

talking history

Secondary edition
Number 3



This edition of *talking history* is produced specially for secondary teachers who are interested in using oral history to support their teaching.

Talking Hosiery

An on-line exhibition on the hosiery industry in Leicestershire

Would you like to find out about the hours people worked in Leicestershire's hosiery industry during the twentieth century? Or hear about the 'Bedaux strike' at the Wolsey factory, or a hosiery worker's first day at work? If so, you should visit the East Midland Oral History Archive's on-line exhibition at <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/resources/hosiery/>.

The exhibition recalls the time when hosiery made Leicester a boom city, and attracted workers from across the country

to move to the county. Using oral history extracts and photos from the archive, the exhibition offers an insight into the working conditions and lives of those who worked in "the Hosiery". Hear how to "link a toe", and learn about the smell of a hosiery factory first hand, from those who actually worked in the industry.

See over for suggestions on how to use the hosiery exhibition to teach citizenship.

Toys and Games An Oral History

The East Midlands Oral History Archive is pleased to announce the launch of its new resource 'Toys and Games: an Oral History'. The resource comprises a CD of edited extracts ranging from the early twentieth century to the present day, and covers a wealth of childhood memories, including tales of mischief and adventurous play, from the days when toys were a luxury, to crazes like Action Man, hula hoops and computer games. Listeners will be able to identify with many aspects of these, and may be surprised to find that despite apparent changes in childhood since the early twentieth century, they also share many of the speakers' experiences. A pack to accompany the CD for Key Stage 1 & 2 teachers is also available. If you would like copy of 'Toys and Games: an Oral History' (priced at £7 + £1 postage), please contact the East Midlands Oral History Archive on (0116) 252 5065.



Citizenship websites

www.casbah.ac.uk/blackandasian.html - links to Black and Asian websites

www.mountainvoices.org/ - a site containing interviews with over 300 people who live in mountain and highland regions round the world. Their testimonies offer a personal perspective on change and development.

www.vhf.org/index.htm - the website of the Shoah Foundation, which has collected more than 50,000 eyewitness testimonies of Holocaust survivors and witnesses, in 57 countries and 32 languages, and is committed to ensuring the effective educational use of its archive worldwide.

www.muscade.co.uk/citfou/index.php4 - the Citizenship Foundations' website.

www.commonwealth.org.uk/education/ - contains an Internet project on citizenship.

www.europa.eu.int/ - the European Union on line.

www.timeforcitizenship.com/ - Downloadable lessons and resources for students.

Oral History and Citizenship

Oral accounts can be used to enhance students' understanding of a wide range of issues, from the importance of respecting the differences between people, to understanding aspects of local democracy, and the ways in which individuals and groups can effect change. Oral history can also be used to enhance a sense of identity and belonging, and to promote communication skills.

Society? As part of this, students are encouraged to consider their own identities and the characteristics of their local communities. Through conducting interviews of their own, or listening to recordings, students can explore a wide range of issues, such as 'What is the composition of the local community?', 'Have people settled here from other places? If so, why?', and 'What events and festivals are celebrated locally?'.

Oral history is an ideal resource for supporting the learning and teaching of the QCA Unit 4, *Britain: a Diverse*

The extracts below offer some ideas on how to use oral to illustrate a variety of different topics.

Movement and migration

I left Wales in 1923. My brother couldn't get a job and I, I was working in a shop at 3/- (15p) a week. My aunties lived here, and they came to live in Leicester in 1913 because of the depression - there was no work in Wales then. And one of my aunties made a friend of a Leicester girl, and she came to Leicester for a holiday and she liked Leicester so much she got a job, there was plenty of work in Leicester at the time. So they came to Leicester.

Oral accounts can also give an insight into how people can influence change at a local level: (Quotes from the Bedaux strike)

'In 1928, when I first started, it was eight until six and Saturday morning, for 10/- (50p) a week. And you had no breaks or nothing, you just had to take a flask and drink it at your machine or whatever you were doing, you know, your cup. But later on as things progressed and the unions became involved, then we got tea breaks and we also got, we had holidays with no pay whatsoever in those days.' *A factory worker remembers the long hours worked, before the intervention of the unions.*

'So of course it got to a breaking point, and, er, we had a meeting and then we, we decided it was no-go and we came out on strike...We used to go on picket - there was some girls went in to work but they went in by coach and we used to shout at them, but that was all there was...After the trauma of the seven week strike it was agreed that we was re-timed, and this is what it was - re-timing of the job. Then they was more moderate, they reasoned things out more. From that day on I never looked back.' *A factory worker who took part in the Bedaux strike.*

In the extracts above factory workers remember Leicestershire's hosiery industry before the war, including the Bedaux strike at the Wolsey factory, which lasted for 8 weeks from December 1931 to February 1932. You can find audio extracts and transcriptions about this subject at <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/resources/hosiery/>.

• Find out more...



Leicester City Council

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/>



University of Leicester



Heritage Lottery Fund



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