

talking history

**Primary bulletin
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EMOHA education officer Sarah Ferrier invites children to learn about toys and games in the past as part of Melton Museum's summer club.

Learning across the curriculum

Oral testimony is a unique source of historical evidence, and is ideal for supporting learning and teaching across the curriculum. For example, in History, oral accounts provide a contrast to traditional sources of evidence, and offer listeners the opportunity to understand events from a different perspective. In PSHE and Citizenship, oral history can be used to challenge stereotypes, to promote tolerance and respect for others, and to enhance a sense of identity and belonging.

All primary schools in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland should now have received a free copy of the East Midlands Oral History Archive's new resource *Toys and Games: an Oral History*, comprising an audio CD and support materials for use across a range of subjects. The accounts contained on the CD range from the early twentieth century to the present day, and cover a wealth of childhood memories, from the days when toys were a luxury, to crazes like Action Man, hula hoops and computer

games.

If your school has not yet received your copy, contact our Education Officer, Sarah Ferrier, 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.

Children in Year 5 at Shaftesbury Junior School have been able to test the value of oral history recently during the Literacy Hour, when they explored the differences between standard and non-standard English. The lesson started with the children listening to a range of memories from EMOHA's 'Toys and Games: an Oral History' CD. The teacher transcribed each extract, and the children were asked to identify any words or phrases that were non-standard English. The children were then asked to suggest what the standard English equivalent might be. The children clearly enjoyed listening to the different accounts, and were keen to discuss the



different possibilities, finding even the less obvious examples of non-standard English used by the various speakers.

One observant pupil actually identified the mysterious sounding 'Foggy 'Ounds' as the well known playground game 'Fox and Hounds'! Using oral history in this way gave a real life context to the learning and teaching objectives for the lesson, and brought the Literacy Hour to life in a way that would not have been possible if a written text had been its main focus.

Sarah Ferrier

A letter from America

During the summer, the East Midlands Oral History Archive received an email from a teacher in McHenry, Illinois in the USA. The teacher had found the Archive via our website [<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha> - in case you haven't seen it yet!] and asked for some help in setting up an oral history project in a local school.

Despite the fact that McHenry falls slightly outside of our Leicestershire and East Midlands remit, we gave as much help as we could on the condition that we got to hear about how the McHenry school project went. Below you can find a report by **Jan Hackman** which explains what they were trying to achieve, and perhaps could serve as a model for similar projects in Blighty!

"Elders in our community will help bridge the gap in the recording of the history of McHenry, Illinois. McHenry is a city of 21,000 people and has changed vastly since its beginnings in 1836. In its earliest days, the economy of McHenry was primarily agricultural. Changes have occurred not only in the economy, but also in the people who make McHenry their home.

The project that is being developed will be available on the World Wide Web in January. Middle school students will determine that accounts of history for McHenry are very few.



History in McHenry, Illinois

The town was established in the 1830s and named after General McHenry [whose statue is pictured left].

McHenry County owes its growth to the farmers who worked the fertile land. More recently factories and new industries have drawn residents to the area.

They will interview the elders in our community in order to create a more complete history that will be recorded in verse, prose, and a time line mural.

Teachers from art, history and writing will lead their classes in the discovery of previously unrecorded events. Students will be posting digital photographs, original art, interview questions, sketches for the time line mural, and written responses to the finished time line mural.

The elders of the community will join the middle school students and teachers in the first public exhibition of the time line mural. With this project, the middle school students will create their own history."

On the web

The East Midlands Oral History Archive's catalogue is now online, and currently includes details of 234 recordings. To view the catalogue, visit the EMOHA website on: <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue.html> for more information about the various collections we have in our archive.



Other useful resources

<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha> - the East Midlands Oral History site.

<http://www.doingoralhistory.org/> - an American site with tips on how to carry out an oral history project in the classroom.

<http://www.historychannel.com> - enter 'toys and games' into its search engine to find the history of popular toys, their inventors, an online quiz and timeline.

<http://www.educate.org.uk/index.shtml> - a really useful site, which supports the QCA Schemes of Work, containing lesson, plans, worksheets, interactive resources and assessments.

Find out more...

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

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You can also find out more by visiting our website at:

<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/>

Our website also offers links to other local and national education and history sites.



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