

Sixty years on... bombs and bon bons

December 22 to 24, 2000 sees the 60th anniversary of the Blitz. According to the Daily Dispatch, on the two main nights of the bombing it is estimated that a huge arsenal of 276 high explosive bombs and nearly 10,000 incendiaries fell within the boundaries of the city. More than 8,000 houses were destroyed or damaged in some way. This barrage caused one major blaze, 31 major fires and 400 large, medium and minor fires, in addition to hundreds of house fires which were extinguished by police, wardens, and residents. Sadly, over the three nights 197 civilians were killed, with 177 seriously wounded, and 648 slightly wounded. In addition 18 members of police, fire and Civil Defence services lost their lives, and 85 were injured.

We interviewed Mrs Barbara Cureton (nee Williams) whose parents owned a sweet and ice-cream shop on Regent Road, then one on Broad Street. As a young girl she recalled the Christmas Blitz vividly:

"...before Christmas Eve they dropped a string of incendiaries. We had one through our house and fortunately it ignited and came halfway through the ceiling and then went out. And we had a time bomb down the side of the house. My father decided that was it and the next night we were going to run away. So we piled everybody into the car, with a leg of lamb, an eiderdown, a loaf of bread, and a bread knife. When you think about it now it's ridiculous. We went along Broad Street and the cars were queuing up to get out because we were all terrified that we were going to be bombed again. People were jumping on the running board of the cars shouting, 'Take me with you.' Well you couldn't - we were jam

packed in the car. But when we came back the next morning they had bombed all round Regent Road near the meat market, they'd bombed everywhere and there were huge craters and all the tram wires were hanging down, and nearly every shop window on Regent Road and Broad Street was shattered."



Bomb damaged shops on Eccles Old Road (Salford Local History Library)

She told us many other stories related to the family sweet shop and we thought this little light-hearted extract

from the recording would balance her more sombre recollections of the war years.

"We were always in the shops, my sister and I, and I'm afraid I used to play truant from school quite a lot. I was very into the business. We used to have horse and carts coming down Regent Road, down to the market and carting stuff all over the place, and this particular horse used to go past our shop on the opposite side (that's away from Manchester) no problem whatsoever. But the moment he was coming back, as soon as he got to our shop, he put his brakes on and that was it! His driver couldn't get that horse passes our shop. He had to come in and buy him a quarter of nut toffee, and he'd take his bit out and feed him this nut toffee."

"And I can remember to this day how he used to slaver eating this toffee. I used to dash out as well with a piece of toffee for him so he used to get extra. And many's the time I'd jump up and try and get my arms round its neck - I was very tiny - and the driver used to pick me up and I used to hang on the horse's neck with my legs at the shafts and he'd walk off down the road with me hanging on."

Slide Away: The Ted Gray Slide Archive



Ted with LifeTimes officers Ann Monaghan and Ken Craven at the launch of his latest book "Salford Quays - The Story of the Manchester Docks" at the Tourist Information Centre - April 2000. (Photo by Roy Mewla)



An unusual image from Ted's archive. Not Norfolk or Somerset but farmer Charlie Cawthorne at Green's Farm Clifton.

Local historian and writer, Ted Gray, has generously donated his collection of over 2000 slides of the Salford area to the **LifeTimes** project. Many of these are copies of his extensive postcard collection, which began with his interest in tramways 50 years ago – when you could buy them for sixpence each! Over the last 20 years Ted has searched out any postcards relating to the Salford area.

Postcards started to become popular in the latter years of the 19th century, most of Ted's collection date from the "golden age" ranging from around 1900 to 1918. Large companies like Valentines of Dundee photographed the obvious landmarks, whilst the many smaller independents photographed local scenes. Charles Downs produced many cards of the Docks area whilst Grundys of Eccles and Bowdens of Winton covered the Worsley,

Swinton, and Eccles districts. Ted remarked, "I often wonder whatever happened to all those original negatives. Grundys were very prolific, continuing production into the 1920s."

Ted augmented his collection by taking his own photographs in the 1950s of trolley buses, followed latterly with scenes of a disappearing Salford. Consequently the Ted Gray Archive contains images from the 1880s through to the 1990s and covers the whole of the city - from Irlam to Broughton and Little Hulton to Ordsall. Now comes the mammoth, but enjoyable, task of cataloguing them!

Ted has now left Salford and settled in the Isle of Man. We at **LifeTimes** are grateful to him for this generous donation and wish him and his wife, Kath, much happiness for the future.

Great Aunt Agnes's Suitcase

For **LifeTimes** we are compiling an oral history archive, recording reminiscences of life in Salford. As part of this project our Outreach Officer, Ann Monaghan, has been visiting groups throughout the city with her Great Aunt's suitcase.

It may look battered and bruised, but, as well as some of Agnes's belongings, the case contains items from the museum collection and objects donated to **LifeTimes** - all designed to jog memories of times past.



If you would like more information, or want to book one of these informal reminiscence sessions for your group, contact Ann at the **LifeTimes** office on 0161 736 1594.

Ladies from the Tuesday Circle at Worsley Methodist Chapel examine some of the items from Great Aunt Agnes's suitcase.

For Our Younger Readers... Those Were the Days! @ Salford Museums

Did your dad dance to disco? Did you grandma groove to Gary Glitter? Did your mum dance to Mott the Hoople? Did your granddad boogie to the sound of the Beatles?

We are asking for your help to recreate the era of flares and long hair. If any of your relatives grew up in the 60s or 70s, and bore you with moans of, "it wasn't like that in my day – we didn't have time for Playstations!" then it's time for you to get your own back! We need 7–14 year olds to find out about life in the 60s and 70s by interviewing their relatives. Dig out the old family album, kipper ties, micro skirts or anything else they've kept from their younger years!

Ask them what they watched on their black and white goggle box, what they grooved to at the dance halls and just what did they do before Nintendo? You might just be surprised by some of their answers...

In February 2001 you can take part in some video workshops to get your relatives on film! So, to totally embarrass your relatives, or for more information, give Jo Clarke a ring at Salford Museum and Art Gallery on 0161 736 2649, quick before their memory goes!



A group of youngsters in Robertson Street, Salford 5 - 1977
(Salford Local History Library)

Museum Fever at Salford Museum and Art Gallery!

As mentioned in our last issue, **LifeTimes** are currently involved in a new project with young people – group member, Shamus Smyth, sent us this report:

The Museum Fever Group is an initiative between Salford Foyer and SMAG so that young people can give their opinion on what they think of museums.

The group has been created to establish better links between young people and museums and art galleries. We hope to achieve this by getting actively involved with the museum and by visiting other galleries and giving our opinions about them and their displays. Then, by discussing the good and bad points, we intend to devise ways in which we think that they could improve and

become more appealing to young people in general.

At the moment we are designing a web site with images and writing from the group's activities. When it is up and running we hope to use the site to make contact with others and it will also let us voice our opinion about museums and galleries to anyone and everyone who visits the site.

Do you remember Salford Royal?

If you have any memories related to Salford Royal Hospital, then Margaret Davies, working as a **LifeTimes** volunteer, is interested in hearing from you.

As part of the Chapel Street Regeneration Scheme, the hospital is now being developed into modern apartments, and Margaret, a former nurse at the hospital, is collecting memories, photographs and information about it and recording the role the hospital had in the local community.

If you would like to help capture the story of Salford Royal and have information to contribute please contact Margaret on 0161 748 3784.

Memories of Swinton District?

The **LifeTimes** project needs stories about your childhood, schooldays, working lives and leisure pursuits in and around Swinton, Pendlebury and Clifton. These will be recorded and used in future displays, education, exhibitions, website, etc to provide a cameo of life in our times and to show our children and future generations some of the changes

which have taken place, while these are still reasonably fresh in our minds.

If you have any memories, photographs which we can copy, or artefacts, or if you are interested in helping us to record these please contact our **LifeTimes** volunteers: John Cook 0161 736 6191 or Brian Lee 0161 736 4270.

Salford on the Box

It seems Salford is never off the box nowadays. In the summer of 2000 the BBC filmed the *Antiques Roadshow* at the University of Salford. And came back for more, when the TV cameras rolled again in October to film *Songs of Praise* with the

Salford Choral Society, the Cathedral Choir, and the University Big Band. At the time of going to press the programme is scheduled to be transmitted on Sunday 14 January 2001. Make a note on your new (Salford) calendar but check the listings nearer the time.

Seedley and Langworthy

You may be interested to know that a book about Seedley and Langworthy has just been published.

Called 'Olden Days - Golden Days, Memories of Seedley and

Langworthy', it combines old photographs with reminiscences of life in the area. It will be available from 16th December, priced £2, from the S.A.L.I Shop, 150, Langworthy Road, Salford. Tel: 0161 737 9918.

Changing Places

The last **LifeTimes** workshop for this year is on Saturday 2 December 2000 and the theme is 'Changing Communities'. This time we will meet at The Lowry where there is the opportunity to see Shirley Baker's fantastic exhibition - 'Salford Revisited'. Focusing on the changing landscape of Salford in living memory, we are asking you to bring thoughts, memories and photographs of

places you think have significantly changed in Salford in your living memory - this could be Broughton, Little Hulton, Seedley and Langworthy or the Quays itself.

If you need transport to The Lowry, we can arrange a minibus from Salford Museum and Art Gallery to the Quays. Please let us know before Monday 27 November 2000 so that transport can be booked.

LifeTimes

The **LifeTimes** project will tell the story of the whole of The City of Salford...

Adelphi
Barton
Blackfriars
Boothstown
Brindleheath
Cadishead
Charlestown
Claremont
Clifton
Eccles
Ellenbrook
Greengate
Higher Broughton
Hope
Irlam
Irlams o'th' Height
Islington
Kersal
Langworthy
Little Hulton
Lower Broughton
Moorside
Monton
Ordsall
Paddington
Patricroft
Peel Green
Pendlebury
Pendleton
Roe Green
Seedley
Swinton
Trinity
Walkden
Wardley
Weaste
Winton
Worsley

If we have missed your community please let us know!

More missing districts...

Thanks to Mr & Mrs Cutts for pointing out that Hope and Paddington were missing from our list of Salford districts. Also to Mrs Dowd - Moorside; Mr Tyldesley - Roe Green; Mr Bullock - Islington and Mrs Davies - Greengate.

Salford City of Education & Leisure