



TALKING HISTORY

The Newsletter of the East Midlands Oral History Archive

Love and Hate

Oral History in Archives Awareness Month

Archives Awareness Month has chosen "Love and Hate" as its title. These themes aptly demonstrate the exciting range of oral history material to be found in archives. These opposing features of the human condition appear time and time again in testimonies of peoples' life experiences. The collections of the East Midlands Oral History Archive provide many examples of the different forms that the themes of love and hate can take.

Love features heavily in descriptions of courtship and marriage, and in the bonds of family. Illicit romances convey both themes and are demonstrated in the testimony of relationships frowned upon by parents or society's conventions. This is particularly demonstrated in times of war when, for example, fraternization between Prisoners of War and local women was a great taboo. Recollections of the Second World War also reveal the love and hate theme in people's reactions to allied servicemen in Britain, especially towards the American forces. American war brides provide the theme of love, often enduring separation and the difficulties of adapting to a new country for the sake of love. In often stark contrast to this aspect is the local resentment and dislike of U.S. troops being stationed in the area.

Love is evident too in memories of places and events long past, which hold for the speaker a lasting fondness and provide for the listener a portrait of time and

location remembered from a positive stance. Oral history can sometimes offer a contrasting view of the same places and events by providing another speaker's recollections, and illustrating how love and hate is so often about personal experience and perception.

Work is another area that inspires the intensity of feeling that love and hate produce in people. The vast wealth of material held in the archive about various professions and work experiences provides an immense resource for the themes of love and hate. The detailed dedication of doctors and nurses, particularly from the early part of the 20th century, illustrated in a number of recordings in the archive, convey a tremendous sense of the love these people had for their work, often in difficult and strict conditions. Domestic Service, the largest employer of people in the Edwardian era, is shown in testimony to be an employment that was hated by many. This was particularly so for young women, often thrust into an alien environment, where strict rules, hard work and unscrupulous employers made



lives miserable. For others, however, it provided good and happy employment. One archive favourite is the recollections of a Leicester tram driver, whose description of handling the tram in icy conditions, and general memories of his work, convey a love of this work and time in his life.

The love and hate engendered by schooldays is well illustrated in oral testimony. The experience of boarding



Continued from page 1



school and approved schools, to be found in the archive, provide some surprising revelations. In one instance, approved school offered one boy education and a doorway to a better life. Archive recollections of the state school experience in the 20th century, and sometimes before, create a wonderful tapestry of love and hate which are often amusing, horrifying and touching.

Love and hate touch so many areas of life that only a few have been mentioned here to illustrate that oral history is a rich resource for demonstrating feelings and emotions. The spoken word, as it is recorded, gives a vibrant record of time, place, personality and experience that can change peoples' perceptions of what an archive may hold. Have a look at the EMOHA website and catalogue on www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue or contact the cataloguing officer on 0116 2525065 and find out how you can listen to these voices for yourself.

Christine Thornhill (EMOHA)

Some references for the above themes that may be of interest:

World War II compilation 405, LO/025/C25

American war bride 713, LO/080/032 94, MA200/102/102 Reaction to American servicemen

426, LO/046/C46 Courtship Days compilation

220, DW400/005 Approved school memories

422, LO/042/C42 Countersthorpe Homes

788, LO/042/C42 School memories

Everyone has a history – and we've got a bit of yours...

September 2003 is Archives Awareness Month (AAM). Events are being held across the UK and Ireland to bring history to life, and to challenge the idea of archives as dry and dusty documents of no relevance to the 'ordinary' person.

The overall theme of AAM is the opening up of archives to the general public and making them aware of the sheer wealth of treasures that archives hold. Many local events are focused around the theme of 'Love and Hate', drawing on a vast range of archives from personal diaries, newspapers, oral histories and official records.

As its own contribution to Archives Awareness Month, EMOHA is offering a free oral history training workshop on Saturday 27 September 2003 from 10.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m. at No. 1 Salisbury Road, Leicester. If you are interested in recording other people's memories, but not sure where to begin, the workshop will give you the skills and the confidence to get started. Numbers are limited to 15, so please book early! Telephone us on 0116 252 5065, email emoha@le.ac.uk, or write

to EMOHA, Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH.

On Saturday 20 September 2003, EMOHA will also be contributing to a Community Heritage Roadshow at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre in Leicester. Elsewhere in the East Midlands, archive services are organising a collaborative exhibition entitled 'Jaunts and Jollities', focusing on life changing events and how people and communities celebrated them in the past. The exhibition will be at the University of Nottingham, and several sets of panels will also tour the region. A separate exhibition by Nottinghamshire Archives will look at how attitudes to 'Forbidden Love' have changed over time.

For more details of these and other events in the East Midlands, visit www.aamsept2003.com, or contact Jerry Weber, Regional Archives Development Officer at East Midlands Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (EMMLAC), 56 King Street, Leicester, LE1 6RL, tel. 0116 2851358, or email jweber@emmlac.org.uk.

The Things They Say

I have just read your article 'Starting Young' in the May Issue of *Talking History*. As History Co-ordinator at a local school, I decided a few months ago to interview children about what they had learned during their history lessons.

I was discussing the Roman Invasion of Britain with Year 3 children. When asked about Boudecia, one child informed me that she destroyed the Romans. I then asked another child if she could she add anything to this. Her response was:

"Boudecia wanted a child and one night three wise men visited her on the way to see Jesus." At this point I said "Shall we stop there, because I think you are a little confused about Boudecia and Jesus' birth." To which the bright spark amongst them replied, "Oh she means Boubshaka."

Kate Hames.

'Come on the Tigers'



A proposed new museum of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment would incorporate oral histories of former members of the Regiment and their families in the displays, alongside recorded extracts illustrating the wider social context in which the Regiment operated during the 20th century.

The new museum would be located in Newarke Houses Museum in Leicester, together with the City Museums' social history collection. At present only around 5% of the Regiment's collection is on display in a gallery at New Walk Museum. The Regiment was first raised in 1688 as the XVII Foot, and served continuously until it was amalgamated into the Royal Anglian Regiment in 1964. It was awarded the title 'Royal' in 1946 in recognition of its service.

A public appeal has recently been launched for £250,000 to match the funding applied for from the Heritage Lottery Fund. For further information, telephone 01780 764 802, or send donations payable to 'The Royal Leicestershire Regiment Museum Trust Fund' to RHQ The Royal Leicestershire Regiment, TA Centre, Ulverscroft Road, Leicester, LE4 6BY.

Some examples of recorded interviews with former members of the Regiment include:

World War I - Charles Monk, born 1895,

who served in the 7th Battalion during World War I (694, LO/061/012) World War II - Reg Wood, born 1909 (60, MA200/061/061) and Albert Attenborough, b. 1917 (305, WF/012/H12)

For further details, visit our online catalogue at www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue, or contact Christine Thornhill on 0116 252 5062 or email her at cft5@le.ac.uk.

Regimental quotes

Anon

Then came the war in 1914. I volunteered, I was one of the first hundred to volunteer, and then we paraded to Glen Parva. The first day we paraded in for our uniform, the second day we paraded. After the parade, the officer came to me and said 'Have you been in the army before, me boy?'. I said 'No sir'. So he said 'Where did you learn your drill?'. I said 'the Church Lads Brigade', so he gave me a stripe! That was the first rung of the ladder. And then we went to Aldershot. We took over the barracks there.

I had ten months training, and by God, we did train! Unfortunately the recruits after that were three months training and out they went. I had a party of 30 men under me. They were all miners, and they were marvellous men, all really marvellous men, they

were. Comradely and brotherly. I was a corporal then, I had another stripe, but you never mixed with the men off parade. And the one gentleman, he lived in Wharf Street, and the men went down to the pub at night, so I thought to myself 'Where are they getting the money from?'. So I did enquire, and one of the chaps, he bent irons round his neck, you know, the old iron fire irons, he used to bend them. So after that the hat went round the pub, and that's how they got the free beer.

And then after ten months training, in August 1915 we were sent out to France. And there's this Constitutional Hill at Folkestone, all cobbled bricks, and the dead of night, and it's pitch black and everything, but the rhythm of your boots on this track, it still brings it back... And I went to France some years afterwards, and it all came back to me, walking down this hill, and we arrived in France and after a few days at the base we went up the line. Oh dear, what an experience. I couldn't tell you exactly where, but we were only 25 yards from the Germans, and both the Germans and us had a tunnel underneath your road to blow each other up. But going down this tunnel you could hear the Germans, and we knew who was on the opposite side, whether they were



Leicestershire Regiment 1914-18

Saxons or Prussians, because they were different types.

591, CH/086/0214

Harry Oates

Eventually I became, I think, the senior warrant officer in the camp. Even then, being only in my mid 20s, you'll realise the terrible losses that we'd undertaken. There were 23 or 24 of us in this camp, and I had a whisper from some Siamese people that we got to know that the Japanese were going to surrender, because they were in a Hell of a mess. And then we heard that these two bombs had dropped. We didn't know they were atom bombs, just huge bombs, and the Japanese then had surrendered.

And then I had a thought that, when we did take over the camp, I wanted straight the way to mark it as our camp. But as I realised that a Union Jack would be too complicated to make, I thought we'd try and make a Regimental flag. And I had a lad with us named Lance Corporal Carter. He was a good tailor, and for obvious reasons was nicknamed Tack. And we stole the underskirt of a Korean prostitute, who were named comfort women and who were stationed about five or six kilometres from our camp in a caravan that the Japanese soldiers used to visit, of course. We also stole a Japanese officer's pith helmet, tropical helmet. Inside it was a red lining which we wanted. And this Korean prostitute's underskirt was black. We also then got

a clean white loincloth that we all wore, because by then we'd got no clothes. And Tack carter made this Regimental flag, and our Regimental colours are red, pearl grey and black, and this was the nearest we could get, of course, and in the centre of it we put the figures XVII. We were the 17th Regiment of Foot, as we were formed in 1688. And as soon as the Japanese commandant told me that they'd finished, and that we were now free, we hoisted this flag on the tallest bamboo pole that we could find, and flew it over the camp. Before I left the camp, I had the flag taken down, and I had all the lads sign it with a bit of indelible pencil or whatever we could find.

618, CH/111/0210



Regimental Transport c1910



Signing up 1914

Moving On

EMOHA technical officer, Tristram Hooley will be leaving the Archive at the start of September to work for the University of Leicester's Teaching and Learning Unit. Tristram has worked at the Centre for Urban History as a researcher and web designer for the past five years and joined EMOHA when the Archive was established.

“I'll be sad to go as I've really enjoyed working at the Archive. Over the last three years we've all seen EMOHA develop from nothing into one of the country's most successful sound archives. I've particularly enjoyed working on some of the on-line exhibitions that we've done and helping to bring together *Toys and Games: An Oral History*. The diversity of ways in which the Archive has used oral history has ensured that I've certainly never had a chance to get bored!”

From the start of September Tristram's duties will be covered by existing EMOHA staff. In particular Colin Hyde will now be available to answer technical and equipment queries.



GOOD LUCK AND A LONG AND LIVELY LIFE...

This was the message sent by telegram to BBC Radio Leicester by Laurie Mason, BBC News Editor South and West, on the launch of the radio station in October 1967. It was passed on to recently us by the Wessex Sound and Film Archive, along with recordings of the first day's programmes and other items collected by Maurice Ennals, the first Station Manager of what was to be Britain's first local radio station.

We are delighted to have this material to deposit alongside the Radio Leicester sound archive itself. Local radio is now well-established and very popular – so you may be surprised to know that its introduction provoked a good deal of controversy and even hostility. The scrapbooks kept by Maurice Ennals give some idea of its extent. "We have a perfectly good newspaper", ran one letter to the Leicester Mercury in March 1967, "reporting local events and controversies, so I can see no point in spending money on such a venture." Although the BBC itself paid the £35,000 cost of equipping each station – well in excess of that of the 'pirate' station Radio Caroline, it was noted, including the ship – their running costs of around £1,000 a year had to be found locally.

In Leicester, it was the City Council which agreed to pay them, on the basis that "this project accords with the Council's policy towards the arts generally." The

Chamber of Commerce, amongst others, declared itself "very much against saddling the rates with any further increases"; but if this were to be the case, wrote 'D.L.' to the Mercury, "perhaps Radio Leicester will be able to justify its existence by supplying a daily Pavement Report – enumerating the latest pavements which should be avoided for safety's sake in our impoverished city."

In fact, the ratepayers were assured that the costs would be met from within the existing arts budget – but this was not the only issue. The public, said a Mercury editorial on 13 March 1967, had not been consulted over the matter, and "still do not know why Leicester City councillors are so keen on having a local radio station... They have not been so keen on anything since they started building roundabouts." In its haste to head off a bid from Nottingham, it claimed on another occasion, the Council had done "a cloak and dagger act over applying for the radio station... The public could be wrong – they often are – but they should still be heard."

Insufficient wave-lengths were available on medium wave, so the Post Office insisted that Radio Leicester be broadcast on VHF, despite claims in the press that only one in three people in the area had suitable radio sets. This was disputed by Maurice Ennals, who also pointed to the better sound quality of VHF. However,

local programming would only account for around four hours a day, with up to 14 hours being drawn from the existing Home Service and Light Programme networks, giving rise to other complaints about value for money.

And what sort of local programmes might the listeners expect? Traffic Island Discs, and Round Braunstone Quiz were among the suggestions imparted to the Mercury by its readers. The aims set out in the White Paper 'Broadcasting' in December 1966 were rather more serious, particularly in the light of demands for the licensing of commercial radio stations. "Properly organised local radio", it declared, "would provide a valuable service to the local community; and by giving a new means of expression to its particular interest(s) and aspirations, serve to reinforce its distinctive character and sense of identity."

The locations of the first three stations – in Leicester, Liverpool and Sheffield – had been chosen because these areas "showed a very strong sense of civic pride and sense of local unity"; and by no means everyone in Leicester was opposed to the idea. Rev. Quine of St. Peter's in Belgrave was "100% behind it. There are many ways in which the church can participate, such as early morning prayers, open discussions, religious plays and music."



Outside Broadcast



Demonstration by the Free Radio Association 1967

Continued from page 5

Maurice Ennals, who had once worked as a reporter on the 'Melton Times', received over 100 letters of support and offers of help within a short time of his appointment.

Nevertheless, his was not an easy task, as an article by his BBC boss Donald Edwards acknowledged: "he will be pressed by individuals and groups for time on the air. He has to select, yet do his best not to annoy. He has to be



Maurice Ennals

courteous and firm, yet diplomatic and receptive. As Mr BBC in his community, he must have the qualities of a just and genial ombudsman."

The launch of BBC Radio Leicester on Wednesday 8 November 1967 was nothing if not lively. It's official opening by Postmaster-General Edward Short was preceded by a bomb hoax, and accompanied by a demonstration outside its Epic House base in Charles Street by the 'Free Radio Association' protesting against the BBC monopoly of radio broadcasts. At 12.45 hours, however, right on schedule, Radio Leicester became the first BBC local radio station to start broadcasting, heralded by the word 'Leicester' spelt out in Morse Code – and the familiar notes of the Post Horn Gallop.

Local radio, said Maurice Ennals, could not take the place of a local newspaper "any more than the national networks can take the place of the national

newspapers... Local radio can give the news quickly... but more often than not people will then want to know more about it in their local paper." But as Donald Edwards noted, Radio Leicester and the other 'experimental' stations which followed it had one great advantage which contributed to their lasting success – for "even the best newspaper cannot print sound. The human voice is still the warmest and most expressive medium of communication between human beings."

Cynthia Brown (EMOHA)

For further information about the BBC Radio Leicester archive and the Maurice Ennals collection, please contact Christine Thornhill, Cataloguing and Production Officer, On 0116 252 5062, or email her at cft5@le.ac.uk. We would like to thank Mrs Kay Ennals, and David Lee of the Wessex Film and Sound Archive, for making the latter available to us.

Courting Days

Over the years, people on the look out for a boyfriend or girlfriend have met in various places around Leicester. Whether it was walking up and down the London Road, trips to Bradgate Park, dancing at the Palais, or local 'hops' in the villages of the county, the memories of trying to find a partner have been recorded on a cassette called 'Courting Days'. These memories, all from before the Second World War, were compiled in the 1980s by the Leicester Oral History Archive and are available to listen to at EMOHA.

"When we came out of the Temperance Hall to 'walk the road', they used to call it, that was going up London Road. But the working class girl always kept to the right side of the road, and the superior ones that were well dressed, evidently from better families, used the left hand side of the road. But it was always up so far then turn round and come back. Boys going up and down, just the same, and the girls puffing these perfumed sweets – aah – because it was an attraction to

the boys. But anyway, if you'd got somebody turning round giving you the glad eye, "Oh, take your time, I think I've clicked." Specially when you began towards school leaving age, one or two of the, well, a few of the older ones, and the boys'd turn round and come back and start chatting you up." **Mrs Hawes**

"Well, every Sunday night there were five of us went out together, we used to go the market, listen to the Sallys [Salvation Army]... then we used to come back, go to the Clocktower and walk up London Road clicking with the girls. When we seen a girl used to come, you just nudge 'em, knock them into the gutter, and things like that, and start talking to them." **Mr Boyall**

If you liked dancing you could head to the newly opened Palais. As well as 'prettiest girl' competitions there were dance competitions between Leicester, Derby, and Nottingham. If you couldn't dance well you were only likely to have

one chance with a partner, so lessons were important, and they might give you the confidence to pluck up the courage to ask someone for a dance, rather than standing at the edge like a wallflower.

Many couples would head to Bradgate Park for walks, although you might have to be careful: "Oh yes, and we used to have no end of 'staggers'... where we farmed at the back, it was uphill and it backed up to the Bradgate Park, and, you know there's a wall right round Bradgate Park isn't there, and of course the couples used to go up there and there was a swing gate in through the wall you see, and they used to pull a little stone and stand watching you, the courting couples through the stone. It's always gone on hasn't it... they call it 'staggering', I think it goes on now. You see a man going off with binoculars and that you know he's not going off birdwatching, he's going watching the courting couples, you see." **Mrs Harrison.**

Generally though, the past is remembered as being more innocent. Several people said they felt they were almost married if they kissed someone, while there were few worries about walking home at night, unless you were late and your parents caught you. This innocence had a down side though; almost everyone on the cassette says they were ignorant about the facts of life when they were young. However, the girls knew you were supposed to be a 'nice girl':

"If anybody in Glenfield, they knew that they were expecting a baby, which quite a few did fall by the wayside, and they were married in white, and they used to say, "Hmph, and she's even marrying in white", you know, and they used to think that was a crime to marry in white if you were pregnant." *Mrs Archer*.

Things could also be difficult if the courting couple came from different backgrounds: "It was a love affair, ours, which the whole village joined in to be quite truthful. Because his father was the managing director of the Glenfield Boot & Shoe Company, Progress Works, and my father was an electrician at Corah's, and his father thought that he should marry somebody, not a village girl, he didn't agree with him that he should have a village girl you see, he thought that was quite wrong. If ever he thought he could stop us, well he did, and people

in the village would say, would tell us, you know, if they saw his father in one direction well they'd come and tell us I should go that way, your dad's that way... and it was, even today they laugh about it, funny, but it all ended alright in the end." *Mrs Archer*

"Stan's dad met his mother at the fair, he used to have the jockey scales, they used to weigh you, and he met his wife there, through there. And, er, the family disowned him because he'd married, married a girl who wasn't a gypsy. A 'white' girl they called her, so there was a big bust up with his mother, and she took the scales off him and he went in the boot and shoes, and ended up as a boot and shoe manufacturer." *Mrs Morgan*

For many people there are happy memories of courting, although perhaps not as energetic as these: "Reg and I started to do the hikes that were in the Leicester Mercury... and then we decided we'd go in for a tandem, and er, course you don't see those very often now. Oh we had a lovely time on this

tandem. We used to go all round the Derbyshire Peaks, round to Dovedale and to Wickstead Park, and Chatsworth House, all those places. And we went on the tandem to Skegness, and the last 20 miles we felt like throwing the tandem over the hedge! It was so tiring because it was about 85 miles. But I can remember as plain as anything... we set off, got little shorts on, set off about five o'clock in the morning, and Reg said, "I've got £14 in my pockets", he says, "we're really millionaires." Fourteen pounds, you know, for both of us to stay for the week, and everything." *Mrs Calow*

Colin Hyde (EMOHA)

To hear 'Courting Days' quote EMOHA ref: 0426, LO/046/C46



Networking...



EMOHA Project Manager, Cynthia Brown, has recently been nominated by fellow members as

the new Co-ordinator of the Oral History Society Regional Network. She takes over from Graham Smith of the School of Health and Related Research at the University of Sheffield.

The Regional Network consists of oral historians accredited by the Oral History Society who act as a first point of contact for their specific area – either

for people new to oral history, or wanting to discuss their work in detail

with someone who is sympathetic and experienced. Members work in a range of organisations including archives, museums and libraries, or as freelance practitioners.

For more information about the Oral History Society itself, go to www.oralhistory.org.uk, or contact The Secretary, Oral History Society, c/o Department of History, Essex University, Colchester, CO4 3SQ, tel. 020 7412 7405, or email Rob Perks at rob.perks@bl.uk.



TEACHERS' NOTES

Education Column: Newsletter September 2003

Britain – a diverse society

EMOHA Researcher, Colin Hyde, has been appointed as Project Worker to produce the Archive's Citizenship materials for use at Key Stage 3. EMOHA has been able to appoint Colin to develop an audio CD and teachers' pack thanks to funding awarded by the East Midlands Museums Libraries and Archives Council (EMMLAC), under Phase 2 of the Museums and Galleries Education Programme. The materials will be developed in consultation with partner schools and the Centre for Citizenship Studies at the School of Education, University of Leicester, and will support the Citizenship Unit 'Britain – a diverse society?'. Two copies of the resource 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 work on Citizenship. Remaining copies will be made available to other organisations through EMMLAC. The CD and teachers' pack will be launched in March 2004 at the Multicultural, Religious Education and Curriculum Resource Centre, Quorn Hall, Leicestershire.

EMOHA Loans Collection

The Leicester Oral History Collection documents the lives of over 500 people from Leicester and Leicestershire, through memories dating back to the early 20th Century. Extracts from longer interviews, compiled into themed recordings, cover a wide range of subjects from transport, farming and industry, to the effects of war and the increasing diversity of the local population.

Titles include:

- World War Two
- World War two Evacuee
- Holidays
- Public Health
- Entertainment
- The Three R's
- Crimes and Punishment
- Public Health
- Entertainment
- Unemployment

The East Midlands Oral History Archive is able to loan copies of these recordings to schools and adult learner groups, with additional support materials for World War Two. The recordings will be loaned for 4 weeks, and may be copied

and used for educational purposes. To find out more about borrowing these interviews, contact me Sarah Ferrier, Education Officer, at:

East Midlands Oral History Archive
 (0116) 252 5065
 sjf17@le.ac.uk
<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha>

Details of other collections held by the East Midlands Oral History Archive can be found on our online catalogue at www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue.html. If you are unable to find what you are looking for, or would like further information, contact Sarah Ferrier, Education Officer, at the address above.

Centre For Urban History
 University Of Leicester
 In Conjunction With The Urban History Group

3RD ANNUAL POSTGRADUATE WORKSHOP

Friday 28 November 2003

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY
 APPROACHES TO URBAN FORM

NETWORKING THE CITY

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST ARE SOUGHT FROM POSTGRADUATE
 STUDENTS WORKING IN AN URBAN CONTEXT

Papers should be 20-30 minutes in length Abstracts of approximately 300 words required by 31 July 2003

Contact: Claire Townsend Stephanie Maksimovic
 cht7@le.ac.uk ssm4@le.ac.uk

pre-registration form
 on-line pre-registration form
<http://www.le.ac.uk/urbanconf/pg/workshop.html>



Memories of the Blackshirts

'Blackshirts in Leicester Before WW2' is a cassette compiled from three interviews with men who were involved in Leicester's political scene before the Second World War.

"When we started in 1934 in the market place, Sunday night was an open forum. Various religious cranks and, er, the Communists and various left-wing organisations, then we started. You'd got a ready made audience of three or four hundred you see, and general hostility you see, and we began to get a bit of rough stuff. Er, I can remember being young and uneducated in these matters, I hurled abuse at them once, including accusing them of being a lot of yellow rats, I remember using that phrase; of course blimming great fat constables, as they were in those days, we were only 19, 20 and 21... "Watch your words or I shall have to take you in mate." After that there was a ban, you see, no more blackshirt meetings in the market because they were getting disruptive."

There were large rallies at Olympia and in Hyde Park, and locally there was a meeting at Granby Halls in 1935: "I went along to the Granby Halls and entered, for the first time in my life, I had a curious first impression of the inside of this colossal structure – a long chain of blackshirts stretched to the centre of the hall from a gigantic pile of folding chairs which were being swung from hand to hand into position. The whole place was alive with activity and strict organisation was apparent. Working side by side were national headquarters officers... High Squad men, which were the, presumably the equivalent of the SS, they were the, they wore jackboots and were particularly efficient looking gangsters."

In the following years, the effects of the Spanish Civil War hit Leicester: "We had an influx of refugees into Leicester from the Basque territory, to which we strongly objected 'cos we felt there enough English boys and girls in state of poverty that deserved our attention rather than these children being driven out of Basque territory. Our sympathy to the Franco

regime is perhaps exemplified that we called our new headquarters, our major headquarters we had in Leicester for some time in Upper Wellington Street, 'Alcatraz House', which of course was the castle which the, um, Franco's men heroically held out against the Communists for nearly 18 months."

With the threat of war increasing, the local support of the BUF (British Union of Fascists) dwindled. While some people held on to their views for years to come, others reconsidered: "I remember a chap that I knew, he was a well known blackshirt and he was a very very nice chap. Now when I joined the RAF I went to Biggin Hill... and I went into a pub one night and this chap was in RAF uniform and I said, "What's happened to the blackshirts then?" 'Aye", he says, 'we all make mistakes."

If you want to hear more about the blackshirts in Leicester, contact EMOHA and quote reference 0404 LO/024/C24

Colin Hyde (EMOHA)

Mouldy-warps and Mimmocking

As well as the information they contain on a whole range of subjects, recordings in oral history archives also provide an opportunity to study local dialects and the way in which they vary, even within quite a small geographical area. Bob Trubshaw of the Heart of Albion Press is currently exploring the possibility of a bid to the Local Heritage Initiative for a project to focusing on Leicestershire dialect, and we will keep you informed of developments.

In the meantime, the British Library National Sound Archive has received funding from the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) to create a web-accessible and map-enabled audio database of matched extracts from the Survey of English Dialects (c.1940s-1970s) and

the Millennium Memory Bank (1998-9). Rob Perks, Curator of Oral History at the British Library, explains that the main task will be to select 300 five-minute audio clips from each of the two collections (600 in all), attach catalogue data and add Ordinance Survey co-ordinates to make them searchable by place and content subject matter.

The project aims to create a body of dialect recordings that can be listened to online and which will also have significant local social and oral history interest for potential educational use and general interest - the emphasis being very much on change and changing ways of talking over time. This will be part of a much larger web resource called 'Collect Britain' which is now online at www.collectbritain.co.uk/,

with more content being added over the next two years.

For some existing studies of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Dialect, see:

- Arthur Evans, *Leicestershire words, words, phrases and proverbs (1881)*
- Clifford Dunkley, *Let's talk Leicester a user-friendly guide to the local lingo (1998)*
- *Dialect, Customs and Derivations in Rutland: 'In Rutland Series' Vol. 12 (1988)*

Note: a 'mouldy-warp' is a mole; 'mimmocking' is a term meaning 'tiny'. Both are dialect words from Rutland.

Cynthia Brown (EMOHA)

EMOHA DIARY

September

Tuesday 2nd (7.30 pm): Mike Taylor (English Heritage), *The Birmingham Jewellery Quarter*. Leicester Group of the Victorian Society. Small Hall, Leicester Adult Education College, Wellington Street, Leicester.

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*. Melton branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society, United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Melton.

Saturday 6th (2.00 pm): *Castle Tour*. A guided walk organised by Footprints. Meet outside the Castle. £3.00/£2.50.

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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 at The Windmill Inn, Brook Street, Wymeswold.

Wednesday 17th (7.30pm): Dr Toby Musgrave, *Moving Plants: How the Plant Hunters and their plants changed garden fashions*. A Nottingham University Public Lecture. Free Admission. Tickets and further details available from Sue Price Marsh, 0115-9515428.

Friday 26th (7.15 p.m): Drusilla Armitage, *Heraldry*. Vaughan Archaeological & Historical Society, Vaughan College, St. Nicholas Circle, Leicester.

October

Thursday 2nd

- **2.15 pm:** Prof. Sir Tony (E. A.) Wrigley (University of Cambridge): *The changing occupational structure of England 1750-1850*. Centre for English Local History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.
- **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*. Melton branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society, United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Melton.

Monday 6th (7.30 pm): Derek Seaton, *The Roll of Mayors and Lord Mayors of Leicester 1209-1999: a brief history of the Mayoralty and some of the interesting personalities who had held the office*. Community History Network, City Rooms, Hotel Street, Leicester.

Tuesday 7th (7.30 pm): Derek Smith, *The History of Gypsy Waggons*. Leicester Group of the Victorian Society, Small Hall, Leicester Adult Education College, Wellington Street, Leicester.

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

Friday 10th (2.30 pm): Maurits van Rooijen, *Open Space, Urban Planning and the Evolution of the Green City*. Centre for Urban History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Thursday 16 (2.15 pm): Dr Michael Costen (Centre for the Historic Environment, University of Bristol), *Toward a chronology for the place-names of South-West England*. Centre for English Local History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

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

Friday 24th (7.15 p.m): Canon Michael Wilson, *Holy Relics*. Vaughan Archaeological & Historical Society. Vaughan College, St. Nicholas Circle, Leicester.

Thursday 30th (2.15 pm): Dr Emma Griffin (University of Cambridge): *Popular sports and pastimes, 18th/19th centuries*. Centre for English Local History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Friday 31st (2.30pm): Peter King (Northampton), *Urban Discourses and the invention of juvenile delinquency in the early nineteenth century*. 'The Committee for Investigating the Alarming Increase of Juvenile Delinquency in the Metropolis'. Centre for Urban History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

November

Tuesday 4th (7.30 pm): Bertel Hutchinson (President of the Derby Concert Orchestra), *Elgar - the man behind the Music*. Leicester Group of the Victorian Society, Small Hall, Leicester Adult Education College, Wellington Street, Leicester.

Thursday 6th

- **7.00 pm:** Richard Knox, *Artefacts from Burbage*. Burbage Heritage Group, Millennium Hall, Britannia Road, Burbage.
- **7.30 pm:** George Gamble, *Medals*. Melton branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society, United Reformed Church, Chapel Street, Melton.

Tuesday 13th (7.15 pm): Derek Seaton, *Tollgate to Tramshed: The Story of London Road*. Birstall and District Local History Society, Birstall Library.

Thursday 13 (2.15 pm): Prof. Mike Braddick (University of Sheffield), *Writing the social history of England in the 1640s*. Centre for English Local History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Friday 14th (2.30 pm): Jan Palmowski, *Arisen from Ruins – Cities and the Construction of National Identity in the GDR*. Centre for Urban History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Tuesday 18th (7.45 pm): Ben Beazley, *History of the Leicester Police Force*. Wolds Historical Organisation The Windmill Inn, Brook Street, Wymeswold.

Thursday 27th (2.15 pm): Spencer Dimmock (University of Swansea), *A re-assessment of towns in late medieval southern Wales*. Centre for English Local History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Friday 28th November

- **2.30 pm:** *Networking the City*. Centre for Urban History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.
- **7.15 pm:** Gerry Stacey, *Knowledge is Power: Albert Mansbridge & the WEA*. Vaughan Archaeological & Historical Society, Vaughan College, St. Nicholas Circle, Leicester.

December

Tuesday 2nd (7.30 pm): Malcolm Elliot (Leicester Victorian Society), *Claimants to fortune - the Earl of Huntingdon and Sir Rodger Tichbourne*. Leicester Group of the Victorian Society, Small Hall, Leicester Adult Education College, Wellington Street, Leicester.

Friday 5th (2.30 pm): Satoshi Baba (University of Leicester), *Britain and Germany in Town Planning in the first decade of the 20th-century*. Centre for Urban History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Thursday 11th (2.15 pm): Dr Mark Freeman (University of Glasgow), *Social Investigation and Rural England 1870-1914*. Centre for English Local History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

Friday 12th (2.30 pm): Peter Bartrip, *Workplace Health Hazards and the Urban Environment. From 17th Century Italy to 20th Century USA (by way of Barking, Essex)*. Centre for Urban History, Marc Fitch House, Salisbury Road, Leicester.

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 at <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue.html>, 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, the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR), and Leicester City Museums and Library Services.

Contact details

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University of Leicester
LE1 7RH
(0116) 252 5065
emoha@le.ac.uk
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Launch of *em:source* website



Women on the Production Line



Nottingham Egg Week



Rescue Workers at Ransome & Marles Raid

A new website aimed at teachers and the general public will bring World War Two Nottinghamshire back to life. The *em:source* Project was started in January 2003 to encourage the use of archives for teaching and learning. The new website contains an archive of over 50 items which have been drawn from numerous local collections and include photographs, official documents and leaflets, posters, newspaper articles, oral history extracts, film stills, letters and diary entries.

One of the topics examined by the website is wartime food rationing. Users of the site can access pages from a Wartime Recipe Book that can only be described as revolting; film stills from a baker's cinema advertisement with the caption, "It's not our fault – blame Schicklegruber that the best of our Cakes and Pastries are "off" for a time!"; and a

Boots Café menu peppered with asterisks that refer to the use of food substitutes. My personal favourite however, is the colourful board that advertises 'Nottingham Egg Week'. This event was organised by the local hospital and resulted in thousands of eggs being donated and subsequently pickled!

Children's experience of war is another area that the website explores. One photo shows a crocodile of evacuees arriving at Bingham railway station, their faces a mixture of excitement and apprehension. A wonderful accompaniment to this is an oral history extract of a local man recalling his own feelings about being evacuated to Nottinghamshire. Pages from Thurgarton School log book record a head inspection where one unfortunate evacuee from Southend is found to have several nits!

Other parts of the website examine the role of women in wartime, look at the level of censorship that was exercised during the conflict, and ask why we remember the Second World War. Photos and documents reveal the emotional impact of war, depict victory, heroism, suffering, community spirit, death and destruction. All of these sources provide a fascinating window into the past but they also ask questions of the website user and show how interpretation is key to our understanding of the past.

Helen Ward, Regional Archives, Education Officer, East Midlands Museums Libraries and Archives Council.

View the *em:source* website at www.emsource.org.uk.

Blossoming interest in gardening sparks UK's first ever conference in horticultural geography.

The garden's role in society as a place for quiet contemplation or therapy, an area for personal expression, a multi-million pound industry, an illustration of national identity or even a tool for political statement will be among the topics discussed at an international conference at The University of Nottingham taking place on 17-18 September 2003.

The conference organisers, Georgina Couch, of the University's School of

Geography, and Dr. Mandy Morris of the East Midlands Oral History Archive at the University of Leicester, said: "In the past 10 years gardens have become arenas of intense interest. We have seen a surge in garden makeover programme on television, an increase in garden-related books and magazines, a boom in garden visiting as well as garden centre trade, and a growing interest in community gardens, allotments

and therapeutic gardening. Likewise, gardens are increasingly the subject of academic research."

More information about the conference and the accompanying public lecture and the tour of the University's gardens is available from Georgina Couch in Nottingham University's School of Geography on 0115 951 5738.