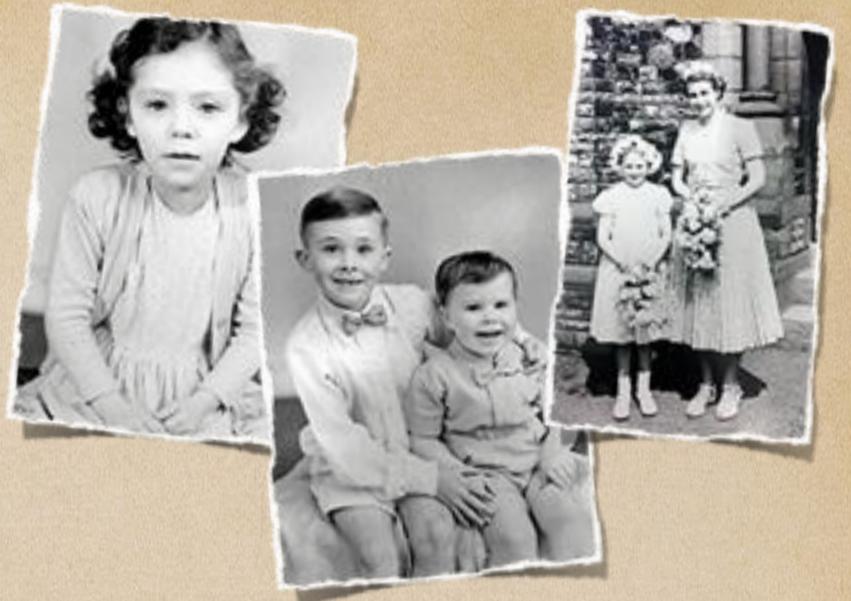
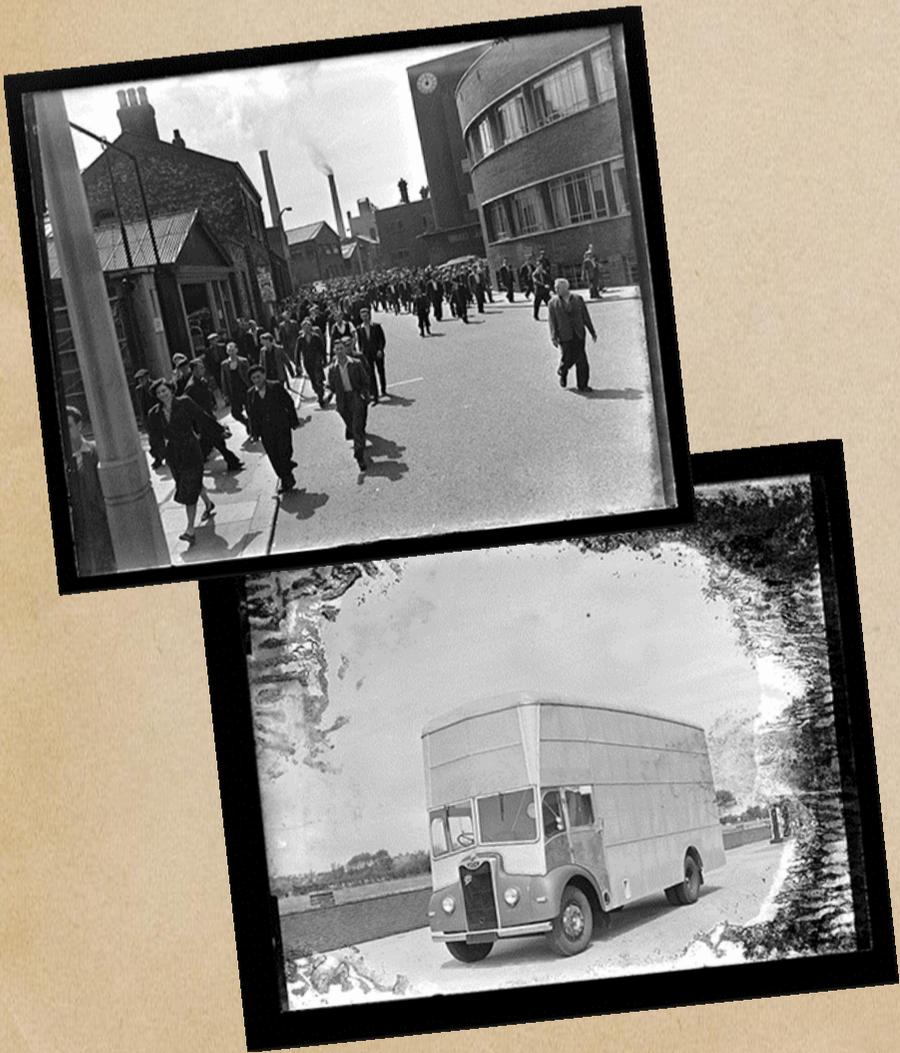
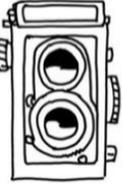


Teachers' Toolkit



St Helens in the 1950s: Local History Resource Pack



ST HELENS
THROUGH THE LENS 
Exploring the George Street Photography collection

 **LOTTERY FUNDED**  **St. Helens Council**  **CULTURAL HUBS**

Introduction

This pack has been developed to introduce using local heritage to teach engaging and insightful history to your students. The pack can be downloaded and used on its own or following a visit to the Local History & Archive Library in St Helens Central Library.

This toolkit includes:

Classroom activity 1: Letter from the Past

Classroom activity 2: St Helens Past, Present and Future

The activities will contribute to statutory expectations – knowledge and understanding of the world through historical, geographical and social exploration. The activities are cross-curricular, including elements of History, Geography, English and Art and are ideal for Key Stage 2, however can be adapted to suit different stages as appropriate.



The Collection

This resource pack uses images from the 'Geoff Williams Photography Collection'. This collection includes over 3500 glass photographic negatives that were discovered in a pet shop in 1984 and taken to St Helens Central Library to be looked after.



Before it was a pet shop, 16 George Street was a photography studio. Between about 1950-1970, the shop was called 'Central Studios' and was run by a professional photographer called Geoff Williams.

Geoff Williams took lots of photographs, including images of weddings, portraits and passport photographs, sporting events, hospitals, factories, buildings, community celebrations and more.

Activity 1: Letter from the Past

Using the 'Family Life in the 1950s' sheet (page 5), describe to the class what someone their age may have experienced growing up in St Helens 60 years ago.

Discuss with the class how methods of communication have changed; explain that there were no mobile phones or internet, and a lot of people didn't even have a house phone. Ask the class to suggest ways they think people would communicate.

Give each table a copy of Ronald's letter (page 6) and photographs (page 7 & 8). Read out the letter from Ronald to the class.

What do we know about Ronald....? How is his life different to yours....? How is his life the same as yours.....?



Give each child a copy of the letter writing template (page 9) and tips for writing letters (page 10).

Direct the class to either write a reply to Ronald, or to write a letter to a class 60 years in the future to tell them about life growing up in St Helens today.

What do you enjoy about school...? What are your hobbies...? Who is in your family...? Do you have any pets...? What is your favourite food...? What would you like to be when you grow up...?

Children can also include a drawing to go with their letter.

Family Life in the 1950s

Only 33% of households had a washing machine. Most people were still doing their washing by hand.

Only 15% had a fridge and freezers were scarcely heard of. Most food shopping in the 1950s was done every day and from local shops.

In the 1950s although some women worked, it was more common for married women to stay home to look after children and do housework.

Only 10% of the population had a telephone.

People listened to the radio or gramophone records.

By 1953, 60% of homes had a television. The programs were shown in black and white. A second TV channel was added in 1955.

Children spent a lot of time playing with other children outdoors. Families enjoyed playing board games such as Monopoly, Ludo, and Snakes and Ladders.

There were over 10 cinemas in St Helens in the 1950s, going to the cinema was very popular and was a big treat.

There was a craze for yo-yos, 3D-spectacles, I-Spy books and hula hoops in the late 1950s.

Green End Lane
Marshalls Cross
St Helens

30th July 1956

Dear class,

My name is Ronald, I am 9 years old and I was born in St Helens in 1947.

In this letter I will tell you what my life is like in St Helens in the 1950s.

I have a younger brother Robert, who is three and an older sister Margaret, who is twelve. My father works at the Pilkington factory and my mother looks after our house.

I go to Robins Lane Junior School and my favourite subject is maths, when I grow up I would like to be a maths teacher. My best friend is called John, we are both in the cub scouts and like to play football after school.

My sister Margaret was in the May Day parade this year. She got to wear a crown and she smiled the whole time. Afterwards my grandparents and cousins came round for tea and we had a game of Monopoly.

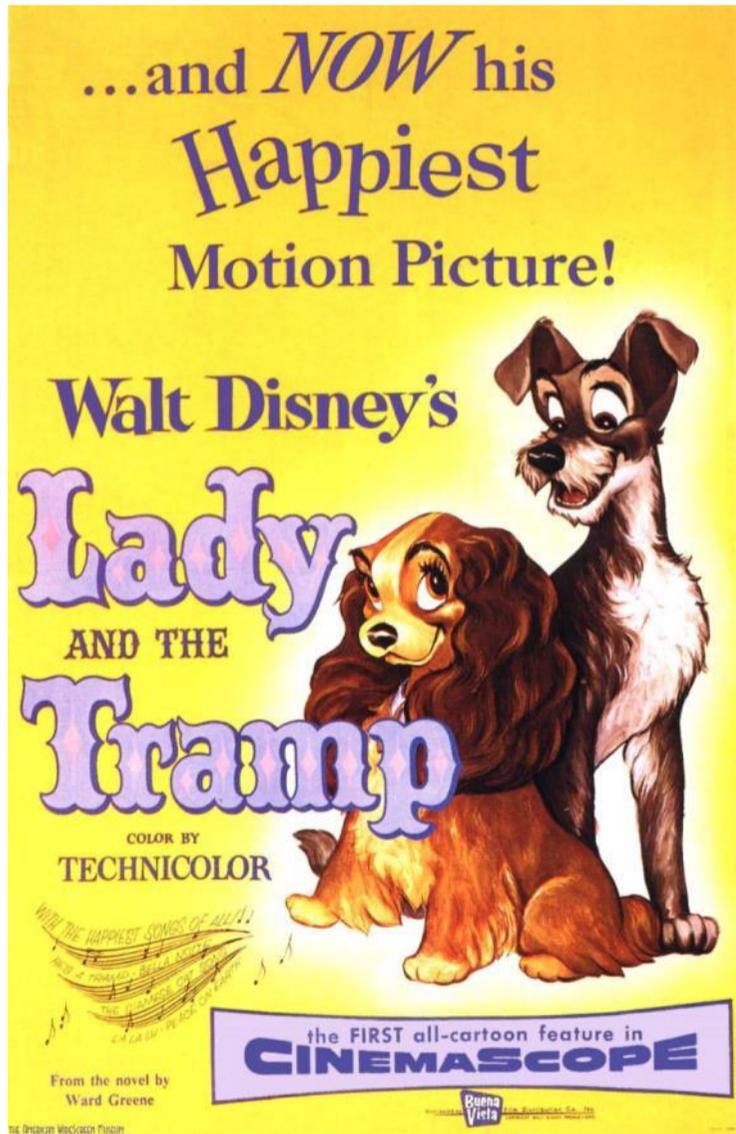
Do you have a television set at home? We don't have one but next week for a treat my Dad will be taking us to the Empire Cinema in St Helens to see the new Walt Disney picture 'The Lady and The Tramp'. I am really looking forward to it!

I hope you enjoyed reading my letter,

Yours Sincerely

Ronald Burns





Tips for writing letters

Include your address in the top right hand corner. This is to so people know where to send a reply.

Don't forget to write the date!

Start the letter with 'Dear (name),' or another type of greeting.

In the first paragraph tell the person why you are writing the letter.

What do you want to say? Make some notes on a separate sheet of paper first to make sure you do not forget anything.

Don't forget to use capital letters at the start and punctuation marks at the end of each sentence.

Lay out your letter using paragraphs. This makes it easier to read.

Always use your best and clearest handwriting so that the person receiving the letter can read it easily.

End your letter with 'Yours sincerely' or 'Best wishes'

Sign your name so the person knows who the letter is from!

Activity 2: St Helens Past, Present and Future

The class is split into small groups, each is given copies of the images showing St Helens 'past and present' (page 12-15).

The groups are asked to 'spot the difference', examine the images from the 1950s and the images from today and make a list of what they can see that has changed and what has stayed the same.

What do you notice about...? How does this compare to...? What is different about this building...? Why do you think it is different...?



After feeding back their discoveries, the groups are then given large pieces of paper. The class is asked to imagine what St Helens will look like in the year 2077 and create a street scene 60 years in the future.

What will the buildings look like....? What will the shops sell....?
How will we travel.....?

The groups then present their ideas for the future to the rest of the class.









Find out more

To explore St Helens history further, book a class visit to St Helens Local History & Archive Library
www.sthelens.gov.uk/libraries/schools-library-service or email:
lha@sthelens.gov.uk

St Helens Through The Lens – exploring the Geoff Williams Photography Collection. Project website:
www.sthelenslens.wordpress.com

St Helens Local History & Archive Library online catalogue:
www.sthelens.gov.uk/history



This pack was created in collaboration with Sharon Mutch as part of the 'St Helens Through The Lens' project 2016-17, thanks to support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.