

This story was filmed and recorded during early February 2006 for ‘Hear all about it!’

This campaign is a wonderful selection of inspiring adult learning stories told by the learners themselves. The highlights from Helena’s interview which can be watched and read; this is the transcript of the whole interview. The on-line learning champions would be delighted if Her stories were used to promote learning in your organisation, college or charity. You can link you webpage to the West Midlands Learning Directory – Hear all about it! Page www.wmld.org/pages/hear_all_about_it/.



Helena’s story –

“I am retired but I’m doing English and Russian. The Russian course is in it’s 2nd year and I was in hospital for a bit so I missed quite a bit of Russian and English. I have done English for quite a long time but my spelling is not very good!

I came to England in 1948 and I worked in Wolverhampton for a bit, making material. But then I decided to move to Birmingham and I worked in Cadbury’s until I retired, really. And I decided to learn a little bit, because my English was very bad at that time, and it still is, with my spelling, But I can understand you and I am pleased that I’ve done some English.

It’s something to do. It is nice to go and meet people and have a good laugh, because everybody’s in the same position. We are all beginners, which is quite good. They are very nice people on the course, but they are much younger than me.

In the beginning I couldn’t spell a thing, when I started so I have learned quite a lot. I like learning languages. Well I think it’s quite enough to learn languages because in English we get some homework and in Russian we get some homework and you have to do things for yourself and in the home as well. I am thinking about going to painting class, because I like to do the portraits. I haven’t done that yet. I would advise everybody to go and learn because it’s very important. And as time passes away, some people are bored of sitting at home doing nothing.

During the war we did have to leave the school and leave the country. The Germans took us away to work, so I was working instead of going to school. It was quite a difficult time for 2 years and after that I was at work full time, which meant it was too much to go to classes so I didn’t. I had children and for 10 years I was looking after them, so I didn’t have time to study, so that’s the only time when I retired. I said that’s it I’m going to do everything now.”

This project was managed by jo.knight@niace.org.uk - who can be contracted for more information. She works for NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education). Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council funded the project.

