



ACTIVITY PACK

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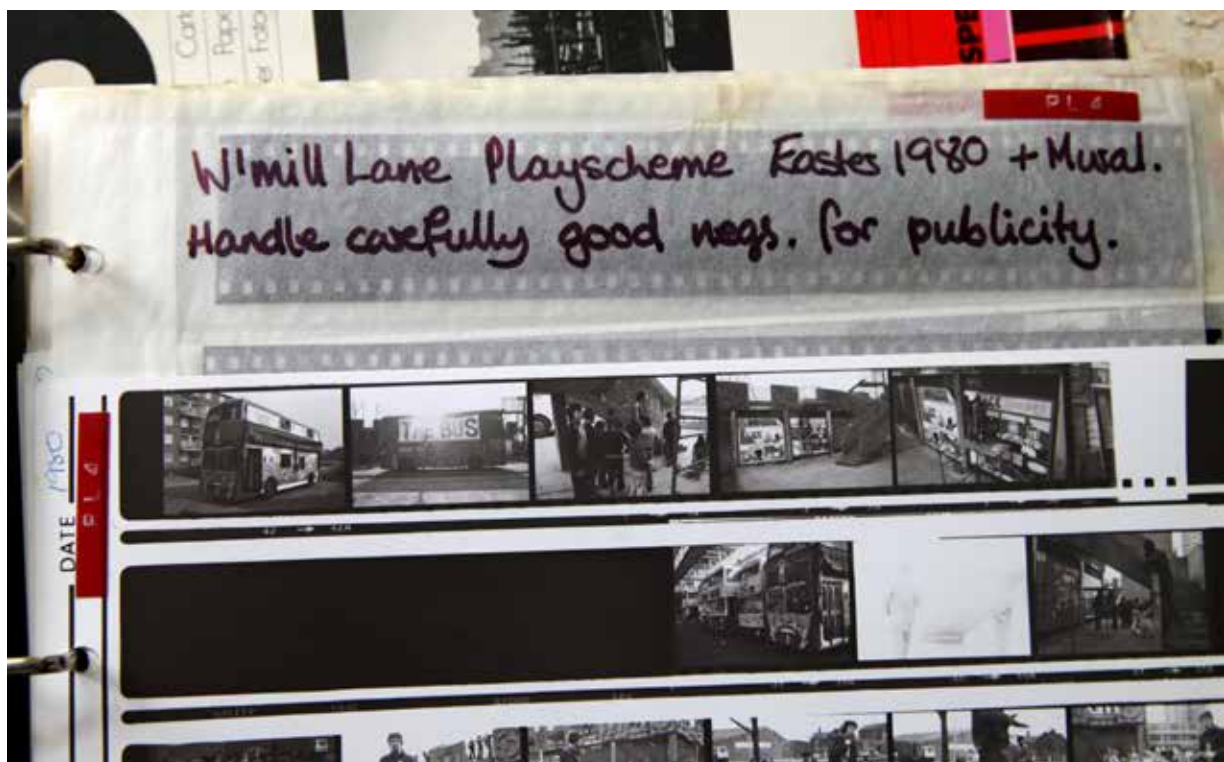
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The Jubilee Arts Archive 1974-94

The Jubilee Arts Archive is a substantial collection of 35 mm negatives and slide transparencies conserved by Sandwell Archives, along with standard 8 film, VHS video and miscellaneous print materials. The photographs were taken by Jubilee Arts & Theatre Company, primarily as documentation of their projects in Sandwell and the Black Country, and further afield. They were made by both professional and amateur photographers, both by artists and project participants. Back in 1974, the first hand held pocket calculators appeared in shops, New Year's Day was celebrated as a public holiday for the first time, and Pink Floyd released 'Dark Side of the Moon'. At the cinema you could see 'The Exorcist' or 'Blazing Saddles'. There was Three Day week and two general elections. In this year, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council itself came into being as part of local government reorganisation and a group of theatre students founded Jubilee Arts in West Bromwich. Today, the photographs from their projects provide a remarkable record of local people and places, and a valuable historical document of political, cultural and social change.

Jubilee was an organisation that valued co-authorship and encouraged cross-disciplinary practice; it was unusual in this respect, using the term 'multimedia' long before it was related to computer technology. They were a group that championed the need for communities to have control of their representation, challenging negative stereotypes, sharing aspects of their life experiences and common values.

In 2022-23, artists from Laundry worked with Sandwell Archives, along with Sandwell Museums and Arts Service, to preserve and share these photographs, presenting a new digital library of over 3,000 images online. The project was supported Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England.



35 mm negative file preserved at Sandwell Archives

Working with archive materials and photography

Aaron Siskind (1903-1991), an American photographer who was part of the part of abstract expressionist movement, wrote: “Photography is a way of feeling, of touching, of loving. What you have caught on film is captured forever... it remembers little things, long after you have forgotten everything.”

In the 2020 documentary by Luke Holland, ‘The Final Account’, Karl-Heinz Rinne, a Wehrmacht medical orderly attached to a Hungarian SS unit, shared an account of witnessing the destruction of a village in the Pripyat marshes (Ukraine) and the murder of all the inhabitants. When asked by the filmmaker, “Why did your officer not write a report?” he replied, “Perhaps they didn’t want one. What is not in the archives does not exist.”

Georgia Bould, the Sandwell Archivist notes: “Public archives tell us about our local community and history, providing valuable information on people, businesses, organisations, and events. They encourage visitors to engage with the past, offer sources for research, and strengthen individual identity. Archives are not just boxes of material hidden away for safe keeping, they’re used in education, they’re on display in museums, they’re digitised for the world to see. Archives are for all.”

While archives can provide primary sources which offer real value in educational settings – bridging the gap between distant historical phenomena and the present – they also provide an effective tool for community engagement across generations. We hope that this activity pack will encourage you to take the opportunity to explore some of the amazing materials to be found in local archives and collections, helping both students, individuals and groups from the wider community.

Several artists worked with materials from the Jubilee Arts Archive. The examples shared in this document offer some practical suggestions for activity.

**TRY OUT
THESE FUN
ACTIVITIES**

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY



This is a photograph from Sandwell Archives. It depicts a furniture dealer in West Bromwich High Street, A.G. Turley, at 126 and 128 High Street. The picture was taken in 1900. Find the same view today, using Googlemaps. Can you compare and contrast the differences?

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

Look carefully at the following seven photographs.

What can you observe in the photograph?

What questions do these photographs raise in your mind?

Can you describe what is happening? Or what will happen next?

Consider what might be outside the frame of the photograph?

Who are the people in the picture? Choose an individual in the photograph. What questions would you like to ask them? If you think of them as 'character' in a story, can you describe how they are spending their day?

Some suggestions... Where do they live? What is their house or street like? What can they see from their bedroom window when they wake up in the morning? What kinds of hobbies or interests do they have? What kind of activities would they be involved with?

Note the year the photograph was taken. Think of some key words or phrases that describe that particular decade - think of work, forms of entertainment, music, art, books. What is the difference between now and then?

If you were documenting your own family or community today, what would you choose to photograph to preserve for the future? If you were to make a photograph that represents your own life now, what would be included in the photograph?



Brades Village, 1982



UNETT Centre, Windmill Lane, Smethwick, 1977



Smethwick, 1981



Smethwick, 1984



Oldbury, 1980



Tantany, 1981



Tantany, 1981

SIXES AND SEVENS

Emma Purshouse and Adrian Johnson are two Black Country poets who often run creative writing workshops. Some of the exercises they use include the use of Haikus or Six Word Stories - these can also be Seven Word Stories.

A haiku is a Japanese poetic form dating from the 17th century that consists of only three lines, using five syllables in the first line, seven in the second and five in the last line.

For example, 'The west wind whispered' by R.M. Hansard is one of the earliest known example of a haiku written in the English language, dating from 1899:

*The west wind whispered
And touched the eyelids of spring.
Her eyes. Primrose.*

Contemporary poet John Cooper Clark gives us his version of a haiku:

*To con-vey one's mood
In sev-en-teen syll-able-s
Is ve-ry dif-fic*

Legend has it that Ernest Hemingway wrote a famous six-word story in order to win a bet with some friends. Sitting around in a hotel lobby in the 1920s, his friends wagered that he couldn't fit an entire narrative in just six words. Hemingway came up with: 'For sale: baby shoes. Never worn.'

Six-word stories are a great way to help you understand the value of writing succinctly.

Six or Seven? Well, that's up to you. These short fictions can act rather like a newspaper headline does. The first lines of longer stories also may be a source of inspiration. For example, 'I am so tiny and an orphan,' is the very first line of 'The Roe-Deer Fawn's Tale' by Vazha Pshavela.

A variation of this activity can be to add a visual element. Each member of your group should choose a photograph from the archive. Ask each other what kind of stories the picture suggests to you, what memory of yours do they connect with? Ask everyone in the group to develop one story (using just six or seven words) along with one photograph to base some visual artwork on, whittling the story down to its essence. Try cutting up the letters and experimenting with the typography. This kind of exercise explores the relationship between photography and the written word, and using both together can add meaning and impact to a story – to become poignant, intriguing or perhaps just plain funny.



Example: for the 'Living Memory' project, graphic designer Richard Franks worked with young people (14-15 age range) from St. Michael's CE High School in Rowley Regis to create artworks inspired by photographs selected from their family albums, and in conversation with older people. (See Resources section of www.livingmemory.live)

Richard uses graphics in a slightly different way with Jubilee Arts Archive materials, as you will see shortly.

THE GOLDEN MILE

West Bromwich High Street was once called 'The Golden Mile' by local residents due to its length and prosperity at the beginning of the 20th century. Much of the civic infrastructure of the street came about in the latter part of the 19th century, with the building of the Town Hall and Library, as well as substantial buildings such as Kenrick & Jefferson printing works.

Inspired by archive materials and a walk along the contemporary high street, photographer and writer Brendan Jackson, along with poet Billy Spakemon and sound producer Urban Monk, made an audio-visual piece for the Jubilee Arts Archive web site. Here's an extract of the text:

*It's pouring down today in the middle of May,
a deluge of biblical proportions,
so we stay tucked up in the YMCA caff
here at Carters Green.*

*No carters or hauliers here now,
bringing their goods into the town,
only their ghosts under the grey featureless sky.
Imagine them huffing and puffing,
looking forward to a pint or two,
horse nostrils venting steam,
the green grass gone
replaced by a long abandoned car showroom.*

*We linger over lemon drizzle cake,
stare up at Farley Clock Tower,
125 year old,
red brick and terracotta,
a memorial to Reuben Farley,
the very first Mayor of the town,
a man of means and vision.
He serves four more terms,
makes his mark.*

How would you choose to describe the high street?



Ideas to consider

Take a walk down the high street nearest to you. Investigate the details of the built environment and learn about their significance – clues offered by old Victorian tiles, street names and signage (i.e. if it's West Bromwich high street, you could count how many Polish businesses are there; or why is there a street called Gunns Lane?). What can you discover? Look at old ordnance survey maps and archive photographs to find out what was there before.

In West Bromwich - our example - you can find the the oldest graveyard in West Bromwich hidden behind the Wesleyan Church. You might discover a statue commemorating a famous or noted local person from the past. Certainly in West Bromwich there is a black obelisk commemorating a female film star of the 1930s as well as a statue which celebrates three Afro-Caribbean footballers from the Albion football team of the 1980s.

Use the archives or the internet to find old photographs or postcards of the high street to make a comparison between then and now. What kind of buildings are there, what kind of shops? When were they built? How have they been changed? Do they have chimneys? What are they used for now? Which are the biggest, which are the smallest? Make a drawing of your favourite building.

Find out what kinds of food are sold on the high street today. In West Bromwich High in the Angelic Superstore, you can find banana chips and custard creams, pureed yam and callaloo, gungo peas and palm oil. Tesco, in the New Square, stock blueberries from Morocco and Chile, and potato crisps from Ireland.

If you are leading the group, make up a fun quiz to test knowledge. For example:

Where can you find a stone pineapple placed above the entrance door? Is it...

A/ The town hall? B/ The library? C/ the former West Bromwich Institute?

You could then hold a creative mapping session, inviting participants to take on the role of town planners. Ask them to create a new street. Consider what they would preserve, what new uses they might put existing buildings to, or what they might create completely anew.

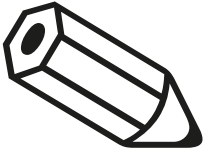


Here are two postcards of West Bromwich, one dating from 1905 and one from the 1950s. From your own observations using drawings or photographs, make a collage or a postcard of the town as it is today.

DRAW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT



Here's a photograph from Oval Road, Tipton in 1980, from a playscheme called 'Circus Week'. Make a drawing of what happens in the minutes after this photograph was taken.



SELF-PORTRAIT

Setting up a self-portrait activity was a key ingredient for many community arts projects, offering the opportunity to create an image of yourself, get a copy of the photograph and to be part of an almost instantaneous exhibition. This was a time when very few families owned a camera. In Sandwell, in 1978 Jubilee Arts had a double-decker bus with a chemical darkroom, where negatives could be processed and black and white photographs produced for showing the next day, often attached to sheets of cardboard or a washing line. They had one 35 mm Pentax camera, which was passed around. The Bus was also used as a print studio, a meeting space, as a mobile film unit and many other things. Often, with great excitement, people ran the self- portrait activity themselves, as you can see by the occasional askew framing of some of the following images. The object they are holding in their hand is an air release which was attached by a cable to the camera - by pressing the rubber bulb the camera shutter was triggered.

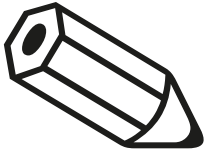
Today this form of portraiture has mutated into the taking of Selfies – every minute some 46,740 photographs are uploaded to Instagram alone – but the sharing of self-portraits pre-dates the invention of the internet. These photogrpahs are from Oak Road, West Bromwich, in 1985. This was a time when very few people had access to a camera, let alone a telephone which could record a picture.

Self-portraits emerged around the 15th century, the time of the Renaissance. Historians suggest that Jan Van Eyck's 'Portrait of a Man', from 1433, was probably the very first self-portrait ever made. Albrecht Durer's 'Self-Portrait at 26', made in 1498, is probably one of the most famous examples. Though until the invention of photography and the later introduction of cabinet cards in the 1870s, portraiture was something only available to the rich, titled and very famous.

Look at the self-portraits on pages 24 to 27 – what do they tell you about the people in them?

On pages 28 and 29, there are 2 other portraits, one made in a primary school in West Bromwich in 1990 and one in a photographic studio in Kingston, Jamaica, dating from the late 1940s. What can you interpret from these images? What do you think about the people in them?

Now, imagine the time before the invention of photography, many hundreds of years before the smartphone: make a drawing of yourself, a self-portrait. How will you portray yourself?



me, now



Oak Road, 1985



Oak Road, 1985



Oak Road, 1985



Oak Road, 1985



Taken at Lodge Road school, West Bromwich, 1988



Taken at Morais Studios, Kingston, Jamaica, 1940s

DESIGN A MURAL

Pictured here, the so-called 'Chinese Playground' in Grove Lane, Smethwick, was not really a playground. It was designed as a car park, albeit one originally planned to be four storeys rather than two, for the convenience of motorists who would occupy new high-density townhouses being built around the Windmill Lane area of Smethwick in the 1960s. The lower walls were constructed of brickwork, topped with rectangular panels of reinforced concrete bearing abstract geometric designs. These various motifs were not actually oriental, but apparently based on castings from a handbook of dentistry.

This car park was barely used – it would be another decade before more than 50% of households in the borough even owned a car. Local kids called the two levels Little China and Big China and before long the council installed a slide and a roundabout. With a large patch of grass adjacent, it was a convenient space to park the Jubilee Arts bus and start a summer programme of play activity. Soon they began to redecorate the walls of this former car park with murals designed in a comic strip style.

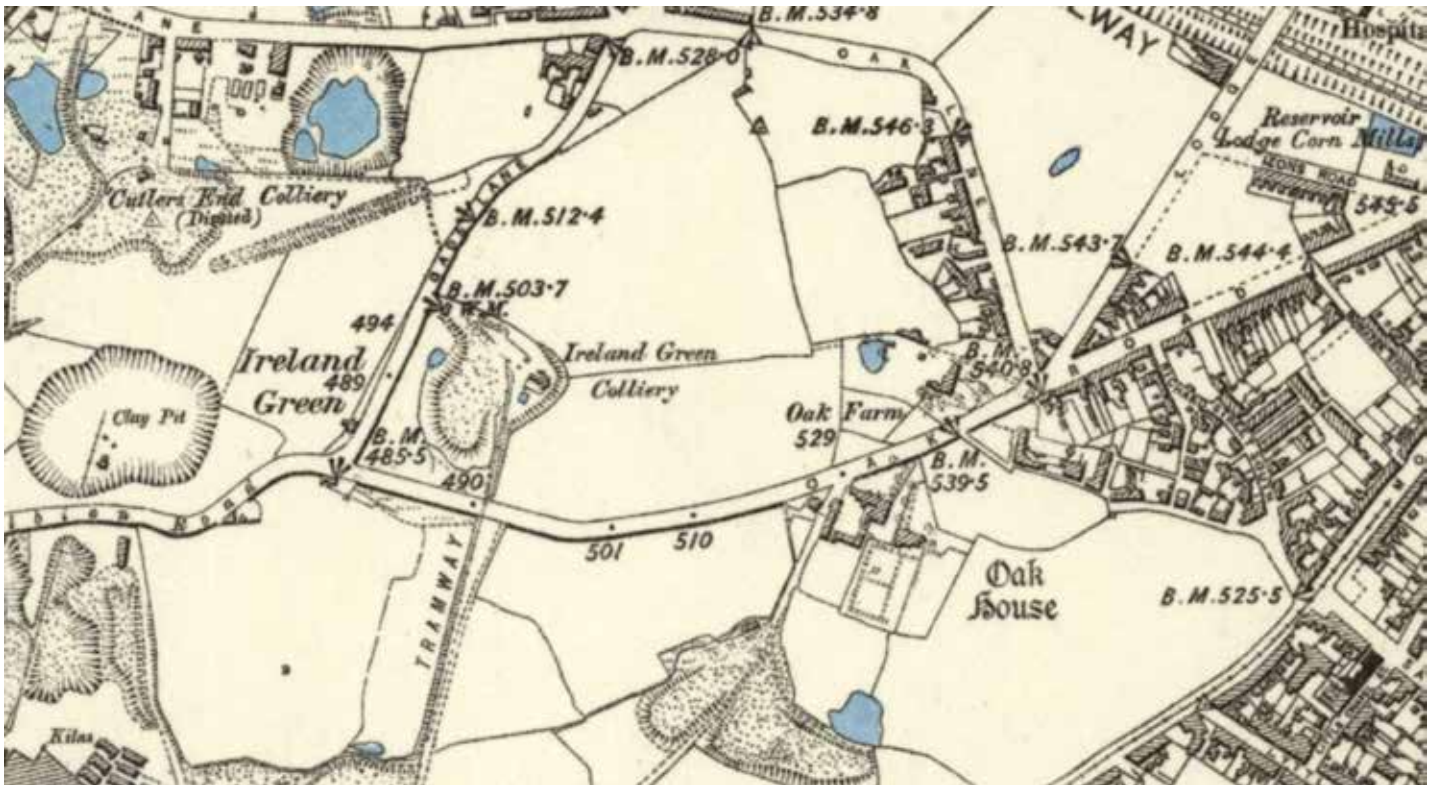
How would you make a mural of your own? Choose a street location and create your design. If you want to make your task more challenging, restrict yourself to using six colours only.





Children painting a mural at the Chinese Playground, Smethwick, 1980.

THE OAK HOUSE



Sandwell Museums look after six historic buildings in the borough, including the Oak House in West Bromwich. This is a half-timbered building dating from the early 17th century, originally lived in by a yeoman farmer, with the brick additions at the rear built in the 1650s. The Turton family, associated with the house at that later time, were also nail makers, ironmongers, brick and tile makers.

Centuries ago, as far as the eye could see, the land around the Oak House was one great meadow, along with oak woods. It changed dramatically before and during the Industrial Revolution, with the development of coal mines and iron factories nearby. The oak woods were chopped down to help in the construction of canals. The map above dates from 1889. The only meadow land today is within the grounds of the Oak House itself, and are environmentally significant.

Reuben Farley (1826-1899), four times mayor of the town, purchased the house with the intention of living there, but after restoration he decided to gift it to the town as a museum in 1898. Much of the material in the Museum at that time was provided by Miss Helen Caddick, from things she collected on her travels/ On the 50th anniversary of this bequest, the house was converted to a period house from the 17th century with antique furnishings. The adjacent barns were adapted in the 2000s into a visitor centre, along with a children's play area. The grounds, once formally laid out, with a bowling green, are being rewilded.



Here's a curious detail at the front of the Oak House. The house is said to date from the 16th century, yet this date is much earlier. Can you be a detective and find the reason for this? How did this get there?

MAKE A GIANT SCULPTURE

Back in the 1980s, the Oak House grounds were often used as a venue for festivals, events and workshops by Jubilee Arts. In 2023, contemporary artists, Hipkiss and Graney, were invited to work at the Oak House. The duo enjoy working with environmental themes and recycled materials, something which links their work to that of early Jubilee Arts. They explored the archival images and the green spaces around the Oak House Museum, undertaking a two-week residency to engage with local people. They offered a series of open workshops in the grounds, to engage participants with the local ecology and reflect the legacy of past artistic outputs in the locality, and its unique meadowland. The results were presented back as a performative event during the exhibition programme, and a film of the event was then later shown in the Oak House Barns in combination with a local history day event. (This is also been made available online.) The artists took their inspiration from nematodes, microscopic creatures which live in the soil. While some are parasitic, the vast majority are beneficial to the decomposition of organic matter, an essential part of the life-cycle of nature. The 'nematode' construction they made was put on display in the barns throughout the summer.

What did the artists use? Wood, fabric, paint, newspaper, wallpaper paste, gaffa tape, cardboard. **Can you design and make your own creature? You can make a small one or a giant one!**





This was the design the artists first made. Look at this and then see what it turned out in real life on the following pages.





Procession around the Oak House grounds, June 2023

WHY COLLECT?

Museums collect objects to preserve a historical artefact for future generations, to learn about the past and to tell stories of past lives. Sandwell Museums hold some 20,000 objects in their collections, with only a small amount on display at any one time due to availability of space.

Choose an object that is important to you to write about. Maybe it's a heirloom passed down through your family, or something from earlier in your childhood, or something you bought on holiday? What can you tell us about this object - why is it significant to you?



This Victorian lady sitting in a rickshaw is called Helen Caddick. She travelled far and wide in the late 1800s and early 1900s. When she returned home to West Bromwich she brought with her hundreds of objects, pieces of arts and crafts, jewellery and costumes. With these she helped set up the Oak House Museum.

Here are two objects she collected on her travels in the Far East and brought back to West Bromwich.



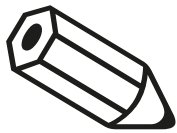
Netsuke, a miniature sculpture, originating in 17th century Japan; carved wooden sculpture of a hyena.



Statue from Burma; wooden carving in teak of oriental dancer in costume with hinged arms.

Do you collect anything?

Imagine you work at a museum. Draw a picture of the important object you have, or would like to have, in your collection. What would it be? Or perhaps there is something you can find in one of these historic buildings in Sandwell that you like best of all. You can draw a picture of that!



Here's a different way people made pictures of flowers.

Pressed flowers is a simple art form that can easily be traced back as far as ancient Egypt. In the 1500s, Oshibana (the art of pressing flowers in a way to create a whole picture) was meticulous and skilled. In the 19th century, this type of art became very fashionable in Victorian England, as trade with the Japanese people increased.



Instead of pressing flowers - which takes a really long time! - perhaps you can draw a picture of some of your favourite flowers from the grounds here?



**Botanists collect plants from all over the world, including flowers.
They collect these for scientific research, to learn how things grow
and to learn how to cultivate them.**

**Go round the gardens at the Oak House and make a drawing of your
favourite flower or plant.**

PERSONAL COLLECTIONS



Even today, people build personal collections. They may not travel to the the Far East, like Helen Caddick did, their interest may be more local and specific. Perhaps you collect comic books or toys, Pokemon cards or autographs?

Mike Fenton is an avid collector of objects related to the history of the area. A member of various local history groups, he also runs a number of Facebook groups devoted to local history. This photograph above is part a display he put on at a local history day at the Oak House.

As Mike explains: "I fell into collecting by mistake really. I didn't get a computer until 2007 - I must have been the only person within a 20 mile radius who didn't have one, I was a real technophobe. I intended to use it for Geneology, to do a family tree. Well, you can't look into family history without looking into local history to understand what's going on. I was looking for photographs of Overend Street, where my father's side of the family lived, and very few exist from that time. Initially I was going to collect local postcards - I had about some 20 or 30 and I now have about 2000. Then I got into collecting objects relating to industrial history. I don't just collect material related to West Bromwich, where the family came from. I collect Oldbury because that's where I live, Rowley and Blackheath because that's where I went to school, and Smethwick, as that as where I was born. So my collection has expanded, which is why my house is so full."



This is one of many original photographs that Mike Fenton has in his vast collection. It was taken by a large plate camera at the time and the print is over a foot wide. The operatic society was re-established in 1938 and still exists today. Where in the town do you think this photograph was taken? Can you imagine being one of these individuals? What jobs do you think they did in their daily lives? If you were to make an opera, what one would you choose to perform?

You can find an article by Mike Fenton on the Resources section of the websit, which explains his passion for collecting.

PERFORMING

In December 1974, Jubilee Theatre Company (as it was then christened) made its first appearance on the streets of Sandwell, performing a Mummer's Play outside of Woolworths on West Bromwich high street to the surprise and delight (and some dismay) of local shoppers. Their press release proclaimed: 'Steve Trow says the costumes will be spectacular and gaudy and the rhyming couplets will be the most awful to ever see the light of day.'

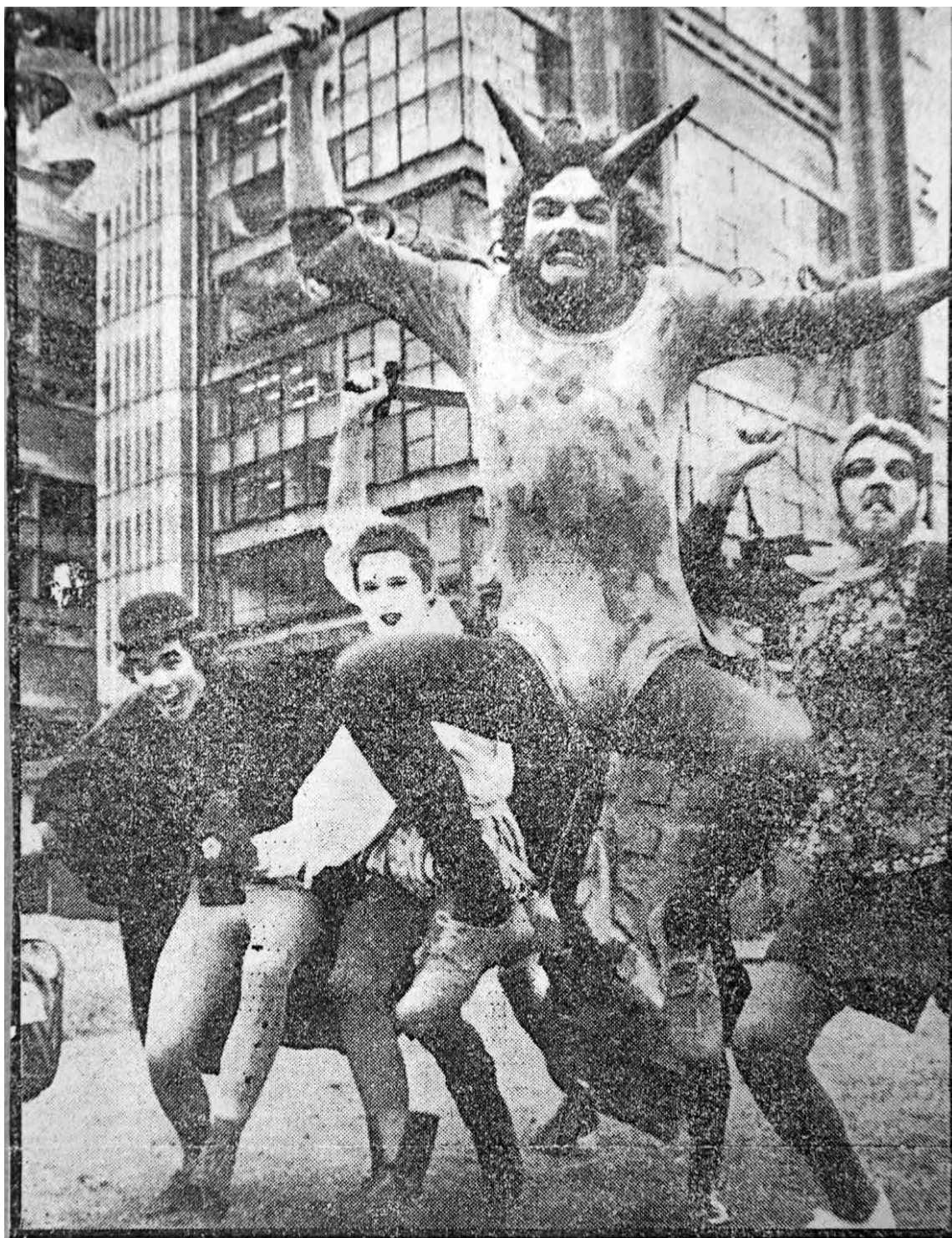
These plays can be thought of as a very early form of pantomime, with the main season for 'Mumming' being Christmas, though sometimes they were also performed on All Souls Day or at Easter. Until well into the 20th century, these old folk customs marked the passage of the winter solstice. In one of his books, the historian F.W. Hackwood (1851-1926) recounted fragments of dialogue he had seen at a performance in a Wednesbury Tavern at New Year 1879. Both 'Wassailing' and 'Mumming' were not uncommon in parts of the Black Country, with performers calling themselves 'guisers', blackening or flouring their faces as participants were intended to remain incognito. The last record of these occurring locally dates to the 1930s.

The word 'mummer' derives from Old French word 'momon', meaning a mask, and the German 'Mummen' to muffle up or disguise. Here on West Bromwich high street, the performers were described in the Midland Chronicle newspaper as 'a group of 20th century strolling players'. One of their members, Steve Trow, was intrigued by an article he had read about the Gregory family of Wednesbury, who had performed an annual Christmas charade some 60 years earlier using Mummers characters. Steve believed the Wednesbury version to be at least 200 years old, as one main character was King George III. Other characters were Boldgiah (the hero knight), Father Christmas, Dr. Brown, Beelzebub and Devildoubt. A member of the Gregory family had written down all that could be remembered on 'two sheets quarto typewritten sheets' and a copy of this inspired the 1974 script, which Steve and Ken Lloyd authored using local Black Country dialect. Their script ran to eight pages and the performance lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. They renamed the Hero 'Hector the Turkish Knight', gave him a mother, 'Mrs Slasher', King George became 'St. George', and they changed the character of Devildoubt to another comic figure, 'Safety Sam', a hapless referee who oversees the fight scenes.

Mummer's Plays are based on ideas of duality and resurrection, a kind of ritual enacted with 'sympathetic magic' to influence the course of events. The central incident is the killing and restoring to life of one of the characters – in this case the Turkish Knight - hence the need for the Doctor. The characters are introduced one by one in a series of rhyming couplets.

On the following pages you will find the opening lines of the performance, as St. George makes his entrance - the version originally recorded by Hackwood in 1879, and the version rewritten in 1974.

Can you write a new version of these lines now, for the 21st century? Where would you perform it? And try to write your own press release?



Picture: ROLAND ROWLEY

The devil of a job for street actors

The Hackwood version of 1879.

Here come I, St. George approved of old,
A Knight of valour and virtue, stout and bold.
Many the gallant deeds that I have done,
Clean victories, both east and west, that I have won.
In deadly marsh, and eke on sandy plain.
Giants, griffins and rocs in swarms I've slain.
'Twas I that brought the famed dreaded dragon to slaughter.
For which I gained the Egyptian Monarch's handsome daughter.

The Jubilee Theatre version of 1974.

Ah fust learnt ah to attack an' defend
Up at the 'Awthorns at the Brummie Road end
Ah've allus 'ad to fight me way
An' ah'll bost anybody 'oo say I ay
As a 'prentice knight ah wor saft
Ah goe me armour from the Patent Shaft
Ah've fought wi' lions whippets an' men
If I 'it 'em once they doh cum agen
But the one that gid me the biggest bostle
Was that bloomin' dragon up at Dudley Costle
The smoke gorrupt me adenoids
An' the flairme was wuss tah Stewards and Lloyds
Yoh should 'a' sin 'im toss 'an butt
Til ah dahted 'im in Tipton cut.



Theatre for shoppers

Street theatre for West Bromwich's Christmas shoppers today. . .

The open air show — using medieval mummers' plays — was performed in the pedestrian precincts in High Street by the town's newly formed Jubilee Theatre.

The group was formed six months ago by Steve Trow, aged 25, of Heath Lane, West Bromwich and Steve Lacey, aged 22, of Pershore Road, Birmingham — who both played starring roles in the plays.

Other actors were Ken Lloyd, aged 24, of Northfield, Birmingham, Mick Grant, 21, of Church Road, Wolverhampton, Ian MacFarland, aged 27, of Kings Norton, and Peter Trow, 21, Steve's brother.

WRITE A LETTER

Instead of texting, we challenge you to write a letter. Not just any old letter, but a letter of complaint. About something that really annoys you.

Inflatables - bouncy castles - were another item Jubilee Arts utilised as part of their play events in the 1970s and 1980s. Made from PVC, they were inspired in part by artist led groups such as Action Space, a London based organisation established in 1968 who built their own large-scale inflatable structures for 'happenings'. Saltley Print and Media, another community arts group in Birmingham, helped Jubilee make their first inflatables, which proved a roaring success.

Some of the playworkers Jubilee worked with had a somewhat less than pleasurable experience using inflatables. In a handwritten memo to Sam Spittle of the Playleaders Department, A.J. Tappenden wrote this letter of complaint:

'On the 30th-9-79 Julie, Ray, Steve and I took the astrobounce to Menzies playing fields. We had to operate without tickets. Towards the end of the session we had complaints from about 50 children that they had paid their money but not had their turn on the astrobounce. It is possible that 3 or 4 may have been telling the truth but not all 50 of them. The children started to chant "We want our money back". This I refused to do. The ranger arrived with a cash bag and a seal so I handed the money over to him in the sealed bag. No. WBC 29228. The total cash was £34.10. We then started to put the astrobounce away and the children began throwing stones and grass at the van and spitting on the windscreen. They then tried to let the tyres down on the van. I caught the culprit a boy named Clive and frightened him by telling him I was taking him to the police station. He apologised so I let him go. However this did not work and the children tried to tip the van over. The police were called and we left it in their hands after telling them we did not want to press charges.'

Jubilee Arts did not charge money for having a go on their inflatable, though they did insist on children helping them deflate it by rolling on it, folding it up, securing the ropes, then neatly storing it back in the Playbus. From that time, Jubilee worker Kate Organ recalled: "Health and Safety hadn't been invented back then and we counted it as inevitable that someone would take a child to Casualty at least once a week... but that was the ethos of Adventure Play!"

**Can you think of something to complain about? Who would you write the letter to?
What would be the issue of concern? Make a fuss!**



Photograph from Beeches Road, West Bromwich, 1983. The inflatable is being deflated with some young people rolling on it to push the air out.

THE ART OF PROTEST



Artist and Creative Producer, Richard Franks from We Can Create, organised an exhibition of photographs from the Jubilee Arts Archive at Haden Hill House in 2023, one of historic buildings that Sandwell Museums manage.

He said: "A lot of the projects that Jubilee Arts did were with marginalised groups, and I wanted to focus on this element of their work. With the help of Sandwell Advocacy, for the exhibition I worked with a group of young carers, who have limited opportunities to engage or to voice their own concerns. A starting point was this quote from Ai Weiwei: 'If anything, art is... about morals, about our belief in humanity. Without that, there simply is no art.' We explored the idea of protest art based on something they cared passionately about, creating banners, signs, slogans, paintings, and illustrations on pieces of roughly cut-out cheap cardboard, stuck to a plank of 2 x 1-inch wood! Protest art crosses the boundaries of visual art, media, ephemera, and copywriting. This was something the participants enthusiastically embraced and the opportunity to show this back to a wider public was much appreciated."

The photograph above is from a protest by school dinner ladies outside Cradley Council House in 1983, campaigning against cuts in wages and increased hours.

What would you like to protest about? Design yourself a banner, a poster or a placard - how can you make your voice heard!



Creating large statement posters at youth workshops, 1983.



Tenants march in West Bromwich in 1981, protesting against large rises in rents and the poor condition of social housing.



'Fight the Cuts' posters, Whiteheath, 1980.



This photograph is from Smethwick in December, 1982. It shows a group of women workers who were on strike outside of Supreme Quiltings and Raindi Textiles. It was mainly Sikh women organising the strike over low pay and for union recognition. What do you think about the role of trade unions in society? What reason would cause you to withdraw your labour and join a strike? What rights do you believe you should have?





Protest banners made with Richard Franks and the young carers group, showing work in progress and installation at Haden Hill House Museum.

HADEN HILL HOUSE



Haden Hill House can be found in Cradley Heath. It is one of the significant historic properties managed by Sandwell Museums, surrounded by 55 acres of parkland. When George Alfred Haden Haden Best inherited this estate in 1877, he didn't wish to live in the Old Hall (dating from the 1600s) where he grew up, so he built a brand new house alongside the following year. He was never married, though he did 'adopt' two teenage girls, Alice and Emmie (pictured above). Emmie came to live at Haden in 1886, after her father died, around the same time as Alice - around the ages of twelve or thirteen. It is believed they met Mr Best while pupils of Holy Trinity School, which he had built and continued to support as a philanthropist.

Artist Richard Flatley worked with his Happy Painters group in Smethwick and Blackheath, using the house and its contents as inspiration.

Can you choose a black and white photograph and turn it into a painting?





Alice Cockin and Emily Bryant, the adopted daughters, pictured with their dog. Both girls continued to visit their families locally, whilst living under the protection of this gentleman of considerable means. They spent their days painting and drawing, corresponding, or engaged with other arts and crafts. Alice's family ran a photographic studio in Old Hill nearby, and there is a fascinating set of photographs from this time, both documenting their the house as well as their holidays.

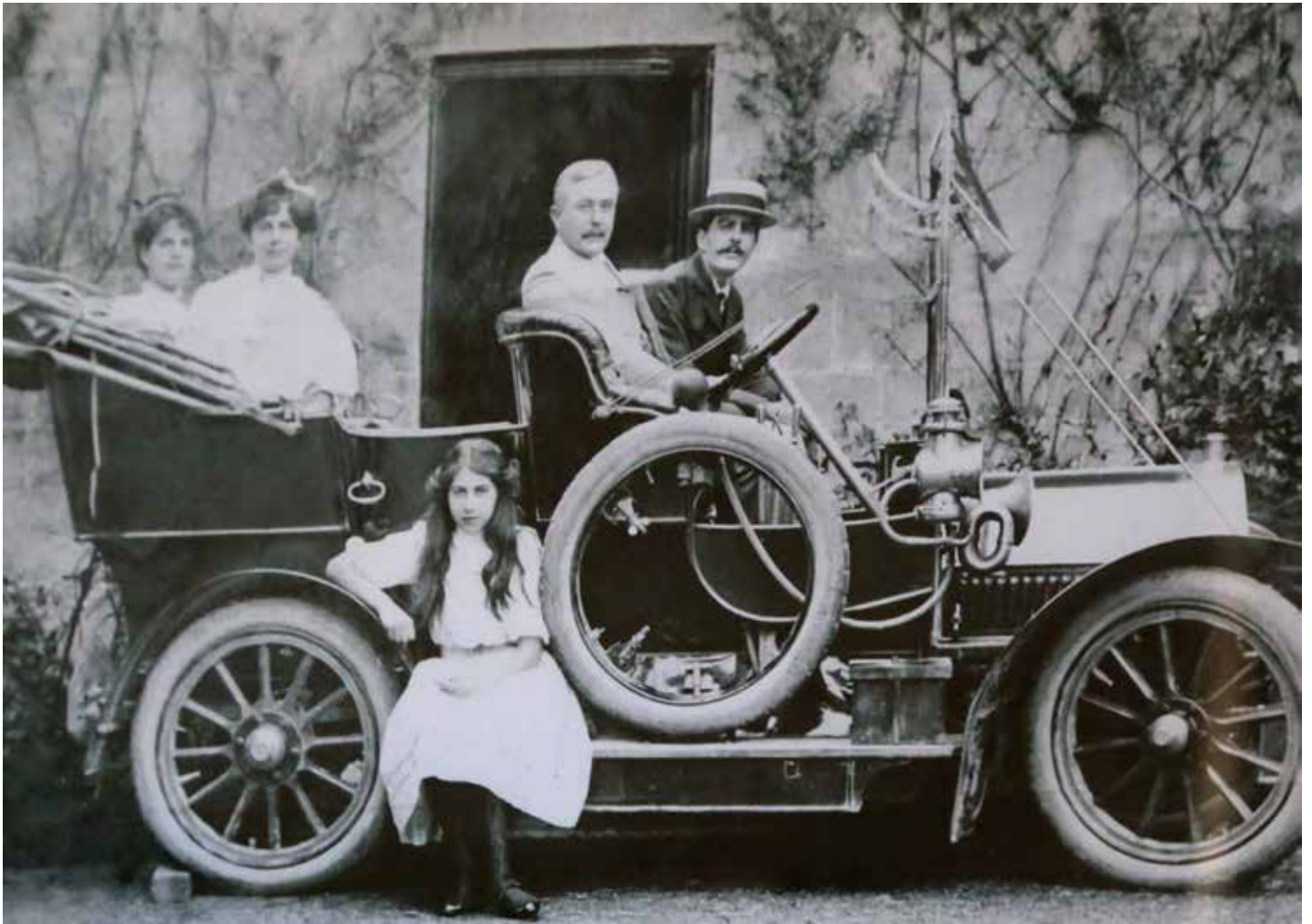
Monday June 24th.

Took our dinner with us and started to walk to Fairy Dell about 10 o/c. Went via Ilkley Bridge Low Hill Farm between Stubbing wood & Coppice Wood (all private) then through Middleton across fields & through farm-yard to the Dell. Very disappointed with it. Nothing worth visiting but it was a pleasant walk to it. Had dinner by stream and got nearly eaten to death by flies and cooked by sun! Alice & I waded . Back home about 5 o/c after teas walk up moors & back by Bath Houses. Home about 9.45. Very hot and dusty all day. We sent a tin of Caterpillars to Mr. Badley. Chiefly peacock tortoiseshell.

- from Emily's diary, on holiday in Yorkshire, 1895

A project with Sandwell Museums in 2015 explored the stories of Haden Hill House and these girls.

For more details see: <https://bestsangels.wordpress.com/posts-page/>



Wednesday Oct 30th.

After a nights rain most glorious bright day! Dad & I went and bought paper. Took our lunch with us & went by train to Walmer via Minster. Walked to castle & went over it. Could not spend much time in, as the house keeper was busy with London valuers. Marquis of Salisbury just taking to it. Went in Duke of Wellington's bedroom etc. Saw it just as it was in his time. The chair he died in, bed, writing desk etc, etc... also drawing room. Nice old place. Had lunch on beach then walked to Deal along the prom. Very nice indeed. Beautiful sea—long pier & plenty of fishing boats. Had cup of tea in town. Back by the 5.15. Ramsgate 6.05. enjoyable day. Cold.

- from Emily's diary, 16 days in Kent, 1895

Imagine you are Emily or Alice in 1895. Can you write a diary entry? For example, you could research what was happening in England or the world in that particular year. You could look at newspapers from that year to find out what was happening in the Black Country. Copies of local newspapers are held on microfiche in Sandwell Archives and are full of fascinating stories. Alternatively, you can write a diary about a holiday of your own.

Imagine the working day



While Alice and Emmie lived a genteel life of leisure, for others life was not so easy. The 1881 census records four servants employed at the house: Anne Payne, 25, housekeeper; Hannah Bird, 19), chambermaid; Eliza Bloomer, 22, cook; Charles Cope, 28, coachman, butler, valet. They were expected to work long hours, starting at 5.30 am and often finishing at 11 pm. They were allowed half a day, or sometimes a full day, off each month.

The photograph above shows the servants bedroom (there are two single beds in this room). Mrs J.E Panton wrote in her popular 1888 book on good housekeeping, 'From Kitchen to Garrett':

"I should like to give each maid a really pretty room, but at present they are a little hopeless on the subject. No sooner is the room put nice that something happens to destroy the beauty. I really believe servants are only happy if their rooms are allowed in some measure to resemble the homes of their youth, and to be merely places where they lie down and sleep as heavily as they can. The simpler, therefore, a servant's room is furnished, the better."

Can you imagine what kind of day they had, compared to the two 'adopted' daughters? While diaries exist for Alice and Emmie, preserved in the archives - often describing their fine holidays - the servant's life would go mostly unrecorded - they did not have much time for keeping a diary.

If you could go back in time and observe the working day of one of the servants, what would you see? Can you tell us their story?



*An idyllic scene of childhood, according to the late Victorians.
What do you think the reality would have been?*

THEN AND NOW

Using archive photographs, Jack Trow decided to seek out original locations. He says: “At almost every turn of my rifling through the archive I could see activities, games and practices I have used in my own work throughout my career as an artist and theatre maker. So the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree! Of course I knew this already, but scrolling through the photos really brought home quite how many trees had been in the orchard that this particular apple had come from - I was following in so many people’s footsteps... on a more fundamental level than I had previously understood. So what if I literally followed in their footsteps? What if I set about finding the exact locations shown in the archive photos? And what if there was more art to be made, inspired by the ghosts I would find in the space in between the archive images and the corresponding physical locations as they are today?” Why not try it for yourself? It’s a treasure hunt. A puzzle. An archaeological dig. A heritage trail. This is how to play.

Step 1

Choose an image on the archive.

Step 2

Look for clues in the image and from other parts of the archive to try and identify a rough location. You may want to use maps and google street view to help narrow it down even further.

Step 3

Go the place you think the image was taken. When you think you’re in the right place take a new photo of the location today. You might want to try and recreate the original image somehow. Or line up the original image with the background in the new photo you take.

Step 4

Use the What3Words app to record the exact location.

Step 5

Be creative. Write a poem, song or a short story about your image. Maybe the what3words words app will give you a starting point. Maybe the original image needs a caption or accompanying legend. Maybe it’s true, maybe it’s fiction. Maybe the activities depicted in the image inspire you to do the same activities. You could do a performance in your local pub. You could paint a mural on your garden wall. You could make shadow puppets, do a lantern parade or make a film starring you and your neighbours.

Step 6

Share your work. Put your new images on social media along any other things you’ve been inspired to make. Make sure you tag Jubilee Archive (instagram: ‘jubilee_arts_archive’ and Facebook: ‘Jubilee Arts Archive’) into what you share, so we can see it too!

Do’s and don’ts

Don’t go anywhere that isn’t publicly accessible.

Do get permission if you go to private properties.

Don’t put yourself in danger.

Do get creative!



*From top to bottom:
Bury Hill Park, Rowley; Oval Road, Tipton;
Smethwick High Street; West Smethwick Park.*

WWW.JUBILEEARTSARCHIVE.COM

Activity pack inspired by the new digital library, Sandwell Archives and Museums

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GET CREATIVE



Laundry



Sandwell Museums and Arts Service



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