

Working Lives

*Memories of work and industry in Nuneaton and Bedworth
A 20th Century Oral History*

kept going all day long.....got the horse's foot on the scales.....enjoyed it nevertheless.....it
en 300 and 400.....lathe doing the tailfins.....bought the nuts and bolts.....buy my first lot
eks.....hard on women's hands.....stand and stare.....smell
.grow up well.....so.....cries.....all gone now.....
s with twine.....ams, it
ired.....we'd.....I was
y by hand.....al....2000
n.....used to us.....long....
ey pots.....magi.....lathe
...packets of sal.....women's
h my life.....bike.....the nit and.....ere.....grow up wen.....so many
avy jobs.....going round at a h.....nds with twine.....it were filthy,
.....different number of shutt.....ired.....we'd work together.....
only be shillings.....fourteen when I started.....was done mostly by hand.....overlooking the
d.....dangerous job.....clipped you were gone.....made for nitmen.....used to use oil lamps



Teaching and Learning Resource

**A Project Funded by Warwickshire County Council's Nuneaton and Bedworth Area
Committee's Well Being Fund**

2009

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*Working for
Warwickshire*

Working Lives Oral History Education Resource for Schools



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The Working Lives website address is www.warwickshire.gov.uk/workinglives

On the website you will find more information about this project including-

- 300 photographs
- 54 Oral history recordings (download and listen to on your computer or read the summaries on the website)
- Interactive map
- Further details about the project
- Feedback opportunity

A book has been published as part of the project called "Memories of Work and Industry in Nuneaton and Bedworth: A 20th century oral history" by Alison Clague

For more information please contact Nuneaton Library on 02476 384027 and mention 'Working Lives'

This resource can be freely downloaded for use in schools, for private research and study only. However if you wish to use the material in any other way please contact Nuneaton Library
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Introduction

Nuneaton and Bedworth has undergone major changes in the past 50 years and it occurred to me, whilst listening to conversations in a local pub, that a lot of the local industrial history could be lost if we didn't do something about it before people moved on to the big work places in the sky.

Listening to these stories made me realise that the best way to record this history was to get people to relate their stories about their working lives onto a tape recorder. I am very grateful that so many came forward to tell their story, and provide graphic details about the work they did, and others who supported the project with photographs and other information.

I would like to thank the Councillors of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee of Warwickshire County Council, for agreeing to supply the funding for this project, and also the Officers of that Committee for steering it through the initial stages.

Alison Clague was employed to develop the project and she embraced it with tremendous enthusiasm, and went to lengths over and above the call of duty to make it a success.

Unfortunately Alison had to leave before the project was completed, however we have been lucky enough to have Louise Essex to see the project through to completion with equal dedication.

This educational resource will enable children to gain a sense of history, and hopefully a sense of pride, in the place they live, particularly as they can hear the words directly from those that did the jobs.

The real stars are those extraordinary people that took part in this project and gave it a real purpose.

Thank you to everyone involved.

*Barry Longden
Chair
Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee*

July 2008

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Oral History

What is oral history? Oral history is spoken history and provides firsthand accounts of people's experiences. It is important because it is the living history of people's life experience. Oral history preserves everyone's unique life experiences for the future and allows voices that would otherwise go unrecognised to be heard. Because oral history is based on people's memories it needs to be checked against other evidence for accuracy. These can be other people's accounts of the same event, newspaper reports, maps and photographs, film and other archive material. These records are called Primary Sources and the information contained in them are used to produce Secondary Sources which include books and pamphlets.

Oral history gives children an opportunity to learn about the past from first hand accounts using recorded interviews and other evidence. It enables young people to explore their own community and its past and to interact with older people. Children can make their own oral history records by interviewing family or community members about their lives and experiences.

The Working Lives Archive contains over fifty oral histories of people who lived and worked in Nuneaton and Bedworth. It is a collection of memories of work and industry in the area. In the past fifty years most of the area's industries have been lost and in many cases the factories and work places have disappeared to be replaced by new housing, industrial estates or country parks. However there is evidence of the past all around us, in buildings, libraries, archives, street names, museums and people's memories. This project aims to engage young people in an investigation of their local area's social and industrial history. The activities set out in this pack are intended to support the History; "What was it like to live here in the past" and Literacy curriculum.

The project provides source material based on:

- Oral histories from the Working Lives collection
- Photographs and other images of industry and work in Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Secondary sources based on books and journals
- Maps of the area

The activities can be used to study individual industries and work that is relevant to a local study for History or Literacy. Involving children in listening to the Working Lives archive and making their own oral histories fulfils many of the Literacy framework specifications.

Further information on oral history is available from:

East Midlands Oral History Archive at www.le.ac.uk/emoha

Oral History Society at www.ohs.org.uk

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