present when carrying out the interviews. If you are going to archive, or use, the material afterwards, written



consent has to be obtained from parents/carers.

I n d i v i d u a l s or groups?

Aside from child protection issues, you may find that

interviewing in groups can be more effective, as it may be less intimidating for children than one-to-one situations. Friendship pairs, or groups of between four and six children, work well.

Preparation: explain to the children what you are going to do, the sorts of questions you will be asking them, and why. It is also helpful to show them how the equipment you are using works, and to give them a trial run before you start. This will help build their confidence, and will also satisfy their curiosity as to what their voices sound like when they are recorded!

Carrying out the interview: find somewhere as quiet as possible. Try to be informal so that the children are more relaxed, but not so informal that the focus of the interview is lost. Ask open-ended questions, and try not to lead the children's responses. With younger children you might need to repeat, or rephrase, questions.



Collecting children's testimony of their experiences forms a vital and often under recorded part of the historical record.

Keep the interviews short: children are not as able as adults to talk at length about a particular subject, and may need further prompting and questioning at intervals. Be prepared for the unexpected: one child I was interviewing on the subject of toys and games became very distracted by the Velcro fastening of his trainers, and another very talkative child suddenly became speechless when the record button was pressed.

After the interview: if there is time, play back some of the recordings. Let the children know what will happen to their interviews, and give the school or organisation a copy if appropriate.

If you have any advice to add on interviewing children, or on children and students carrying out their own interviews, then we would like to hear from you. Contact Sarah Ferrier at the East Midlands Oral History Archive, Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH, tel (0116) 252 5065, or email sjf17@le.ac.uk.



You can hear some examples of Sarah's interviews with 7-11 year olds on *toys and games: an oral history*. You can order a copy of this CD by sending a cheque for £7 + £1 postage, payable to the "University of Leicester" to the East Midlands Oral History Archive.