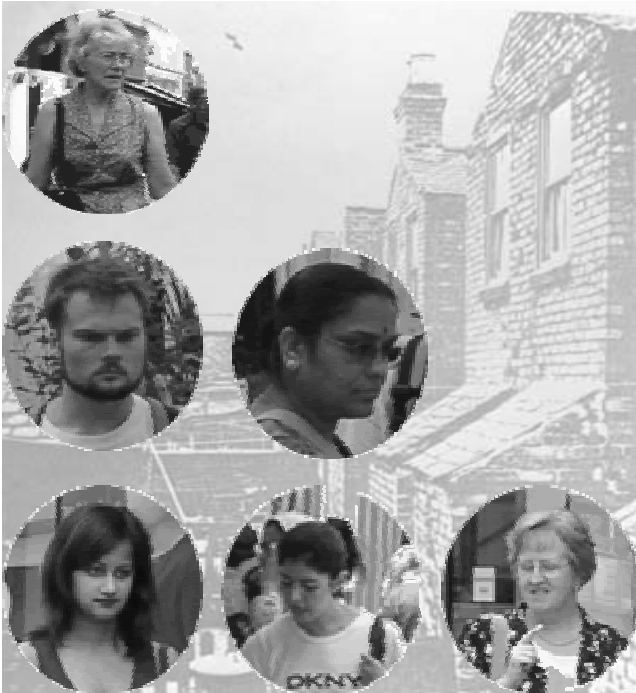


talking history

Oral history

What is it and how can it help adult learners?



History isn't just kings and queens—it's all of us.

'I was born in 1905...there was ten cottages. They were small...No taps inside, no toilet, out the back yard you'd just got a kind of sink and a bowl.'

'Toilets were outside, no inside toilets. You had to go up to the yard and sit in the toilet there and all share...'

What is oral history?

Oral history is spoken history. It enables us to learn about the past through the first hand accounts of the people who experienced it. Oral accounts can take different forms, from stories, songs and edited recordings, to interviewing people directly to find out about their experiences of a particular time or event.

The East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA) is a new project, based at the Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester. It aims to make oral history material easily accessible to individuals and groups across the region.

How can oral history involve and encourage adult learners?

Oral history is a good way of encouraging adults and families to get involved in learning. Children - and other members of the family - may simply enjoy hearing the 'stories' of older people, but other opportunities for learning together might include:

- ⇒ using the internet to find information on subjects that interest them
- ⇒ going to the library and choosing relevant books together
- ⇒ reading together
- ⇒ using old photographs as a starting point for telling or writing stories
- ⇒ visiting a museum to look at old toys, household objects, clothes...

For more ideas on family learning, see our information sheet 'Family Learning and Oral History', which is available free from the address below, or can be downloaded from our website.

The East Midlands Oral History Archive is currently in the process of setting up a pilot project with Tony Williams, Community Tutor at Shaftesbury Junior School, Leicester. The project aims to bring together adults from the local community with children in school to develop a website based on their memories of the West End of Leicester. EMOHA is also planning a pilot project with another Leicester community centre, in association with Leicester Adult Education College's *LiveAge* project, to record the memories of Asian elders in the city.

You can also find out more by visiting our website at: <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/>

Our free information sheets, covering subjects such as 'What is oral history?', 'How to conduct an oral history interview' and 'Oral history and the internet', are available from the address over, or can be downloaded from our website.

Find out more...

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Leicester
City Council

You can get in touch with the East Midlands Oral History Archive by contacting Sarah Ferrier, our Education Officer, on (0116) 252 5065 or by email at sjf17@le.ac.uk, or by writing to:

Sarah Ferrier, EMOHA
Centre for Urban History
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester, LE1 7RH

Alternatively you can visit our website where you can find downloadable infosheets, education bulletins and newsletter.



Sarah Ferrier, Education Officer at East Midlands Oral History Archive.



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How can we help?

It doesn't have to be family learning – oral history is a good way of encouraging people to return to learning by getting involved in finding out about the history of their local area, for example. If you would like to set up an oral history project at your centre, the East Midlands Oral History Archive can help by offering the following training and support:

- ⇒ An introduction to oral history - why use oral history?
- ⇒ Planning a project - how much money, time, effort will it take? What will the end product be, and how can it be achieved?
- ⇒ Recording equipment - which recorders, microphones to use, and how to use them.
- ⇒ How to interview people - interviewing issues and techniques explained.
- ⇒ Copyright and ethics - avoid pitfalls, and be legal and ethical.
- ⇒ Documenting the interview - preserving your work for posterity.

All training sessions can be tailored to meet the particular needs of your group or organisation. If all this sounds a bit daunting, why not contact us to find out about some of the talks that we can offer as a starting point?

Our Talking History for Adult Learners bulletin is published three times a year and will keep you informed of new interviews and resources, as well as conferences, training and support.

Useful books

The Community History section of Leicester City Libraries has published a number of books on the history of Leicester. *The Story of the Saff: A History of the Saffron Lane Estate, Leicester*, (1998), and *Walnut Street Past, Present and Future* (1995), by Colin Hyde are both excellent examples of the ways in which local groups can trace and document the stories surrounding their communities. Some other books which use oral history include:

Talking Shop: an Oral History of Retailing in the Harborough Area during

the 20th Century, by S. Mullins and D. Stockdale, (Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service, 1994)

Knitting Together: Memories of Leicestershire's Hosiery Industry, by Geoffrey Bowles and Siobhan Kirrane, (Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service, 1990)

Cap and Apron: an Oral History of Domestic Service in the Shires 1880-1950, by S. Mullins & G. Griffiths (Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service, 1986)