

BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM

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Adventures Through Time is an exciting new series of animations and podcasts, working in collaboration with Fun Kids Radio UK. Below is the transcript of the first podcast episode.

Podcast – Episode 3: Keeping Us Fed

Voice over/intro jingle: The Black Country Living Museum Podcast, Powerful Women of the Black Country

Host: Hello and welcome to the Black Country Living Museum Podcast, the show where we dive into the history of the Black Country, discover the stories from the past and have some fun along the way!

Question: Black Country Food

Host : As humans there are certain things that we need to do in order to stay alive, eating is one of these things and the people in The Black Country were no different!

Depending on where you live in the UK, you might have different foods. There's stargazy pie from Cornwall, Haggis from Scotland and even Jellied Eel from London. The problem with The Black Country, is that it isn't an officially labelled area, just a collection of areas that people began to refer to as The Black Country. Still, there are a few things that stand out when we look at what are considered as 'Black Country dishes'. My personally favorite is Grey Peas (pronounced 'Pays') and bacon. It takes a long time to make, but it is simple to do and very, very filling. Honestly you feel like you've eaten a rock, its so heavy! Grey peas aren't like the green things you buy, they will be in a separate aisle. These peas have to be soaked overnight to soften them up, boiled and simmered for 45minutes. Bacon cooked until its brown and then cook it all together on a

low heat for 2 more hours. It was a simple dish that wasn't very expensive to get and make and lots of people still eat it today

There are other foods that were really popular amongst the working class like boiled tripe (this is meat that comes from the stomach lining of farm animals). This was boiled with some onions for around half an hour.

Faggots and peas could be made from any meat offcut (or offal), including heart, liver etc. This meat would be wrapped up in stomach lining and mixed with onions to make the meal.

You can tell from the recipes I've mentioned that they use a lot of parts of the animal that people used to use as much of the animal as they could. Nothing went to waste. There is a famous saying with regard to Black Country food, 'They used everything but the oink!'

Discussion – We have Simon Briercliffe with us today another of the museum's researchers. Simon I have some questions for you:

Question: The recipes we have talked about already seemed to involve a lot of meat. Was there any such thing as vegetarianism?

Not usually through choice, especially amongst the working class. People had hard jobs that required a lot of energy, protein from meat enabled this. If people ran out of money as meat was expensive then they may have resorted to dishes like a baked onion with a bit of butter for flavor.

Question: There seemed to be a lot of people owning animals like pigs and chickens. Why was it popular and where would they have gotten them from?

It was popular because animals had a lot of uses. Pigs for example would eat any sort of scrap food so were relatively cheap to feed. Their poo could then be used to grow vegetables and if it was a female pig they could have lots of babies that could be sold. Chickens would supply meat, but also eggs that could again be sold to neighbors etc. Animals could be gotten from markets or bought from neighbors who had them.

Question: What did children have for school dinners?

School dinners from school didn't become compulsory until the 1970s. From the late 1800s when school was compulsory and teachers noticed that students couldn't concentrate due to their poor diets most children would go home at lunch time and have a large cooked meal then. They would have smaller meals in the evening.

Discussion Topic: Adventure's Through Time Episode

Host: Right, now we're going to have a listen to an episode of "Adventures through Time", our series all about 2 kids that visit the museum and get transported back in time to see the events they're learning about happen right in front of them!

[Play episode]

Discussion Topic: Black Country health and safety

Host: This is Black Country Health and Safety, where we have a look at some of the silliest injuries and mishaps from back in the black country's heyday. Today we're thinking of factories and the sorts of accidents that can happen here. On the museum site we have got a Trap Shop, a building that used to manufacture animal and human traps. Nasty things that snap shut of an animal's leg. Building these objects was not easy, and in a factory such as this accidents were very common. They used machines that were powered by motors, very often women who had especially long hair would sometimes get their hair stuck in the machine and it would cause major harm. Another example is the machines used to punch a hole in metal. These were operated by hand, and again were primarily used by women as at the time this work was relatively unskilled. The women would move a lever to punch holes in the metal but they had to be careful, as anything that was used to punch a hole in metal could very easily punch a hole in someone's bones and there are many stories of women losing fingers to these contraptions.

Today this would not happen, as most machines such as these (if they were done by hand) would have some kind of guard in place, and the employer would have to give them safety equipment like hair nets, and safety shoes if there is a danger of dropping anything on their feet. In the Victorian times most factory owners didn't want to supply this equipment as they would have had to pay for it, very unfair on their workers!

Listener questions

Host: Now it's time for the part of the show where we answer some of your questions. If you have a question for us then you can email us at blackcountrykids@bclm.com

Question 1 from Holly: In the Victorian times what did people eat for pudding?

Answer: Beginning of 19th century sugar was very expensive so it was not common to have sweet puddings. Towards the later part when sugar was more common there were more sweet

things like cakes but they would have been as a special treat rather than every day. They would have also been incredibly unhealthy and full of fat like a 'Lardy Cake'. Puddings would have also used ingredients like berries that were a bit more common place. Puddings that took a long time to cook like rice puddings were popular as they would have taken a long time to cook so the housewife would have been able to do other jobs while she was waiting.

Question 2 from John: When did people start eating chocolate?

Chocolate was imported from the 1600s from 'The Americas'. It started as a bitter drink like coffee until people realised they could add sugar to it and make it taste really nice.

In 1847 Joseph Fry realised it could be condensed and turned into a bar like we have today.

The chocolate bars tasted so nice that some people thought they were sinful. It was quakers like the Rowntrees and the Cadburys that decided to take it up and produce them in factories.

Outro [1 minute]

Host: Thanks for listening, if you want to find out more about The Black Country Museum then just head to our website at bclm.com