

A CENTURY OF HISTORY

*straight from
the horse's mouth*



**Adult Learners Edition
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My father of course, being old-fashioned as he was...no way could you go into a factory. He wouldn't allow that - you'd got to go into service.

Memory of being in domestic service from the first half of the 20th Century.

If anybody died, there was always a woman in the street that used to lay the people out and put them in the front rooms, and put blackboards up at the window so that you knew somebody was dead.

Memory of funeral arrangements from the first half of the 20th Century.

I wore a maid's uniform. I wore a blue cotton dress, black stockings and shoes, and a white mop cap, but I didn't do that for many months before there were a vacancy for a housemaid, so I went up into the house.

Memory of being in domestic service from the first half of the 20th Century.

Oral accounts are a unique and accessible source of historical evidence, which can enable learners of all ages to get involved in discovering what life was like in the recent past.

The East Midlands Oral History Archive will shortly be able to offer small loan collections for use by adult learner groups, initially comprising a selection of themed recordings from the Leicester Oral History Archive Compilation Series.

Titles include:

- Maids and Mistresses
- Courting Days
- All the Fun of the Fair
- The Three Rs
- Leicester Market
- Tree, Fruit and All (Convent Life)

Further details of these interviews can be found on the EMOHA catalogue, which is now on line at: <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue.html> Interviews may be borrowed for one month, and we hope to add other recordings to our loan scheme in the future.

To find out more about borrowing these recordings get in touch with Sarah Ferrier at the following address:

East Midlands Oral History Archive

Centre for Urban History
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester
LE1 7RH
(0116) 252 5065
emoha@le.ac.uk
<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha>

Trailblazers and innovators

Adult education groups in the Midlands have been using oral history in a variety of ways. We hope that these examples inspire you to experiment with oral history in your teaching and learning. Do not hesitate to contact the Archive for advice on how to get started with your own project and please let us know about any successes or challenges that you experience.

Across the Generations

Leamington Memories is an intergenerational project involving members of the Leamington Elders Action Project (LEAP), a retired people's computer group, and two schools in Leamington Spa. The project aims to collect and preserve the memories of older members of the local community, focusing on themes such as 'Wartime', 'Hobbies', and 'Leamingtonians of note'. The memories collected will also incorporate the views of people who have moved to Leamington Spa from other parts of the world. The project will also encourage children to think about what they would like the children of the future to know about the way in which they grew up. For further information, contact Elizabeth Mordecai on (1926) 882001.

Listening to the Past

Adult learners at Wreake Valley Community College, Syston, have been uncovering the history of Leicester with the help of tutor Heather Parkinson. The group, which meets every Tuesday, is exploring Leicester's past through a number of topics ranging from Work and Leisure, to Politics and Religion, and Health and Education. Oral history has played a valuable role in provoking discussion, and in enabling the participants to learn about a range of events in Leicestershire's more recent past. Heather Parkinson feels that listening to the memories of 'ordinary people' has enabled members of her group to identify with these recollections, and is hoping to follow this up by interviewing and recording members of the group themselves. For more information about this project, contact Heather Parkinson on (01509) 827 081.

Toys and Games

Steve Rooney of the School of Continuing Studies writes about his work with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) students at Leicester College.

We have recently been running an oral history project with the theme of Toys and Games. To students with often limited literacy skills, oral history provides a useful medium through which communication and research skills are promoted, developed and recognised. Students are able to take part in individual and group research tasks with minimum reference to text based sources. In terms of recording information, oral history also provides students with an interesting alternative to the written word.

Of particular value has been the EMOHA Toys and Games CD. This resource has enabled the students not only to develop their listening skills, but also to formulate questions, undertake their own research, and contribute to group discussions. These skills can be clearly accredited and referenced in line with the adult literacy core curricula. Given the success we've experienced this term, we are currently looking to expand the use of oral history with MLD students at the college.

WEA Courses

EMOHA has recently run a number of short courses at Vaughan College, Leicester, in partnership with the Leicester branch of the Workers Educational Association (WEA). These have drawn on recordings from the archive, alongside documentary and other sources, to explore a range of topics including childhood, work, leisure, local political movements, and the experience of the Second World War. The most recent course has examined changes in the nature of village life and the rural economy in Leicestershire & Rutland since 1900.

If you are interested in using oral accounts with a group, or in setting up an oral history project of your own, the East Midlands Oral History Archive can help. Our **free** information sheets can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha>, or can be obtained by contacting Sarah Ferrier, our Education Officer, on (0116) 252 5065, by email at sjf17@le.ac.uk, or by writing to EMOHA at the address overleaf. EMOHA also offers free training sessions and talks on a range of subjects. For further details, visit our website on: <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha>, or contact us at the address above.