



## Newsletter • Issue 4 • July 2024

A project capturing Newham elders' stories from their youth, of transport, travel & food to share with the next generation.

Welcome to the 4th issue of the Charabancs and Cadillacs Project newsletter packed full of information on the progress we have made thus far in delivering our Heritage Lottery Funded Project.

### Volunteer Profile - Henry Wilson



**Can you tell us why you are interested in our project?**

"I have always been very interested in history and this

includes my own family history. This has naturally lead on to my looking at the local history of Newham. A project such as Charabancs & Cadillacs really engages my enthusiasm and commitment to learn more about the experiences of others from the same area."

**What do you hope to get out of your role within Charabancs & Cadillacs?**

"I hope this exciting role within the project will provide me, and those who contribute, with an

opportunity to learn, develop and share experiences from different periods and places in time."

**Can you give us some details about any similar previous projects you've been involved in?**

"I have been involved in other oral history projects with my previous company creating a wealth of data for their museum and the connected history programme. I have an interest in & hold memberships with the Imperial War Museum and the National Army Museum."

### Memorabilia Search – The Clippy Machine

Many of you may remember the days when we still had conductors (or clippys, as they were known) on the buses. We've recently been very lucky to have received a donation of an original clippy's machine, complete with carrying case.

This machine model type is a Gibson A14 which was manufactured by a company called Ticket Equipment Ltd, based in Tring, Hertfordshire.

It's a heavy old bit of kit, which usually came with a strap, so the



conductor could hang it around his neck whilst he was patrolling the aisles of the upper & lower decks of his bus.

The problem is the strap from our machine is missing. So Charabancs & Cadillacs would like to put out an appeal to our readers to find us a strap that would complete this fabulous piece of transport memorabilia.

If you are able to help us with our search, or have any other items of transport & travel memorabilia you think we'd like to take on board (or just photograph if you do not wish to part with it) please contact Alison Skeat on 07523 696273 or Jackie Mattock on 07719 964166.

## Reminiscence Session – Beddals Farm Court

In March this year we hosted a Reminiscence Session for the residents of Beddals Farm Sheltered Accommodation in Beckton, run by L&Q Housing. We introduced the group to the Charabancs & Cadillacs project and what we would be doing in the session.

Mark Gorman, our local historian, gave a talk about transport in



Newham which sparked off lots of conversations in the group. One resident used to be a bus driver

and shared his experiences on the buses and his route including driving the old Routemaster.

We passed round our fancy, flowery '50s swimming hat full of questions which helped residents recall old holidays and journeys from their past. At the end of the session our volunteers Yasmin, Popa and Mark were able to record some of the residents stories.

## Our day trip to Ongar Railway – Beddals Farm Court

Following on from our Reminiscence session at Beddals Farm we treated the residents to a day trip out to the Epping Ongar Railway, taking advantage of their Red Rover tour.



This heritage railway is completely run by volunteers, who picked us up from Epping station in an old Red double decker bus. Although it was a little bit loud & rattly everyone agreed that it made them feel quite happy to be travelling how they used to when they were young.

We took lots of photos as we bounced along the country lanes & got lots of waves from passers by as we passed through Epping high street towards North Weald station. On our arrival we hopped off the bus & boarded a steam train waiting for us in the station. Everyone was given a special ticket which was duly clipped by the conductor on our return journey.

The track runs between what used to be the last two stops on the Central Line, North Weald & then Ongar. This now acts as a shuttle run for the steam trains to trundle back & forth. When we alighted at Ongar we just about enough time for a cuppa & a Kitkat in the garden at the end of the track, before boarding the train again back to North Weald.



The ticket office & buildings at the station have all been restored to their former glory & house a gift shop & tiny museum. There is also a café in a marquee on the platform where we treated the group to bacon & sausage rolls & hot pasties with yet more cups of tea.

We were then escorted back on our lovely old Red Routemaster to pick our minibus up at Epping Station. It was great to see how these old modes of transport & a trip out to a spot in the countryside seemed to make the whole group smile.

## Our day trip to Southend – Stephens Court

Throughout the Reminiscence session we ran in April with the residents of Stephens Court in Canning Town, when holidays & day trips were discussed, Southend-on-Sea was remembered very fondly by many of our participants. On the strength of this we invited the group to be chauffeured on one of our Community Transport minibuses down to the seaside.

We took a little wander around the gift shop on the mile long pier. Some bought souvenirs, & we even found some books full of recipes from war times, for boat dwellers & for picnic goers. These will be useful for further Reminiscence sessions.

After a hearty fish & chip lunch together, we found a great stand with hot doughnuts & so many

varieties of ice-cream, that it would be rude to not try one.

Many of the group commented that they really enjoyed their day out with us. Some of the group said coming out of London for a change of scene had lifted their mood. Others mentioned that visiting Southend brought back many happy memories from their youth.

## Visiting maker Daniel Higgins for a travel trunk update

All the elements we're pulling together within the Charabancs & Cadillacs project, i.e. our travel quilt, oral history recordings & our memorabilia will culminate in an exhibit that will be toured around Newham schools & libraries. All these details will be housed in a huge copy of an old-fashioned travel trunk.

The designer & maker of the travel trunk is Daniel Higgins, who is based at The Blackhorse Workshops in Walthamstow. We visited him in June for an update on how the trunk construction is coming along.

At this point Daniel has completed the shell of our trunk. To round off the trunk's edges he's laminated & bent thin sheets of wood. Canvas will be adhered to the shell, then oiled oak rubbing attached to prevent the canvas from touching the ground & scuffing.



Daniel is currently experimenting with canvas samples, glue, wood & lacquer to get the correct effect. He's endeavouring to implement as many traditional methods as is possible & is nodding toward

sustainability by sourcing wood from London Plane & Oak trees that have actually fallen in the London area. He's also using lacewood, which is a really decorative type of wood, for the pigeon-hole draws for housing memorabilia.

Daniel is a man of many skills. As well as hand-cutting, stitching & staining leather handles for the trunk's top & side he has created two braised copper latches, incorporating decorative motives connected to transport, travel & day trips.

The latest video of the building of our travel trunk can be seen on our Charabancs & Cadillacs Facebook page. We hope you enjoy it.

We'll keep you up to date with Daniel's progress in our next newsletter.

## We still need you! – An appeal for project participants

One of the main elements of the Charabancs & Cadillacs project is recording oral histories. We know there are many current & former Newham residents over 60 that could retell all sorts of stories to us of their memories growing up.

The focus of our project is travel & transport, so we're looking for stories about the following:

- Day trips out with the family
- Beans to the seaside

- Your adventures on a bus, train, ship or in a car
  - Building a go-kart, or racing around on your bike or skates
  - Life as a Bus or Train driver, or working on the Docks
  - Your first trip on a plane or ship
- You, or your chatty auntie with interesting stories, or Dad who has lots of memories to share is who we're looking to interview and record.

All recordings can remain anonymous if you're shy, & we promise our volunteers will look after you. If need be, we can come to you. If you want to get on board please contact Alison Skeat on 07523 696273 or Jackie Mattock on 07719 964166.



### CONTACT DETAILS

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Why not join us to celebrate

## *Newham Heritage*

### **Are you 60+ and a Newham resident?**

Join us at the Big Picnic, a unique fun day out for our Seniors exploring memories of by-gone picnics and your travel and transport memories.

Have a ride in a vintage bus, play musical bingo and enjoy some authentic Picnic Fayre. Relive the 50's and 60's with our vintage props.

Sunday

**11**

August

1pm-4pm

Debden House Conference  
& Camping Centre  
Debden Green,  
Loughton,  
Essex  
IG10 2NZ

**RSVP to Jackie Mattock**

Jackie@ctwf.co.uk  
OR Call 07719964166



Transport from Newham is provided.  
Bookings in advance only on a first come  
first serve basis.

