Saturday Heritage Fair 21st November 2026

1. Segment 1: Introduction & John Coster

Rob Watson: Hello, I'm Rob Watson and this is Soar Sound, and today we're at the Leicester Saturday Heritage Fair taking place at the Adult Education College on Belvoir Street in the city centre. If you want to come along and say hello to us, we're going to be here until—all afternoon actually, until about 3:00 PM when it closes—and we're going to be live on air starting around about 11:00 till 1:00, and we'll drop in some information about what's going on, who's the exhibitors here, what the guests think of it. It's a really great space, the cafe's open so you can come and have a coffee, it's nice and warm—so it's a chilly day out there and this place is baking at the moment, so I've had to take all me cardigans and everything off, and I'll take me balaclava off in a minute. But yeah, the Saturday Heritage Fair is about bringing people together who are interested in heritage from a point of view that you might collect something, or you might be part of a group, you want to trace your family history, and there's a whole load of people here who will be happy to talk to you and show you what they're interested in. Some of it might be military history, some of it might be kind of important events, different communities. Just—right. Here's the man of the moment. Here's John Coster. Good morning. Just doing a quick introduction to say hello to the listeners, and you've been rushing around like mad.

John Coster: Hello. Morning. Absolutely, it's a collapsing bag. It's my old army training, eh? Throughout the week I bring things into town and cache them in different cupboards and stuff, and it's like a collapsing bag so it gets smaller and smaller, and all of a sudden everyone arrives and just: "Where am I? Where's my... I wanted power," and I go, "Well, your power's there," "Oh yeah." You know what I mean, that kind of stuff.

Rob Watson: So just give us a very, very quick rundown of who are the kind of people that people can come and see.

John Coster: Well, it's the 10th Saturday Heritage Fair, so again they've steadily grown in size and influence, I guess, and we've got people ranging from stalwart partners like the At Risk War Memorials project and the Leicester and Rutland Family History Society, where you can research anything about streets and people from if you're just starting out on your family history research, or you've got so far and suddenly the money you need to pay to the online providers is giving you a bit of a block. Right through to MACE, Media Archive for Central England, they're showing some films today. We've got Ride Leicester talking about the history and heritage of cycling, right through to, you know, Leicester Civic Society. We've got the Leicester High School for Girls, it's their 120th anniversary. So, you know, things like that with people celebrating—

Rob Watson: University of Leicester are here.

John Coster: University of Leicester Heritage Hub are a great partner, and they've partnered with us this year, so we've got their sort of Heritage Hub ambassadors, and then we can support them in March with their celebration of heritage.

Rob Watson: Brilliant. Go and boss your boys.

John Coster: Thank you very much.

Rob Watson: Speak to you later.

2. Segment 2: John Ghent

Rob Watson: Morning, this is Rob Watson on Soar Sound, and today we're here at the Saturday Heritage Fair at the Adult Education Centre on Belvoir Street, and I'm now joined by John Ghent.

John Ghent: Morning Rob. Yes, you've got it spot on, mate. Great. I get "Jent" quite a lot, but yeah.

Rob Watson: Have I got it right? Yes. Yeah, the silent H.

John Ghent: Yes, that's it.

Rob Watson: Yeah. So tell us what you're doing here today.

John Ghent: So, I'm here today to do a little bit of a meet and greet if people want to come and have a chat with me about my social media and YouTube videos, and Leicester history, urban history, undercover history maybe that people don't think about. Look, I said to John who's set this event up: I try and make the mundane interesting. And then I'm here to meet a few of the guys and a few of the groups and maybe get some YouTube videos set up and in the diary, because that's one of my weak points really.

Rob Watson: How did you—because you pop up on my YouTube feeds—how did you get into it?

John Ghent: A bit of luck, really. So I'd always done quite a bit of video for my business, and then I did one video on short-form social media in April of 2025? Yeah. And it exploded.

Rob Watson: Wow. What made it explode? Because I've been doing it for years and nobody follows me.

John Ghent: Yeah, I think it's a little bit of luck. So—

Rob Watson: You've got the charisma.

John Ghent: Well, so they say. I did one video, it was about Church Gate, and I'd been to a charity event that night—and they're not really my thing, but a lady invited me along and I get along really well with her, so I went along to this charity event that was at the Athena. And, but I had an event on, a run the next morning, so I wasn't staying late. So I left about 10:00, 10:30, walked back to my car, which was in the Highcross. I walked down Church Gate and it was a Friday night, and there was just nobody down there. And it blew my brains off because that's where I spent my sort of late teens, early 20s with four and a half thousand other drunk people. And I just did a video saying, "Wow, look at this, look how much it's changed." And it just went bananas. So I posted it on TikTok and woke up the next morning, it was on 75,000 views, and it ended up at something like 450,000 on TikTok, about the same on Facebook, Instagram. Then a mate who goes on Twitter—or X as it's known now—he sent a screenshot, someone had picked it up and put it on there. Loads of people were using it as a green screen, they were commenting on it, they were like taking my video and talking over the top. It just went mad.

Rob Watson: And what did that instant fame feel like?

John Ghent: It was a bit odd, yeah. And then from there, I then did a bit more on nightlife because—and honestly, I just did it for my business, because just, I'm an estate agent, I just wanted to sell more houses. So, and this was getting me free exposure. I was like, "Well, if that went crazy on nightlife, then maybe I'll do something on the old clubs." So I did a video on Zanzibar, and then one on Life, or Palais as it's known, and then one on Life or Krystals as a lot of people will know it, and that's where I met my wife and stuff like that, so that's pretty cool. And it just started growing and growing and growing. And if I'm honest, I can't actually remember the first sort of history video that I did, but people loved it. They loved the nostalgia and just thinking about old stuff.

Rob Watson: Yeah, the nostalgia's—there's lots of the nostalgia stuff, but it's when you turn it into a history thing, which is like you're learning something from it as well. Because if I did a nostalgia one, it'd be moaning.

John Ghent: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rob Watson: But you do one, but you keep it upbeat.

John Ghent: I try to. I try to because yeah, we can be quite down about things. Do you know what I mean? "Oh, that club's gone now," or "That bar's gone." And I do think it's important to remember what it was like and how cool it was, because I loved it, and I've loved a lot of other stuff that's gone. But then I quite like the—what would the word be?—sort of the thought, and actually not just being the moaner and going, "Wow, how has it changed? Why has it changed?" Yeah. "What's it like now? And is that inherently better?"

Rob Watson: Trying to understand it. Yeah. Because there's a lot of stuff on social media which people just use to antagonize people, that they're looking for the fights outside pubs at 4:00 in the morning kind of thing, and that's easy to do. But to give people a sense of understanding,

that's what we do with Soar Sound, we try and, you know, encourage that sense of understanding that there's something else going on beside this and it's in other places as well.

John Ghent: I think that's really important. And I think sort of one of the things that I try and do—and I probably do it subconsciously really—I've got quite a short attention span. So my content is really varied. So I'll be doing a very sort of typical history piece that you'd expect on a history documentary, but then the next video can be quite sort of social history about why an area's changed and the people that live there now. But actually, if you bring that all together, that then gives you an overall more interesting picture.

Rob Watson: It's finding a hook for the story.

John Ghent: Yeah.

Rob Watson: And sometimes you can go for the structured, responsible way of doing it, and then what catches people's imagination is like, I don't know, the history of chips or something like that, you know, and you say you go around and you try different chips in different places. I'm not saying that you should do that, but—

John Ghent: Do you know what, some—you never know. You never know, the chip shops of Leicester. I mean, some of the videos that have gone crazy just make no sense. So there's—I did two videos on the underpasses on Benbow Rise and Gallards Hill, which are in the middle of Braunstone. They go under the Meridian bypass. But the history about why they're there is—it's quite poignant actually—a little girl died, which is why they put the underpasses in for people to be able to get from one side of the estate to the other. But all of the estate will have gone through those underpasses, and had a drink down there, and messed about, and had their first kiss down there, and there's loads of graffiti on the walls. You do videos on stuff like that that nobody else will do a video on, and it just gets people talking.

Rob Watson: Right. Yeah. Yeah. And it's like a living archive. It's like you're discovering it as you're going about as well. So it's not just you're taking stuff from textbooks or the museums, it's actually this is—and you're looking for those nooks and crannies.

John Ghent: Yeah, and I mean, I did the same with Corah. I just sort of walked in to the sort of courtyard area and then put the drone up and had a look around. And I don't know all of this stuff. I think there's so many people out there that know loads about these subjects, but maybe have never thought or don't want to come onto YouTube or onto socials or put it into blog format. But the knowledge they've got is incredible. So what I found most interesting and most exciting I guess is when I put a video on, the comments are probably more engaging and more informative than my video, because some of the stuff that comes out is just unbelievable.

Rob Watson: Well, we believe at Soar Sound that you're here to learn. If you're rubbish and you get better, brilliant. If you stay rubbish, we might find you something else to do. But it's about coming in and finding skills for yourself and what works for you and what works for your

listeners, that kind of thing. So where do people find out more information about you? Would they just search you on any social media?

John Ghent: Pretty much, yeah. If you put my name in—John Ghent Leicester, or John Ghent estate agent, Ghent is G-H-E-N-T—you won't miss me. As soon as you Google that name, there's not many of us around, so yeah, you'll find me on YouTube or Facebook or Instagram or TikTok, whichever your preferred social medium is. Yes.

Rob Watson: There's lots of them. Have a lovely time today.

John Ghent: Thanks very much for having me on. Cheers, Rob.

3. Segment 3: Matt Axon

Rob Watson: Hello, this is Soar Sound with me, Rob Watson, and Jen is here with us, but she's being quiet, and we're joined by one of our Soar Sound aficionados, Matt. What's your surname? I've temporarily forgot what your surname is. Matt Axon. Matt Axon, how could I forget that? And what are you doing here today, Matt?

Matt Axon: That's alright. Come down to find out about the history, have some real conversations, connect with real people who got real passions in what they want to tell you about and how I want to invest in them. I'm also down here with Brotherhood Legion, so which is a men's mental health charity. So I'm here to promote that, that the people who have been in the forces and represented, sometimes mental health is an issue after that. So here to connect with as many people as I can. And also my grandparents fought in the war as well. So I don't know what stories or images I can see here, but there might be some family connections which I've never known about until I've come to this event today. So it's really wholesome, really cool event, and I'm glad I've come down.

Rob Watson: So we're at the Leicester Adult Education College on Belvoir Street. We're here till 3:00, and it's the Saturday Heritage Fair, and as Matt says, there's a lot of people here exhibiting things that they either collect or that they belong to their school or belong to their society, or there's so much stuff here. Have you had a look around the main hall yet?

Matt Axon: Yeah, I saw some amazing artifacts where one of it was a shrapnel from a guy who was in a Lancaster bomber, and my great-uncle was a rear gunner in a Lancaster bomber. So to reconnect that imagery and what that person had gone through, it's amazing just to see it. And the uniforms, how amazing the uniforms are, and then connecting the uniform to the person. It's there, I'm a visual learner as well, so to see something and it's like all the jigsaw pieces at this event today, they're all in front of you. So you can visually understand what the people have gone through, how they were dressed, some of the stories—you're bringing it to life. And this event is bringing all of that to life.

Rob Watson: Now you're a presenter on Soar Sound, and your show was on yesterday. What time does that go out?

Matt Axon: I am, yeah. 9:00 till 11:00 on a Friday.

Rob Watson: Now when we first started, you weren't nervous—you're not a nervous type of person—but you were unsure. How's it going? This is the first time in a while we've had a chance to catch up. How's it going?

Matt Axon: Of course. Amazing. Yeah, amazing. I love presenting. You learn how to talk—I know that sounds a bit weird, but like you learn how to project your voice in a professional way for radio, and promoting the event. I work in a school, so that's always really cool to be a role model where being in the radio is really cool. And my show is all about a mixture of music. And I think to be an interesting person, I think yes, you can have a specific genre of music which is your passion and you love, but to be open-minded to all the different music, and Leicester's full of music. There's an exhibition in the other hall where we are now which has got all the flyers from some of the clubs in Leicester and stuff like that. I know the guy who's presenting that, and you can go and see him, Chris Allott—sorry not Chris Allott, Keith Allott. And going to there, and I remember it's nostalgia. All of the—I love nostalgia as well, like those conversations about nostalgia is amazing because I went out clubbing in Leicester and I used to get in for free because I'd be holding my friend's vinyl, and I'd go to Poonana and Industria and all of these places, but they don't exist anymore. But they do in your mind. The stories then you can communicate and you can share, and you might meet people. And there's a guy here as well who I've just been talking to, John Ghent, and he was the year below me at secondary school, which was over 25 years ago. So I'm just like, the reconnections you can make at an event like this is amazing, and that's priceless. So yeah, everything's gone full circle. And I did music at college, at Leicester College. So when you've got dormant skills just laying in your mind and you just think, "Right, okay, how can I do stuff now where it's opportunities?" And it's about taking the opportunities when they're given to you and shine. So yeah.

Rob Watson: Brilliant. Well, have some good conversations today and enjoy the rest of your day.

Matt Axon: I will do. And thank you for this one.

Rob Watson: Brilliant.

4. Segment 4: Helen Pettman

Rob Watson: Hello, welcome to Soar Sound. We're at the Saturday Heritage Fair here at Leicester Adult Education on Belvoir Street, and I'm joined by Helen Pettman.

Helen Pettman: Hello, Rob.

Rob Watson: What have you been doing here today?

Helen Pettman: Oh, I've just been wandering around looking at the stalls, and I've found some really fascinating ones.

Rob Watson: Tell us about them.

Helen Pettman: Um, well, I first of all headed to the, um, to look at the First World War and Second World War, um, stalls. Sorry, I can't—forget words. And, um, because I've been interested in looking at local history in Evington, and, um, we've—I've just had a go at doing a World War I project which I put up on our Evington Echo website, evingtonecho.uk, and it was aimed a lot at helping local schools with local history. And I did some new research on the VAD hospital that was in Evington in the First World War, but it was then called Knighton because it was people from Knighton that came to run it. It was called Knighton House then. And the quartermaster who did all the ordering of equipment and had to and got help with the fundraising and everything, was a fascinating lady called Gwendoline Whittington. And so I researched her, and then it sort of got spin-offs with other things. And so it was going around talking to them and letting them know that I've done some local research as well, which they were very interested in, and then I picked up other fascinating leads to, you know, for how you get a centre and it all sort of goes out.

Rob Watson: It's the connections, isn't it? That's the fascinating part of this, and why being at an event with lots of people here is really important, because it's more fluid and it's, you know, you might not get to speak to everybody that you want to speak to, but Sue Lester's here from the Leicester Family History Society, so they're all, you know, having those kind of conversations with people, and yeah.

Helen Pettman: Yeah. Yeah. So, um, then I went on to another site, um, which was also absolutely fascinating, um, because he had—he was a man called Jason who was interested in games, and games to get children involved in local history. And he had a game where you picked up some dice and you threw it on a piece of paper, and then it was about trees and buildings and water supplies and everything. So they could build up a sort of model village, as it were. And it is sort of like that's their imaginary village that they can start to think about and decide, and then gradually it brings them into the local scene as well. So I thought that was amazing.

Rob Watson: Have you looked at everything? Are you going to go back in and—

Helen Pettman: No, I haven't looked at everything. Not yet. No, so that's why I can't go round with a mic.

Rob Watson: Yeah, yeah, no, no, it's like it's a day off today and just enjoy talking to people.

Helen Pettman: Yes, yes.

Rob Watson: So, so what kind of things—so you edit the Evington Echo at the moment. You've done a long stint and hopefully we're going to hand over to a new editor soon. So what would you want for articles in the future? Do you think about heritage?

Helen Pettman: Soon, yes. Oh, I think heritage is one of the things we do, but it's also about having the current things going on and reporting on that, what groups we've got, what they're doing. We're absolutely passionate about thinking through the problem of bringing local people together regardless of their, particularly regardless of their religion.

Rob Watson: So it's a secular way of looking at life in Evington. It's a place where people do things for the benefit of everybody, not just your own.

Helen Pettman: Yeah, yes. Yeah. And, but it's difficult because, um, so we tried to do, um, a Navratri event and make it secular, and the programme definitely was secular. We were just—started with a keep-fit, then we did refreshments, and then we did a show type thing. Um, but it was really only interest to the Hindu population.

Rob Watson: Right. Well, that's the point about, you know, opening these things out and you can find and discover things, and it's a two-way process rather than thinking it's either/or. I think having that, you know, it's like it's both—both/and, as they say, rather than just one or—it's not just one, it's both.

Helen Pettman: Yeah, yes. Yeah. And certainly I think some of the women's groups—and they're not intentionally women, but men don't tend to come to keep-fit things like that, especially sort of locally run keep-fit rather than, you know...

Rob Watson: Yeah, the big macho gyms. Yeah, yeah.

Helen Pettman: Yes. So, so that's also a struggle.

Rob Watson: Well, yeah, yeah, getting blokes involved, yeah. Oh, brilliant. Okay, right, enjoy the rest of the day looking at the stalls and we'll speak soon.

Helen Pettman: Thank you. Okay, thanks.

5. Segment 5: Liam McCarthy (with a brief interruption from Helen McCarthy)

Rob Watson: Hello, this is Rob Watson at the Leicester Adult Education College and it's the Saturday Heritage Fair. It's on until 3:00 today, so if you want to come down and have a look at some of the stalls, and joining me now is one of our talkies for the day. Is that what you describe people as?

Liam McCarthy: Yeah, speaker I think is the word.

Rob Watson: Liam McCarthy, who's an author, and you've just published a book. So do you want to tell us about what you're going to be telling people about?

Liam McCarthy: Yeah, it's called *The Life of African-American GIs in Britain in the Second World War*, and its subtitle is *A War Within a War*. And that's because Black and white soldiers used to fight like cats and dogs.

Rob Watson: Right. The thing I'd heard about Black GIs in the UK is that they didn't have to deal with segregation in the same way that they dealt with in the United States, back at home in the United States. Was that—is that something that came out of—

Liam McCarthy: Okay. So the history of the army in the Second World War—because people talk about the Air Force and the Army, but of course it was the US Army Air Force, so it's all one in Britain, then the US Navy separate. So what you've got is you've got an army document in 1925 which looks at the use of—and I'm going to have to use the word, I'm afraid—the use of "Negro manpower in war." And it describes African-Americans as a subspecies of the human race with inferior mental capacity and, um, and even worse, which I won't go into here. Hello, sorry. What are you trying to do?

Helen McCarthy: I just need your face. People want to buy books. Sorry.

Rob Watson: We are live.

Helen McCarthy: Yeah, they've all come down from the talk. They want to buy books.

Liam McCarthy: Are we live?

Rob Watson: Yeah. I'm not editing anything.

Liam McCarthy: I can't do it. I've forgot my glasses.

Helen McCarthy: Well, so basically it's been such a popular talk, you just have to go and see them. There's a rush.

Rob Watson: Interrupted by a broadcaster there.

Helen McCarthy: I can't do it, I can't do it.

Liam McCarthy: I'll have to do it later.

Helen McCarthy: Sorry.

Rob Watson: Right. So where were we? Just explain who that was.

Liam McCarthy: That was the BBC's Helen McCarthy from East Midlands Today, who—she's my wife—who should know better than to interrupt something that's—

Rob Watson: And you can't complain because... In the middle of an interview. By shoving a phone in your face.

Liam McCarthy: In the middle of an interview. Yes, twice. So, we were talking about this 1925 report, which was astonishing, as I say, describing African-Americans as a subspecies of the human race with no leadership qualities and inferior mental capacity. And that's got its hangover in slavery and white supremacy. And by 1941 you'd have thought, well maybe wiser heads might... But no, they were—Black soldiers were just given service roles, and "real Americans" did the fighting. So Black soldiers had to do things like trucking, laundry, logistics, engineering—those kind of not-fighting. And to be fair, when they were in the States, I mean all the segregated bases were—the cheapest land was in the South, most of the bases were in the South, and Black soldiers from the North would go to bases in the South and want to go out of the base, and there were riots, killings, murders all over the States around American bases. And the Black press at the time obviously was, um, actively involved in campaigning against racism, and they launched a Double V campaign: victory against fascism abroad and victory against racism at home. And it was launched by a newspaper called the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and lots of Black newspapers across the States took that on board. So what we've got then is Black soldiers being not treated very well wherever they went in America. And what they read in the Black press about Britain was: here was an empire that treated Black and brown people worse than the Americans. So they had no positive thoughts about coming to Britain other than it would be just the same. And of course, when they stepped off the boat, they realized—apart from in places like Liverpool, London, Cardiff—very few British people had seen a Black person before, so they were taken at face value. Now, they were on segregated bases, but as soon as they came off their bases and went onto the streets, there was no segregation. They could go to places that anybody else could go. And of course they were very polite, which British people liked, and that politeness was a, oh, it was a kind of, um, defense mechanism against being lynched in the States.

Rob Watson: Yeah, subservience in a way.

Liam McCarthy: Yeah. So we know, for example, when the first Black soldiers arrived in Leicestershire: December the 16th, 1942, because the postmistress at Gaddesby made a note in her notebook. And we've got the notebook, which was found under the floor of the old post office when it was being renovated. And she calls them "dark Americans" and "darkies." Now, my grandma used to use that phrase—she grew up in, she was born in Clarendon Park—but she didn't use it in a nice way. But during the war it was, it differentiated them from the white Americans. They were seen—the dark Americans were seen as the pleasant Americans. And they formed relationships with local people, they held dances, they had relationships with women. So yeah, the segregation, it was an eye-opening experience, which is why after the war lots of them went back and joined the Civil Rights Movement, and actually kickstarted the Civil Rights Movement. You may have heard of Medgar Evers, who was murdered in the '60s. He was the NAACP, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—he was their first representative in Mississippi. And he was basically hunted down and killed by white vigilantes, who, by the way, were found not guilty in two trials by white juries in Mississippi. Wasn't till the '90s, when the double jeopardy rule was changed by Clinton, that the two survivors went to prison. I mention Medgar Evers because he served in England. And he's just typical of people who served in England and went back and thought: "Relationships with white people don't have to be like this anymore. I'm not putting up with it."

Rob Watson: So what got you into this topic enough to write a book about it?

Liam McCarthy: Well, it started off a conversation in the pub: "Did you know about...?" "No." And having been born and brought up in Leicester, I thought, "I didn't know about race riots in Leicester in the Second World War. What, between white Americans and Black Americans? You're joking, aren't you? Why don't I know about this?" So I went and found out about it, and I wrote a master's paper at the university about it. And then some time after started working on a film with a filmmaker called Jonathan Beamish called *Terry's GI Dad*, which hopefully will be on a streamer anytime now, about a local guy called Terry Harrison searching for his father—his 40-year search for his father. And going through it, it became obvious to me that actually there was a story to tell here across the country as a whole. The story's been told as in a kind of "this government minister said that, and that government minister said that, and this police chief said that," but not about what the life of these individual Americans was like. So I've told the story in the book—it's called *The Life of African-American GIs in Britain*. So I follow a unit that went across the country. And funnily enough, wherever they went there was violence—not caused by them, but they witnessed it. They were in Lancashire at Bamber Bridge, they were in East Anglia, they were near Bristol, they went to France. And that unit was quite interesting because Terry Harrison thought his father was one of that unit. And the guy he thought was his father was murdered by a white GI at a traffic stop. So the book tells that story. And we know it's there because when his mum died, he wrote to the American military—he found a photograph of a grave at Madingley, the American cemetery, and asked for details, and in the pack he got back was a letter from his mother saying, "I believe John Hendricks is the father of my children." And so obviously Terry thought this was the man. And also included was a load of court-martial papers. And in the court-martial papers are the transcripts of the Black soldiers, which talks about their lives and talks about what they were—it's absolutely fascinating.

Rob Watson: So you just got absorbed by the story itself.

Liam McCarthy: Absolutely absorbed by the story. So these guys were in a truck, um, they were stopped by a white MP—two of them, one at the front, one at the back. The one at the front looks at all the documents and says, "Yeah, fine, off you go." And the guy at the back said, "No, no, no, no," and just shot at the truck. And this is the court-martial papers of the white soldier, who was nevertheless found not guilty. Found a little bit negligent for just shooting at the truck, but not guilty of anything. Um, but they got these Black soldiers out the truck while their mate's dying in the back, lined them up against the wall, hands up on the wall, reversed a Jeep carrier with a machine gun on the back, cocked the gun, said, "We're going to kill all you..."—won't use the word—and then didn't. That's like a bit of torture. And during it, I also found in the American archives a story of a Black chaplain who had given talks to local churches. And during the course of these talks, he talked about the racial situation in America after the war, what it might be like. And some of the white officers from his unit, an engineering unit, had witnessed the talks and held a secret case against him. He didn't know about this; the chaplain didn't know about the case. Um, and they decided the best thing to do would be to send him back to the States and put him in a chaplains unit and get him out the way because "we don't want any of this talk over here. It's just wrong. Nothing's going to happen after the war; we've got to shut this down." He was actually transferred to a port unit, I subsequently discovered because I managed to find his son. And his son told me he knew nothing about this. Wow. He knew nothing about the hearing. He told me he actually went to the 502nd Port Unit, and he was one of the many Black soldiers on Omaha Beach on D-Day, which you never see in the films, do you? There's no Black soldiers ever. And there they were—they were medics, they were chaplains—he was unarmed as a chaplain. And there's one marvelous story: just off the beach, his unit has been asked to look after some captured German prisoners, and one of them has a dog collar on, and the chaplain recognizes him because he'd been to Yale with him to study divinity. So there's a Black American chaplain, seen as the underclass, meeting a Wehrmacht chaplain who he knew well and had conversations with while he was a prisoner. And, but the interesting thing about the chaplain was he and a guy called Howard Thurman went to India before the war, and they met Gandhi while he was hiding from the British, and learnt about the non-violent opposition to British rule. And they took that non-violence back to the States. Didn't get a very good hearing because people just wanted to fight. And Howard Thurman, who was the guy he went with, became a college lecturer, and one of his PhD students who he took under his wing and became a great influence on was a chap you've probably heard of called Martin Luther King. So there's all those interconnections.

Rob Watson: And you found a thread through it.

Liam McCarthy: Yeah. And through Terry, um, he's what we call a "brown baby"—that sounds a horrible phrase, doesn't it? Child of a Black soldier and a white woman. But as the American press called them, the "black babies of Britain left behind after"—the "brown babies of Britain left behind after the war." And now Terry and about—there were about 2,000 brown babies after the war—Terry and all those survivors now have a Facebook group and they call themselves Britain's Brown Babies. Um, and through them I met a guy called Kerry, and Kerry's dad was a Black GI. And amazingly, his dad came back after the war and married his mum. Now if I tell you there were 70,000 British GI brides went back to America after the war, how many of them would you guess were Black?

Rob Watson: Like three? 3%?

Liam McCarthy: If I said four—that's four individuals, not percent—I might be overstating the case.

Rob Watson: Right. So it's quite an exception.

Liam McCarthy: So Louis had to come back to marry—yeah, it was very much an exception. And I thought, well, that's quite an interesting story because I want to tell that story in the book about the relationship between Black soldiers and white women: what was it like? Did they encounter riots? Did they encounter this, that, and the other? And Kerry said to me, "Oh, I'll be back in a minute." And he went upstairs and he came back with a suitcase, and he opened it up, and it was full of their love letters. He said, "Would these help?" So the whole chapter is told through their love letters, because they talk about him being—Louis being confined to barracks while the riots are going on in Bristol, so he can talk about rioting. They talk about—there's one wonderful moment where he's waiting for Pat, his girlfriend, to turn up, and he's waiting in their regular place, a little shelter. And a little boy comes up, and he tells Pat that, "Oh, this little boy came up and asked if I was waiting for my tart." And of course, in their innocence, they thought the boy meant "tart" was short for sweetheart.

Rob Watson: Yeah, these things change.

Liam McCarthy: So you can talk about them being welcomed as brothers-in-arms, but not necessarily brothers-in-law. You can talk about rumors. After the war, you can talk about the GI Bill. So the GI Bill gave soldiers cheap loans and paid for college for them. And if you take a place like Alabama, 70% of the people who went to war from Alabama were Black; 95% of people who got GI Bill money in Alabama after the war were white. So there's another level of injustice. But Louis, in his letters you can see he's got stuff about the GI Bill. We know from the unit history that he was in that the unit ran sessions about the GI Bill, and he used it, and he got a grant to come back to England and could use the money paid by the US Embassy to pay for his education in Britain, and he became a health service secretary for 40 years.

Rob Watson: So what time's your talk on, and where can people find your book?

Liam McCarthy: It was half an hour ago. That's why it's all fresh in the mind. And the book is available in the reception, but it's published by a company called Pen & Sword, about £25. I think you can still get it for 20 quid on Amazon.

Rob Watson: Oh, it was half an hour ago. That's why it's all fresh in the mind. Brilliant, Liam. Thank you. Other online retailers are available.

Liam McCarthy: Yeah, yes they are.

6. Segment 6: Ope Akingbade (Roro Production)

Rob Watson: Hello, this is Rob Watson of Soar Sound—that came out wrong—but we're here at the Leicester Adult Education College for the Saturday Heritage Fair, and I'm really pleased to be joined by...

Ope Akingbade: My name is Ope—Ope Akingbade. I'm the founder of Roro Production.

Rob Watson: And what does that involve?

Ope Akingbade: So yeah, Roro Production is a bespoke company that tells stories—maybe animation, documentary, life story. We tell stories that are passionate with us, that reflect who we are, and we just want to tell stories that can influence the next generation.

Rob Watson: What kind of stories are you telling? Where do you get your inspiration from?

Ope Akingbade: Yes, so I think I got my inspiration from virtually everything I see every day. The most important thing for me is being able to stay present to what people are saying. I might be walking down the road, it could be a turn of phrase somebody said something that triggers something in my memory. Whoa, then maybe it's something that is worth investigating or do a research on, then that could be a beginning of a story. But my family has been a pillar for me as well, they do inspire me as well. There are so many things we do at home as family that trigger, "Oh, I need to tell this story." So yeah, I just want to be present, listen to what people are saying, and hopefully I can get inspired.

Rob Watson: So which platforms do you use?

Ope Akingbade: Currently, I just launched—like I said, I launched *Amani Groove Quest*, you guys can check it up on socials on YouTube. We've just launched our pilot episode, um, but in about a few weeks' time now, we're going to be releasing our second episode. But there is a bigger plan in the future, I can't say much about it now until everything materializes. But if you want to watch us now, check us on YouTube.

Rob Watson: And what's the channel called?

Ope Akingbade: *Amani Groove Quest*.

Rob Watson: Say that again?

Ope Akingbade: *Amani Groove Quest*.

Rob Watson: *Amani Groove Quest*, okay. So we'll find a link for that as well. So in terms of storytelling, what kind of stories do you like and what do you think resonates with people? What

gets you to listen and watch stories? So you see things on YouTube and you've decided you want to have a go at telling stories. What got you into that? What inspired you to do that?

Ope Akingbade: I think I believe storytelling is a fabric of life. It's who we are, it's what connects us. I love stories that reflect who we are as a human being. I was watching a documentary a few weeks ago, David Olusoga about the slave trade kind of storytelling, and that triggered a lot of nuggets in me to create a documentary about the Benin Bronze Chronicles—how can I use all those artifacts, Nigerian heritage, to tell a different story? I'm just wired to tell stories. I'm just a people's person.

Rob Watson: Because I have a thing these days which, if I say this, people might take it the wrong way, but I'm going to say it anyway. I'm not really interested in people's identity. I don't—it's important, but what I think is people are story carriers, they're myth bearers. And this idea that everybody, it doesn't matter where you come from, we've all got different stories and different heritage of stories. And that fascinates me more because that enables me to learn about different stories from around the world, and they're all different. And then you learn—what have you learnt? Let me ask you this question because it triggered a thought then. In coming to the UK—so you're from Nigeria—what British stories do you like or do you resonate with?

Ope Akingbade: Oof. A lot, a lot, a lot. Uh, I mean, well, I don't even know where to start from. I mean, I love *Peppa Pig*.

Rob Watson: Right, okay.

Ope Akingbade: And *Peppa Pig* was so great. And I think when Boris Johnson was the Prime Minister, he forgot—probably it was at this trade kind of show—and then he forgot his notes or something, and he was talking about *Peppa Pig*. And one thing about *Peppa Pig* is it's one of the greatest—it's one of the most popular animations in China. The Chinese people, they don't speak English. I believe stories are universal. It is what makes us human. You can be black, white, green, it doesn't matter—story gets us, it makes us cry, it makes us happy. So to answer your question, the story is not about being Black, about being white—good story, I'm in love with it all day long.

Rob Watson: I love that answer. Thank you so much.

Ope Akingbade: You're welcome. Alright then.

7. Segment 7: John & Shruti (The EBB Leicester)

Rob Watson: Hello, this is Rob Watson at the Leicester Adult Education College on Belvoir Street in Leicester. We're here today for the Saturday Heritage Fair, which is on until 3:00. So if you've listened to some of the reports and conversations we've had so far, there'll be more of

those coming. So now I'm joined by John—it's a good job you've got name badges on because I didn't ask you before you sat down—and Shruti. Okay. What are you doing here today?

John: Oh, well, we're from The EBB Leicester. So we know John, who's the organizer, told us all about it, so we've come down. We've had some really nice conversations with people. I mean, it's like there's a fantastic room full of heritage displays and stuff, but there's lots of other interesting things. We've had a really good chat with a lady from Victim First, sort of like talking about apparently it's Restorative Justice Week, so that's something that we're taking a bit of an interest in. And we had a really nice chat with a lady sort of like who works at a school in Leicester as well, you know what I mean, so it's been...

Shruti: Yeah, we also had a chat with Mark from Brotherhood Legion.

John: Oh yes, absolutely, yes. Yeah, the Brotherhood, yeah. There's so much happening down here.

Rob Watson: There is, it's a really good opportunity to kind of come and explore, and everybody's in one place so you can connect with people really easily. Just tell the listeners a little bit about what EBB does, and then we'll think about that in the context of say history and heritage, I suppose.

John: Okay, yeah. Well, we're a support group for the families of prisoners based here in Leicester, and we offer, you know, support for anybody who's sort of like got a family member or a friend caught up in the criminal justice system in whatever way.

Rob Watson: So one of the things that we've had conversations about with Sue Lester, who's the Leicestershire Family History Society coordinator, as people discover things like members of their family, either in previous generations or had been incarcerated, were in prison, you know. Is there anything you deal with—have you ever had that as an issue where somebody finds out that a close relative who might have passed away, you know, they're looking through records—is that something that ever comes up, or are you just really dealing with people who are affected here and now?

John: Yeah, no, we're dealing with the here and now. I imagine that'd be very interesting to discover that for people, wouldn't it? You know what I mean? Because, yeah, I mean actually my brother's actually really interested in family history. He's sort of like dug up all sorts of sort of interesting sort of stuff. I mean like nothing—you find out that somebody was a bigamist or a murderer or something like that, it's like, you know, you didn't know about it.

Rob Watson: But those people who you're dealing with now and supporting now, they leave traces in today's history which future generations have to think about and have to come to terms with. That there might be a shame factor. What advice would you, you know, when you're dealing with people and you're kind of saying think about your actions now, think about your responsibilities now because it's not just for today, it's also for future generations.

Shruti: Yeah, it impacts the future generations as well, yeah.

Rob Watson: How do you deal with that? How do you advise people in that way? Because I suppose—sorry, often people get into trouble because they're thinking short-term, immediately here and now, they're responding to something or they can't resolve something, and that leads them down a path where they do things that they wouldn't otherwise do. But having that more extended view, is that something that might...

Shruti: So we have to be really sensitive about such a topic, and currently I'm working as a smoking cessation advisor at the council. So we provide behavioral counseling to individuals to help them quit smoking, but it is multifactorial. They have other areas of life as well. For example, if someone is stressed, they tend to get into smoking and other kind of bad habits, and that might impact them as well as—for example, I work with the pregnancy team as well. So the pregnant women who are smokers, obviously their action is impacting their baby as well. So when you are having a conversation with individuals whose actions can impact their future generation, you need to be very sensitive about the topic, but you need to make them understand in a way they could understand because sometimes if you are giving them just the information, for example harmful effects of smoking, we cannot just tell them that "if you are smoking the baby is going to die." We cannot tell them that. That means they might not listen to you. But you have to be very empathetic towards them, and you need to validate their feelings and their concerns. For example, if someone is a neurodivergent person and they are smoking, that means it would be very difficult for them to quit smoking, and they might be trying their best, but they are unable to quit smoking. So same goes to other things as well. For example, if someone is under lots of stress and they are committing any crime, they are just thinking about the short-term impact. Maybe they are thinking that "I will get some money" if someone is involved in a theft, and they might be doing things for their families, but the impact they have on their future generations, they need to think about that as well. So we have to approach it in a very empathetic way and we need to have that sensitive conversation. We can explain to them in a way—for example, I had this lady, and she was smoking for like five, six years now, and so one of her children, she was preterm because of the impact of the smoking, but she didn't realize that, and she was trying, but she tried multiple times before, but she was unable to quit smoking. So I had this conversation, so I just explained to her that it might be difficult for you, but we are there to help, and we can provide you with the support you need, and we can provide you with free nicotine replacement products, and also we can provide you with behavioral counseling. For example, we give them a call once every week and we explain to them that, okay, how are you doing? Are you experiencing any cravings? And what can we do to help? And if they are experiencing any cravings, we might provide them with behavioral counseling to deal with the cravings, so some of the coping strategies. So in the similar way, if someone is involved in a crime, we can just—when they are actually thinking about committing that crime, we can maybe come up with some solutions for them, some coping strategies. Maybe we can just tell them just when you are going to commit that crime, about to commit that crime, maybe just think about your children. Maybe just think that what impact it might have on the future of my children, and "I might gain some money right now or I might get something out of it right now, but it's going to impact my life as well as my children's life for the years to come." So, and they might use some other coping strategies, for example distraction. So instead of doing that particular thing at that moment, they can just do something else so that they don't think about committing that crime, so that means you're just distracting your brain. And there are some other coping strategies as well. So instead of committing that crime—for example, I'm just

talking about theft right now, but there are other crimes as well—so they need to be occupied in their life. For example, if someone is unemployed and they're thinking about committing this crime because they are under lots of stress, so they might turn up to the council or they might gain some skills and experience, and they might also involve with other people. So there is this aspect of social connectedness. So if you are giving back to the community, if you are socializing with other individuals, and if you try to learn some more skills, that means you are going to get involved in something else, that means you are also doing this for your own development, personal development, as well as you are doing this for your own family. So maybe we can approach this from this point of view, that's what I'm thinking.

Rob Watson: Cool. Anything to add, John?

John: Well, that's a lot to unpack there, and I think—I mean, that's the thing, it's like understanding, or trying to come to an understanding of the things that are driving you, you know what I mean? I think actually all of us probably understand, you know what I mean, that we look back and think, "Why did I act like that?" you know what I mean? And so I think that's what you...

Rob Watson: And what I find useful about the heritage side is that you can see that other people—every generation has to deal with these things. So it's like your story is not unique to you, and it has echoes in the past and in the future. So being open to the idea of learning about those stories that people are telling, because there's always people uncovering these stories, is going to be interesting. Where do people find out more information about EBB?

John: Um, well, we have a sort of Facebook page, we have an Instagram page, sort of, yeah, so go Google us and get in touch if...

8. Segment 8: Ayyub, Yusuf, and Charmaine

Rob Watson: So this is Rob Watson at the Leicester Saturday Heritage Fair—I can remember now—and we're at the Leicester Adult Education College on Belvoir Street, and I'm now joined by two young gentlemen. Do you want to tell us your first names?

Ayyub: My name is Ayyub.

Rob Watson: Do you know, I'm the world's worst person for pronouncing people's names when I meet people, so you'll have to teach me.

Ayyub: A-Y-Y-U-B, so it's pronounced Ayyub.

Rob Watson: Ayyub.

Yusuf: And my name is Yusuf, so...

Rob Watson: Yusuf, yours is a bit more readily—lots of people called Yusuf.

Yusuf: Yeah, yeah, there's lots of people called Yusuf.

Rob Watson: Yeah, I've not heard anybody called Ayyub before. Is it a common name or a special name?

Ayyub: It's not a common name, but like...

Rob Watson: Well, I'm Rob, so that's an easy name to remember. So what are you doing here today?

Ayyub: Uh, we just came because like it's a Saturday, you don't really do anything on a Saturday, you just want to do something. And this is like somewhere that you can learn stuff, but it's also fun.

Rob Watson: And what was fun about it?

Ayyub: There's like you got to see stuff that you wouldn't usually see on a day-to-day basis.

Rob Watson: So you describe it to us, Yusuf, you tell us what you saw.

Yusuf: Well, I saw like multiple artifacts that we've seen in World War I, World War II, and all of the things we've seen in the past. There's like uniforms that have been in the past. We also got to make our like a map using the dice, so like we also saw some board games which are really fun as well.

Rob Watson: Cool. And were there any stories that you learnt? Was anybody telling you what were the stories associated with all of these things? Because that's what these things are there for. They're not there to just be things by themselves; they've got a story with them. Did you hear about any of them?

Ayyub: Yeah, I was hearing about—we went to this place and it had like all the comics and all that sort of things, so it was like really good. And we were hearing stories about how like the person used to play like—used to play with your brother like together, but these days you can only play like multiplayer and stuff.

Rob Watson: Right. So it's nice to see stuff that isn't just screen-based.

Ayyub: Yeah.

Rob Watson: Yeah. If you were telling your friends about what was happening here today, what would you tell them would be the best thing about it?

Ayyub: The VR. There was this VR thing where you could like see all the stuff and you could pick stuff up and like hit...

Rob Watson: I feel like I've missed out! I've been sat here in the cafe doing things and not being able to get out and do anything. It's like maybe I need to leave you guys here in charge of the radio and I'll go and have a look around the exhibition. Do you guys—so what media do you guys like using? Allowed to use and like using—two different things.

Ayyub: We don't use TikTok, Snapchat, that sort of thing, but we use like YouTube. Like YouTube just like—it's a base Android app and it's good to use.

Rob Watson: What kind of videos do you like the most?

Ayyub: Video gaming. I'm into video gaming.

Rob Watson: So you watch people playing video games? Those YouTubers, because people watch them for hours, don't they?

Ayyub: Yeah, I'm not that person though. I only watch for like 20 minutes.

Rob Watson: I like the science documentaries that you get on YouTube because the BBC used to do some really good science documentaries, but they...

Ayyub: Like the *Operation Ouch!* I used to watch that when I was younger, that was quite good.

Rob Watson: *Operation Ouch!*? I don't know that one, what's that about?

Ayyub: We watched it in science class as well. It's like where you learn about like science and like the heart and all that sort of thing.

Rob Watson: So if you had a magic wand and you were able to set up your own media channel, what would you want it to do?

Ayyub: Gaming. No, funny enough, I already have my own media channel.

Rob Watson: You have—you're a media expert already!

Ayyub: Yeah, I have one, but I don't post on it anymore. I used to post on it, I have like 200 subscribers-ish, so...

Rob Watson: So why have you stopped posting?

Ayyub: Because I just feel like—yeah, too lazy, too lazy, end of story.

Yusuf: Too lazy.

Rob Watson: Not inspired. I think the best way to describe it is not inspired.

Ayyub: It was fun though for the time I done it.

Rob Watson: Do you want to introduce yourself?

Charmaine: Hi Rob, I'm Charmaine. I'm taking these young lads around today, and it's really interesting reflecting on what they've taken away from walking around and what they've spotted and what they've interacted with. They've forgotten about the record player that we saw at the beginning, and trying to dial an old phone, which is kind of hilarious watching them trying to dial the old phone getting the numbers. How did you find that, guys?

Ayyub: Really hard. Oh, it was really hard. Yeah, because at the stall we thought it was to do with something else, then really you have to like put your finger in and twist it, so it's quite hard.

Rob Watson: You've never used one of those telephones? And then if you were dialing 999—that's why the Americans have 911, and we've got 999, and you go *shhh* all the way round, *t-t-t-t-t-t*, *shhh* all the way round, and it'd take forever to actually dial through, whereas the Americans just do 9-1-1. Did you know that?

Charmaine: No, I didn't! I learnt something new here today, Rob, thank you.

Rob Watson: Whereas with buttons, you just press the button, it doesn't make any difference. Somebody must have thought that's a good idea, all the nines, that works. So any other things that you found that you...

Yusuf: Yeah, it was amazing how to see like the vinyl recorders worked, like how the sound—the vibrations make the sound and then we could hear through like a pin that goes on the ridges, then we could hear it. It was amazing how it works.

Rob Watson: Analog. Old school. So when was the phonograph invented? The phonograph—well, that's what it is, that's what it's called, it's a phonograph.

Charmaine: Oh is it? I always thought it was record player.

Rob Watson: It's a record player, or it's Edison's phonograph.

Charmaine: Oh is it? I've learnt a second thing—second fact.

Rob Watson: Yeah, there were various different names for it, but I think it's the 1880s, 1890s. I'll have to Google it just to double-check, but yeah, it's been around a while.

Charmaine: No, we have the old-school record player at home, but the electric one. Still got records. No, God, I don't think it survived that.

Rob Watson: You've not got a wind-up one? Well, that's what they—I mean one of the things at the moment is about being prepared in case there's like the internet goes down, and they're saying have a wind-up radio. So it's like an AM or an FM radio because it's not digital. So could you make a radio on your kitchen table? You can't make a digital radio on your kitchen table.

Ayyub: Yeah, I don't know.

Yusuf: Make a radio? That would be almost impossible for us these days.

Rob Watson: It's why people used to make radios called crystal sets. And in the 1920s, you'd buy a kit and you'd make your own radio, and you'd listen to the crystal—the crystal would be what tuned in. And then transistors came in in the 1940s and made it electronic. So it's like people made their own radios—well, before that it was like valves, so the electronics was big valves so they'd get big and hot, and you'd have a big radio in the corner of the living room. So yeah, you were able to make and repair it yourself, yeah. Should we do a history class on media?

Charmaine: Oh, I think we should.

Rob Watson: I haven't done this stuff for a long time. But you don't discover it. I tell you where's a good place to go to—do you ever go over to Nottingham?

Ayyub: No. We don't really go anywhere.

Charmaine: Oh, you don't ever go anywhere! Listen to him, Rob, honestly.

Rob Watson: Just by the railway station, as you come out of the Nottingham railway station, there's a shop called Hopkinson's, and it's like three or four floors, and it's got loads of old things like vintage and collectibles, that kind of stuff. So it's got things like old cameras and stuff like that. So John's got a collection of cameras.

Charmaine: I think Milton Keynes—in near Bletchley Park, there's also a centre which has got the history of like radio and things like that.

Ayyub: They had like World War I stuff and you brought with you this like little thing and it told you like, "Oh, go here, go have a look at that," and you had like headphones on, it was like a really good experience.

Charmaine: That's the history about there as well, and communications—I think it's a communications museum. I'll have to look it up, we'll get back to you about that. But just reflecting back on what we did see in the other hall, because I mean when we came into this hall, Rob, we've just come and just sat with you to talk to you, but in the other hall which was also talking about history, um, there was a map there of the Great War, and all of the countries that were involved in the Great War. Um, and what did we notice, kids, about what that map showed? Can you tell me what was significant and what stood out about that map of the Great War?

Yusuf: The map of the Great War...

Charmaine: Great War. There was a lot of what color all over it? Do you remember the map?

Ayyub: There was a lot of red because like everywhere was affected practically.

Charmaine: Was there one country stood out interestingly? China wasn't part of it.

Rob Watson: China? The Great Wall of China? No, because China—yeah, my history of China...

Charmaine: No, my history's not that good either to be honest, but...

Rob Watson: When was the Chinese Revolution? That was the 1930s, wasn't it?

Charmaine: You're looking at the wrong person, really looking at the wrong person. You need to start a history channel.

Ayyub: No, I think I'm sticking to my *Operation Ouch!*

Rob Watson: Okay, well I think on that note we'll say thank you very much, because otherwise we'll start a family argument.

Charmaine: Thank you, Rob, for hosting us.

Ayyub: Thank you, Rob.

Yusuf: Thank you, Rob.

9. Segment 9: Philomena Imade-Omoruyi-Osaigbovo & Egosa Matty Omoruyi-Omorogieva

Rob Watson: Hello, welcome back to Soar Sound, and we're at the Leicester Adult Education College on Belvoir Street, and it's the Saturday Heritage Fair, and I'm now joined by—do you want to introduce yourselves?

Philomena Imade-Omoruyi-Osaigbovo: My name is Philomena Imade-Omoruyi-Osaigbovo. I'm one of the Leicester City Council Heritage Champions, and my project is looking at how food is documented as a heritage, looking at West African food.

Rob Watson: Okay, and your colleague is...

Egosa Matty Omoruyi-Omorogieva: My name is Egosa Matty Omoruyi-Omorogieva, Matilda's Kitchen. I'm one of the participants.

Rob Watson: Now, let's get straight to it because you've both got food in your hands. Do you want to tell us a bit about what you've got and describe it for the listeners so they can get a sense of what the texture, what the color—start off with that and then we'll think about the stories that you can tell based around food.

Philomena Imade-Omoruyi-Osaigbovo: Okay, since I have one of my participants here—because I haven't cooked any of this food. So from the project I recruited vendors that are West Africans, and that cut across Cameroon, across Ivory Coast, Ghana, and we had four represented from Nigeria, and we have Matilda's Kitchen here. So you want to tell us about the cake and briefly about the black soup as well?

Egosa Matty Omoruyi-Omorogieva: Okay. Um, I'll start with the cake. Um, this is red velvet sponge cake, and it's mixed with Greek yogurt with a little bit of honey. So this cake is one of our favorites in Nigeria. We make it a bit harder than the ones we eat—the English cake. So this is crunchy, it's moist when you—after, you know, when you put it in your mouth, it feels crunchy, and then by the time you chew it becomes moist. So it's very nice, tastes nice for occasion. We use them for wedding cake, birthday cake, any ceremony in Nigeria.

Rob Watson: Now one of the things about food that's really good is for memories. It triggers memories. When you serve that with people and they've not had it for a while, what do you think it brings? What does it evoke?

Philomena Imade-Omoruyi-Osaigbovo: Excitement.

Rob Watson: Excitement? What makes it excitement?

Philomena Imade-Omoruyi-Osaigbovo: You could see the "wows" and like—I had someone in this building today who is from Africa. Unfortunately, he said the mom passed away very early; he hasn't got a chance to taste African food. But he asked so much about the jollof rice, the one I'm holding right here, and he had a taste and he left a comment: "This is my first time tasting this, wow." So there's always that "wow." And I've had over 15 English persons taste the food today: "Wow, this is amazing! Oh, how is it made?" You know, so it starts conversation and it just brings that excitement in people. You want to add to that, Matilda's Kitchen?

Egosa Matty Omoruyi-Omorogieva: Yes, it brings that good vibe to people, because most people now, generally in the whole world I would say, this Nigerian rice has become a challenge to different people, whereby, you know, when they hear about any occasion, what comes to their mind first is the Nigerian rice or the Ghana rice. It becomes a competition all over the place. So some people say Nigerian rice is the best, some people say the Ghanaian rice is the best. But we all believe that the jollof rice generally, it tastes nice, it's nice, it's very good for occasion. That's one thing people are looking for when they get to an occasion. Most occasion in Africa, what people are looking for is not really the other food, but that jollof rice is one of their favorites they're looking for. Some people say it's the orange rice, like the children will describe it like the orange rice. So without the jollof rice in an occasion, I think that occasion is not complete.

Rob Watson: Now when you travel, and you've experienced food from other places, you get a certain sense of, as you say, excitement, isn't it, that comes through. But it's also something—is there some food that you like from other places? So the question is: how tied is this to Nigerian, West African experience, and what other foods—because we live in a globalized world now, don't we? Do you crave foods from other cultures or like foods from other cultures? What do you like?

Egosa Matty Omoruyi-Omorogieva: I like fish and chips.

Rob Watson: Oh right, okay! What do you like about fish and chips?

Egosa Matty Omoruyi-Omorogieva: I don't know. You know we have this food called yam. I don't know if you know the yam? Yam is similar to the potato. So in replacement of yam, we use the potato. So we do fry the yam just like potato as well. So whenever the craving comes and I see the fish and chips, it reminds me of yam back home in Africa.

Rob Watson: Yeah. I was up in Manchester last year and there were all these really nice food places, and we ended up in a fish and chip shop, and it was like the first time I'd had fish and chips in like 18 months and it was like, oh, when you put lots of vinegar and salt on it. And it's not really a nice dish, you know, but this time it just hits the spot and you kind of go, okay, I've satisfied the craving. What about you? Would you...

Philomena Imade-Omoruyi-Osaigbovo: Yeah, I'm someone who loves food generally. I'm very open to trying different food. Like, I've tried a lot of different English food. Like even today I've ate the beef pie. So nice. I got it from the cafe right there. So I eat different food from different—I'm very open to food. What I do as a person, anytime I go to a new country, the first thing I do is to try food, try to visit their museum, try to explore because I love anything that connects with history, with heritage. Yeah, so I have tried so many food from even other cultures from Nigeria.

Rob Watson: And what is it about food that brings people together? You know, when we think about social cohesion and we think about some of the challenges we've got as a society, food is one of those things that actually—why is that, and do we do enough?

Philomena Imade-Omoruyi-Osaigbovo: Yeah, it's not probably because people are hungry, let's not relate it to that. But people just get excited when they hear the word "food." So when you're having an event, you said there will be food—people just turn up.

Rob Watson: It's like a gift, isn't it? You know, come and join in.

Egosa Matty Omoruyi-Omorogieva: It's charity. It's like people have the opportunity to do charity to other people, because in Nigeria mostly we believe in gift. People believe in gift, gifting somebody something free. You understand? So when people hear about food, they believe, "Oh, there will be something great in that event." So people want to attend, they have the opportunity to attend because there's something in place for them, you understand?

Philomena Imade-Omoruyi-Osaigbovo: If I add to that, especially when a particular food is mentioned, so people begin to think, "Oh, party jollof rice." Like this is from Empress Kitchen. So when you hear the word, "Oh, there will be jollof rice," oh, then party—it's going to be made specially. It's not going to be made like the way it's made at home. So everything has to be in it. So people already have that sense of, "Oh, it will be very nice, there will be extra care, you know, to ensure that it comes out great." And again, people just then come together. So my research on this heritage project has found that food is a starter for conversation. So food helps people to connect, and food also helps people to kind of connect in a kind of multicultural way. We

already know that Leicester is very multiculturally diverse. You could see the turnout at St Matthews when one of the workshops we did, when we tried to transfer knowledge to the young people, we taught them moi-moi. Even people from Pakistan, people from Asian [backgrounds], they got to try how to do the moi-moi leaf for the first time, they got to taste the moi-moi leaf. Even when she did the meat pie and the egusi soup, it was so lovely.

Rob Watson: So you're there now, aren't you? You're eating all of that lovely food again and it brings back those memories. Last question: where can people find out more information about what you do?

Philomena Imade-Omoruyi-Osaigbovo: Good. So like I said, this project has been funded by National Heritage Fund in partnership with Leicester City Council—I'm one of the Heritage Champions—and from PEARL Initiative CIC. So all of the research findings, the report, we've put it on our website, so you could check PEARL Initiative CIC website and you'll see and connect with the different things we're doing. And we had a board which you could see over there, we've made a big board from this project just so people could know what the food is about and what the ingredients are. Like someone came in today and looked at what the ingredients are made of jollof rice and he said, "Oh, this is not for me because it has chicken stock in it. I'm vegetarian." So at first I didn't pick that, I said, "Oh, we don't have the chicken today." He said, "No, the chicken stock." "Oh, sorry, that's the spice for making jollof rice." So just because of that, he didn't have a taste anymore. So we've made that so people could know what it is, and some of this will be donated to Leicester Museum when the project ends in February. And I'm trying to also kind of explore how we could, if we get more funding, then do like a kind of recipe book, because a lot of people have been asking during the workshop training, "So how do we even get to make this on our own?" So we could get the participants like Matilda's Kitchen here, Empress, Criss Cross Kitchen, and other kitchens—about KLN as well, the one at London Road, if you want to—you said you like fish? Go try the grilled fish at London Road, KLN, I will write the address for you afterwards. So we could get them to actually write down how all this food are made, and then we could share that as well.

10. Segment 10: Kim Sadidue

Rob Watson: So here we are at Leicester Adult Education for the Saturday Heritage Fair, and I'm joined now by Kim Sadidue. Do you want to tell us what you've been doing here today, Kim?

Kim Sadidue: Yeah, so I've recently been invited to be Researcher in Residence with Conflict Memory Education Centre here in Leicester, and I've been fortunate enough to be given access to an archive of photos, maps, and publications by the late Jim Hooper, who was a conflict journalist, and he'd been out in Bosnia during the genocide and mass atrocities that were committed in the 1990s. So my role is actually working through that archive, hopefully to work towards building an exhibition next year.

Rob Watson: And what kind of things are you learning as you start to delve into it?

Kim Sadidue: Um, I mean it's been fascinating for me because I'm a Bosnia specialist anyway, but just the amount of archive that there is in terms of photos. I think the key thing for me is

really about the photos of the refugees who were—many were ethnically cleansed from the regions in Bosnia. And actually what I really want to do is to be able to get some of those photos back to those people and to survivors who are still here, because it may be the only photos they have of their loved ones. But I think I'd been given one of the letters first, and it was from the Croatian Army who were based in Bosnia, and it's actually written to Jim Hooper about giving him access to be able to go and interview people. But the letter was written within the first six months of the independence of Bosnia in 1992. So literally a few months after the war had started, so it's that kind of first piece of written evidence. So for me I was like, you know, just to see the full coverage of the archive is absolutely amazing.

Rob Watson: And as a journalist, what was Jim's process and who was he working for? Was he a freelancer, was he a stringer, what was he employed to do, and why was he focused on this particular area or on areas like it?

Kim Sadidue: So he'd started in—actually he was from the US and he was in the Foreign Service, so he was a diplomat, and then he'd worked for publications like *Jane's Defence Weekly*, and done some work for the BBC as well. So actually his role out there was to literally document all three sides: so the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosnian Serb Army, and also the HVO, the Croatian Army. So he was literally taking photos of all of the war process as it happened, and obviously with civilians as well, so you could actually almost document day-by-day lived experience of living in conflict.

Rob Watson: And from the point of view of a—I was going to say memorial, might be the wrong word actually, but as a reference point for people to learn from to look at conflicts today—what is there that you're finding out in the archive that maybe can become lessons or models that people can learn from or avoid? What are you finding with that?

Kim Sadidue: Um, so as well—my work more broadly, so by qualification I was originally a criminologist, and very fascinated in understanding mass atrocities and genocide. My work then kind of moved into—my PhD is actually in education, but it looks specifically at how we educate about genocide and mass atrocities, so through kind of museum studies, memory studies. And I think actually having evidence, because there's a lot of genocide denial across all different genocides—we've seen that obviously playing out with the ICJ recently finding Myanmar guilty as a state for the first time of genocide against the Rohingya. And so I actually think by having a documented archive, it actually prevents genocide denial. It allows us to challenge it with real evidence, photographs from that time. It also allows people to have those difficult conversations. So previously I'd been working on a Virtual Bosnia Room, which used actually photographs and things, so we replicated Srebrenica Memorial Centre in Bosnia. And we're finding that it's really good for young people who are second generation or third generation—so their parents had either fled the conflict or their grandparents had—and the families didn't know how to have those conversations with them. So actually having photographs, having a virtual space as well like the Virtual Bosnia Room, actually allows young people to engage with those materials, that evidence, in a more comfortable way and at a pace that suits them, and the parents find it easier to use something else rather than having the direct conversations.

Rob Watson: And the benefit of being here at something like the Saturday Heritage Fair, what has that given you? Because that's the tangible learning—we were talking to some young

people earlier and they were saying, "Oh, we got to see these things as a hands-on thing, it felt more alive to them."

Kim Sadidue: Yeah, and I mean I was here yesterday as well for the Military History Live, and so many people came up to the display and started having—because well we've got a map of Bosnia, actually with the front lines drawn into where conflict was happening. And people kind of came to look at this random map that was on a table, for instance, and then obviously saw the photos and were like, "Ooh, you know, what was happening in those?" And so they're a really good way—the archives are a really good way of being able to start those conversations. And then people will kind of follow up questions with that, and you can start to explore more contemporary issues as well. So for instance, obviously the war in Ukraine right now—I've been really fortunate to work with Ukrainian refugees and survivors—and it just allows those conversations to happen. It allows you to apply historical cases to more contemporary issues, probably I'd say in a safer way, because then people don't feel necessarily they need to talk about a current issue in detail, but can see evidence from something else and maybe understand a bit more what that would look like. Because I think for me, I mean I've been to Bosnia eight times now, and obviously I've seen it in the real world. But when you see the map and you understand those red lines and what they mean, I think that really brought something alive for me because I hadn't considered what it looked like in terms of a war map, you know—I'd just seen bullet holes, shell holes in buildings and things. So actually to be able to flip between the two of photographs, which demonstrate the actual physical destruction and the human cost, and then to be able to use the maps alongside that to go, "Well, where was that in Bosnia? What does that look like now?" I think those two—you know, a lot of the young people I spoke to yesterday as well were kind of like asking questions about it, and it's being drawn in by physical materials.

Rob Watson: Brilliant. Where can people find out more information about your work?

Kim Sadidue: Um, well it's all kind of new at the moment, but if they go online to Conflict Memory Education Centre, they can find out there, or they can—obviously I work for De Montfort University in Leicester, so they can always just Google me and drop me an email if they want to. I'm more than happy to have a conversation about mass atrocity and genocide education.