

Leicester Pen Pals Keep in Touch – By Tape

News article, publication unknown, 1959:

Leicester pen pals – 1959 style – are getting together. At the Shaftesbury Boys' Club in George Street, Belgrave Gate, this Friday, they are attending the inaugural meeting of the Leicester Tape Recording Club, the city's first organised group of tape enthusiasts.

These "tapesponders" – young men and girls who record their voices on tapes, which they post to fellow enthusiasts all over Britain, instead of writing letters – are, at the moment, a fairly small group. But many of them have big ideas.

Some want to "tapespond" with enthusiasts overseas, even cherishing the hope of sending tapes beyond the Iron Curtain.

Others want to use their tape recorders to bring pleasure to hospital patients by playing them messages recorded by their relatives and friends.

One member of the new club is interested in forming a drama group. She believes that tape is an excellent means of teaching actors speech delivery.

Some others want to concentrate on the technical aspects of tape recording. Members of the club's "working committee" formed before the inaugural meeting, are Mr. John Buckler, of 32 Scott Street, Leicester, who is the chairman, Mr Peter Starie, of 24 Minehead Street, the secretary, treasurer Mr Collin J frost, of 71, Staveley Road; Mr Raymond Butler; and Miss Janet Towlson.

Mr. Starie, who is an electrician, says he would like to send tapes to overseas countries, including those on the other side of the Iron Curtain. But no club member has yet established the necessary contacts to make that possible.

Like all other tape enthusiasts, Mr. Starie gets a great kick out of operating a recorder. He takes part in a "triangle tape" correspondance. That is a "tapespondence" between himself in Leicester and two other enthusiasts elsewhere in Britain.

Jokes Sound Better

Mr. Starie records a message on his tape. "You put down what you would put in a letter," he says. "For it's a letter in sound."

Jokes and other pleasantries come over much better in sound than in print.

"Triangle tapes" are passed round the triangle of people, each listening to the others messages, music or anything else they care to record.

The tape passes from one tapesponder to another every week. The result? Everybody gets lazy about letter writing!

Mr. Starie has made interesting recordings of young Edwardian gentlemen in a Tudor Road café. He interviewed them and taped their unrehearsed replies.

Asked about rock 'n' roll, one gentleman said: "If you've got the feet-itch, it's a good way of scratching them." Questioned about religion, another gentleman gave a reply that was as old as the tailoring style of his suit: "You do not have to go to church to be a Christian."

Versatile Medium

Mr. Starie has built up such a good system of tapesponding that he receives a tape nearly every day from one of his correspondents. Some of his tapes run for about two hours.

The Leicester tape club is one of a large and ever increasing number in Britain. People are thinking up new ways of using tape – a most versatile medium – all the time.

Members of the new Leicester club need not necessarily be owners of tape recorders, and it is expected that some of the inquirers this Friday will be people who are wondering just what it is that makes tape recording so fascinating.