

TALKING HISTORY

Adult Learners Edition: August 2003 (No 6)

that's entertainment!


What people got up to before they invented TV

"Entertainment was confined really to what you could do locally... the odd person had a piano. Although not many people played the piano, my mother did and she used to be on tap for anyone who'd got a piano and wanted a tune knocking out... she would get a singsong going."

LO/012/C12

"There was a fella called 'Birstall Jack' we used to call him, and he used to come round with a barrel organ, and as soon as we heard him there used to be thousands of kids come from everywhere and stand against him while he played his barrel organ... It was lovely when we could hear him."

LO/012/C12



These extracts are all taken from recordings held by the Archive. All archival recordings are available to the general public.

To make an appointment to listen to these recordings ring the Archive on 0116 252 5065.

"The Bank Holiday Monday, it was a ritual whereby all of the local children, or youths and girls, and families for that matter, we would walk from where we lived in New Road and we walk to Bradgate Park every Bank Holiday Monday... We'd take a jam sandwich and probably a lemonade bottle filled with cold tea, wrapped up in a sock. That would be our wonderful day out as far as we were concerned."

LO/012/C12

"There was five playhouses in Leicester – the Palace, the Opera House, the Theatre Royal, the Pavilion and the Empire... the Pavilion was at the top of Wilton Street... a little rowdy-dowdy, third-rate music hall... the Opera House in Silver Street, that was a very good place and I always remember going in later years to see musical comedy... there you would sit on a bare board, no seats... if it was a popular show, and there was people waiting outside, a man used to come along and say 'move up, please, move up' so you was gradually pushed into a little, small space."

LO/012/C12

Silver Surfers

During this year's Adult Learners' Week, which took place during Local History Month in May, the East Midlands Oral History Archive held a joint event with Age Concern Library in Leicester. This aimed to encourage older people to use the Internet, and to access its vast range of historical resources.

Project Manager Cynthia Brown, and Cataloguing Officer Chrissy Thornhill, offered free half hour 'tutorials' on the Library's computers, according to the particular interests of visitors. One delighted surfer was pleased to discover information on Ancient Egypt, and was amazed at the diversity of topics to be found. All those taking part in the event were given a pack with helpful tips and URL addresses for solo surfing later.

The verdict from visitors was very favourable, not only in terms of the resources they had discovered, but in feeling more confident about using the Internet for their future



exploration and enjoyment. The afternoon demonstrated that people of all ages can, with a little support

On the day favourite sites included

The National Archives' 1901 C e n s u s s i t e (www.census.pro.gov.uk/)

Leicestershire and Rutland M u s e u m s F o r u m (www.lrmf.org.uk).

EMOHA's own guide to local history (<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/village.html>).

The BBC history site (www.bbc.co.uk/history/index.shtml).

and direction, get to grips with what often seem like terrifying technology, and find a very useful resource to aid their research or inform their personal interests. EMOHA hopes to take part in another Surfers event in the future.

New Collections in the Archive

Recent additions to the Archive include the **Walnut Street Collection** and the **Leicester Oral History Archive Collection**. The Walnut Street Collection comprises 26 interviews conducted as part of a documentary arts project in 1994 and contains the recollections and experiences of people who lived in the Walnut Street and Bede Island area of Leicester, providing an

insight into their lives from the First World War through to the 1990's. Colin Hyde, EMOHA's Outreach Officer, conducted the majority of the interviews with Debbion Currie assisting for a publication entitled *Walnut Street: Past, Present and Future* produced in conjunction with Leicester City Council. A popular talk based on this is available as part of EMOHA's free programme

of talks.

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 including:

- ⇒ 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 now able to loan copies of these recordings to Adult Learner groups. To find out more about borrowing these interviews, contact Sarah Ferrier, Education Officer, at the address at the bottom of the page.

East Midlands Regional Adult Learners' Awards



During this year's Adult Learners' Week, tutor Chris Lewitt was presented with an East Midlands Regional Adult Learners' Award at County Hall, Matlock. Chris was nominated for the award by EMOHA's Project Manager, Cynthia Brown, in recognition of the successes he has achieved through returning to learn following the closure of his business due to recession. Chris began by enrolling in the 'Learning by Degrees' short course certificate at the University of Leicester, where Cynthia was his tutor, and then went on to complete a teaching certificate. He now works in the mental health sector, teaching basic skills, local history and sport. Chris is also co-founder of the Chrysalis Project, a group for people with mental health difficulties. He received a certificate, t-shirt and £200 vouchers towards learning resources or course fees, and also attended the national reception in London.