

Armchair Adventures: A Local History Adventure – Transcript

Connie: Hi guys! Welcome to Armchair Adventures, a fun interactive podcast for children, hosted by me, Connie...

*Armchair Adventures Theme Song:
On an armchair adventure you can go anywhere you like,
On an armchair adventure imaginations fly.*

Connie: I hope you enjoyed last month's episode adventurers, I loved dancing the funky chicken!

Hey, guess what...Armchair Adventures has been nominated for a Digital City Award, for best use of technology. Can you believe it?! There's a glitzy ceremony too, I can't wait. We'll let you know how we get on next time.

Anyway, on this month's episode we are going on an Armchair Adventure with...drum roll please... John. Say, hello John.

John: Hello, John!

Connie: You're in a good mood!

John: I've been for a wander along the canal, it always cheers me up!

Connie: The canal does? It's so murky. What do you find uplifting about it?

John: The history! It's incredible, all we have to do is step out of our front doors. There's history all around us, I learn something new every day! The industrial revolution began where we live in Manchester and so there's so much to see: cotton mills, waterwheels, the canals.

Connie: I love history, like Ancient Egypt and Rome. The Pyramids and Coliseum are cool, even medieval British history, like the Tower of London. But the canals and those dark old mills do not excite me. I see them every day!

John: You know, we don't have to fly around the world to see beautiful buildings, or places where historic events took place. For example, in 1863 the millworkers in Manchester went on strike in solidarity with President Lincoln to abolish the slave trade.

Connie: I did not know that.

John: They did! Black lives have mattered in Manchester for a very long time.

Connie: That is interesting!

John: When your eyes are open to it, you can uncover such great stories. It's important to know the past, so that we can learn for the future.

Connie: Also, really great that you are getting lots of fresh air while you're learning!

John: And exercise. I have a thirst for the world around me, Connie. I don't want to miss a thing!

Connie: Hmm, yeah. I hate FOMO, too!

John: What's that then?

Connie: Fear Of Missing Out!

John: Haha, of course it is!

Connie: Speaking of missing out, should we get the others on the line for this chat?

John: That's a good idea!

Armchair Adventure Theme (Instrumental)

Connie: I have all my lovely customers on a conference call now ready to take part. Say hi everyone..?

Ensemble: (different hellos)

John: Hi..

Connie: So guys, this podcast is an adventure of the imagination and I want all you adventurers, Hi!... to join in with me and my customers. It's going to be awesome.

We've been talking about how John's been learning loads about local history while walking along the canal. I didn't know so much history happened in Manchester!

Kenny: Oh, yes! The Suffragettes had their first meeting in Manchester.

Chris: The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was founded in Didsbury.

Hazel: And Mr Rolls and Mr Royce met in town for the first time, before they made cars together.

Connie: Excellent local knowledge, guys! Have any of you been learning anything lately?

Pat: I've been using the census to trace my family tree on the computer. It's great! I've been in touch with a first cousin once removed, who lives in Spain!

Chris: I've been taking a course in IT, thanks to Pat's encouragement. I wasn't keen at first, but my attitude was holding me back.

Pat: Embrace the spellchecker, Chris!

Cyril: I'll tell you what I've learned... how to use the washing machine and the iron!

Hazel: You've only just learned that, Cyril?

Cyril: Lily's been teaching me.

Lily: I wish I'd known this earlier, this talent!

Cyril: I enjoy the ironing, it's like meditation!

Connie: You're at one with your iron, Cyril!

Cyril: Have a go with me! Are you ready? Hold your iron in front of you. Breathe in and move it along the board to the left, 2, 3, 4, 5.

SFX Ding

Ensemble: SFX breathing and moving iron

Cyril: Breathe out as you bring it back to the right, 2, 3, 4... And again, in, 2, 3, 4, 5 and out, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Ensemble: SFX breathing and moving iron

Cyril: How does that feel?

Carla: Oooh, calming.

Connie: Lovely! What have you been learning, Ros?

Ros: How to crochet. I copy it from a book, but it never turns out how it's supposed to.

Rita: You know what I've learned, Connie? That you can go shopping without any money!

Connie: How do you do that, Rita?

Rita: With a plastic card... It's all you need, you can nip out any time you want! That's new to me, I can't believe it.

Connie: (Laughs) It is pretty clever, I suppose! What about you, adventurers? What have you been learning recently?

SFX Ding

Connie: So then, John, what are you thinking? Have you decided what we should do on our Armchair Adventure?

John: Oh, yes!

Connie: Drumroll please...

SFX drumroll

John: Everybody, today I'm going to take you on an Armchair Adventure to learn about the history of our local area together.

Connie: Fantastic!

John: Let's all meet over at Portland Basin in Ashton.

Connie: Smashing. See you there!

Armchair Adventure Theme Music (Instrumental Only)

Scene 2

SFX Canal boat engine starting up

John: Hop aboard, everybody!

Connie: A canal boat, how exciting! Good work, John.

John: I thought it'd be the fastest way to travel, we'd get to see more. Careful as you climb on, there's a bit of a gap between the boat and canal-side.

Keith: Here, grab my hand, I'll help you all aboard.

Connie: You too, adventurers. Hop on board!

SFX Ding

- Ensemble: SFX clambering onto the barge.
- Ros: I've never been on a canal boat.
- Hazel: Me neither. It's much narrower than other boats, isn't it?
- John: The canal is very shallow, so the barge is built longer to create more space for carrying cargo.
- Jean: It has a lovely painting on the side.
- Linda: I like the name - Sunset!
- Connie: Me too. What name would you give a canal boat?
- Linda: I'd call it Duckling.
- Pauline: Hmm...Water Lily.
- Rita: Tranquility.
- Keith: Water Viper.
- Connie: Good one, Keith. Adventurers, what would you call your boat?

SFX Ding

- John: We have to return the boat by Sunset, so we'd better set sail. How are we doing? All aboard?
- Connie: Aye aye Cap'n!
- John: Then away we go!

SFX the canal boat clunking as it sets sail

- John: Look over here, everybody! I like this part of the route because we're on the canal, which was built during the Industrial Revolution, then if you look further along there's a railway bridge, representing the steam era. Then, just over there, is a motorway bridge carrying heavy traffic. Sometimes you might also see a 'plane fly overhead. All these points in history merging at once; the past, present and future.
- Connie: That is pretty cool.

John: Look Connie, see those disused mills?

Connie: The bricks are all dark and it looks like some of the windows might be smashed.

John: They are now, but if this was two hundred years ago that Mill would have up to four hundred workers bustling about it. They called Manchester Cottonopolis because it spun 80% of the cotton in the world.

Pauline: Cotton that was used for clothing, towels, textiles.

John O: They still call bedding 'Manchester' in Australia, after where the cotton came from.

Pauline: Manchester was making its mark all across the globe.

Connie: Fancy that! Are any of the mills still operating?

John: Sadly, the textile industry in the North West came to an end in the 1980s.

Rita: Although, more recently, a mill in Tameside was restored and it's now Spinning cotton again. Isn't that great?

Connie: Brilliant!

John: It's strange to think that Ashton and many of the other towns where we come from were established because of the cotton industry!

Connie: I can't imagine what it would be like here without the mills, can you?

John: I can't.

Connie: Adventurers, what do you know about the history of your local area?

SFX Ding

Ronnie: Look out! We're coming up to a lock.

Connie: What's a lock?

Lynda: The next stretch of water is lower than the one we're in now. So, the lock allows our boat to safely descend into it.

Connie: Like a log flume?

Linda: Not quite, Connie!

SFX opening lock gates and water emptying.

Jean: Did you know that Leonard Da Vinci designed the lock that's still in use today?

Connie: The painter?

Jean: Yeah! He was a painter, an architect, a scientist...

Connie: I didn't know that!

Ronnie: We're at the bottom now, John. Safe to move on.

John: Thanks, Ronnie. Off we go!

SFX Boat sloshing through water

Scene 3

SFX of being on boat, wildlife etc.

Connie: Who are all those people outside of the mill? I thought it was closed.

Rita: It looks busy. Is it a school trip?

Pat: They're all in clogs!

Linda: Do you think it's a costume?

Connie: Maybe. We once had to dress up in Victorian clothes on a school trip!

Barry: It could be filming. I can't see any TV crews, though.

Anne: Look! That boat's being pulled by a horse! Like in the old days.

Jean: Strange, the water has changed colour.

John: I remember that happening when I was young. It was the fabric dye from the factories.

Connie: But these mills are closed... aren't they?

John: It doesn't really look that way, does it?

Connie: But...? So...? Guys...? Does anyone think...?

John: Come on, Connie!

Connie: It might sound a bit far-fetched. But those unusual outfits and...

Pat: The clogs...

Anne: Horse drawn barges...

Jean: And water changing colour...

Connie: Could it be...?

John: (Laughs) Finally, you're cottoning on.

Connie: John, have we travelled back in time?

Keith: Don't be daft.

Linda: That's not possible!

John: Are you sure about that?

SFX A horn from the factory blows

Chris: Did you hear that?

Connie: That was the factory. Where did this boat come from?!

John: Don't look at me! Travelling through time, indeed... Whatever next...?

Connie: We have, haven't we? You knew all along!

John: I don't know what you're talking about, Connie!

Connie: (Suspiciously) Hmm...

John: Don't forget what I said, Connie. We have to get the boat back by sunset.

Connie: Or else what? Will it turn into a pumpkin?!

John: Well...I wouldn't like to take the risk!

Connie: Roger that...OH MY GOODNESS. I can't wait to tell Ms. Sweeney, my History teacher!

Ros: She'll never believe you!

Connie: She won't! Adventurers, if you had a time-travelling boat, when would you travel to?

SFX Ding

Anne: Aww, look at the little kids over there.

Connie: Let's all wave. Hello!

Ensemble: (shouting) Hello!

Connie: Can they see us? Hello!

Ronnie: I don't think so.

Connie: I don't think they can, either. Ah well. Wait, though! Is that girl looking at us? She's walking this way. Hello?

Ensemble: (quieter) Hello there/you ok?

Ellen Enters. A young mill worker from Lancashire, 15 years old.

Ellen: Hello?

Connie: Hello! Can you see us?

Ellen: Of course I can see you, you're on a very big boat in the canal. If you're trying to hide, you need to try harder!

Connie: Oh! Wow!

Ellen: What are you doing?

Connie: We're travelling along the canal. On an adventure.

Ellen: An adventure? Any room for a stow away?

Connie: You'd be very welcome.

Ellen: Thank you. If only. I have to get back to work.

Connie: Aw, that's a shame, we'd like to get to know you. I'm Connie.

Ellen: I'm Ellen.

Connie: Hi Ellen. These are my friends.

Ensemble: Hello!

Connie: Say Hello, adventurers!

SFX Ding

Ellen: There are so many of you. Have you come from another mill?

Connie: Not quite. Are you working today?

Ellen: Yes. And it is not going well at all.

Connie: You do look a bit stressed out.

Ellen: My sister is off sick. She'll be fine, but while she's off I have to cover her duties, or she won't get paid. My family needs every single penny we can earn. The foreman is just waiting to catch me out! I've come outside for a gasp of fresh air, but I must get back, or I'll never finish everything.

Connie: You poor thing. Is there anything we can do to help?

Ellen: Not unless you have a time machine to help me find a few more hours to do everything I need to?

Connie: A time machine, ha! As if! What if we loaned you a few helping hands to do your sister's work?

Ellen: That would be very kind, and helpful. But I'd never get all of you past the foreman, he has eyes in the back of his head!

Connie: He's on his break now though, isn't he? We'll be in and out before he gets back.

Ellen: Don't you have somewhere you need to be?

Connie: We have to be back by sunset or, well, we might never get back, but don't worry about that! John, do you think we can do it?

John: Oh, it's only early! There's plenty of time!

Connie: Great!

Kenny: Let's do it!

Chris: We say yes!

Hazel: Many hands make light work!

Ellen: This is wonderful, thank you. But please... try not to let anyone see you!

Connie: We'll be small as mice!

Ellen: Then you'll be quite at home, there are plenty of those in the mill.

Rita: Argh, I wish you hadn't said that!

Connie: We'll be ok, Rita. They're just as scared as we are! Right then, Ellen, let's get cracking. Lead the way!

Ellen: Follow me everyone! Stay together... and don't touch anything, the machines can be quite dangerous.

Scene 4

SFX Clackety clack rhythm of the machines

Voices speak above the sound

Ellen: Welcome. This is my home! Not really, but it might as well be. I'm here fourteen hours a day.

Connie: It's huge! The ceilings are so high!

Jean: The aisles are narrow, there's not a lot of space between/

Pauline: /The machines are enormous!

Carla: It's so loud!

Barry: You what? I can't hear a word anybody's saying!

Ros: We have to lip read, Barry!

Rita: It smells of oil.

Keith: (Coughing) There's a lot of fluff flying around.

Anne: It feels claustrophobic.

Linda: White, spidery webs of cotton.

Ellen: Did you say you'd come from another mill?

Connie: No. Some of us have worked in mills, but it's the first time for most of us.

Ellen: Don't worry, you'll get used to it! When I first started working here, the noise made me sick.

Connie: How old were you?

Ellen: Seven.

Connie: Seven? Didn't you go to school?

Ellen: School? Do I look like my family have money? I need to work. We all do.

Connie: Of course, sorry! Ok, let us help you. What jobs need doing?

Ellen: My sister operates the flying shuttle.

Connie: Ok, Pat, are you up to this?

Pat: Oh, yes!

Ellen: Thank you. You need to pass the shuttle from one hand to another, like this.

SFX The shuttle flies across the threads

Connie: Adventurers, open your arms out wide, the size of a loom, and pass the shuttle from one hand to another!

SFX Ding

Ellen: Then we need someone to push the weave into place.

Connie: Carla, can you do that?

Carla: Of course.

Connie: Adventurers, both hands, push them from your chest forward, as far as they'll reach.

SFX Ding

SFX (ensemble stretching)

Ellen: This is wonderful, thank you. We need to move quickly, the break will be over in five minutes.

Connie: What next?

Ellen: My job is to piece the threads together.

Connie: Come on Adventurers, let's help Ellen piece these threads!

SFX Ding

SFX (ensemble piecing threads together)

Ellen: When I was smaller, I had to run under the machines to collect the cotton fluff.

Connie: We can do that! Adventurers, let's make ourselves small so we can get under the machines and collect all the fluff.

SFX Ding

SFX (ensemble crawling under machines)

SFX A wheel turning

Ellen: This is the Spinning Jenny. I'm not there yet, but soon, I hope to be working on the Jenny.

Connie: Fantastic! Come on everybody, let's all have a go at turning the wheel!

SFX Ding

SFX (ensemble turning the wheel)

SFX Factory sounds

Ellen: You've been such a great help. Where did you say you've come from?

Connie: Ashton, like you.

Ellen: But you don't work in a mill...?

Connie: I go to school.

Ellen: Are your parents rich?

Connie: No. But I am lucky.

Ellen: What is school like?

Connie: It's alright. There's loads of classes, like English...

Pauline: Science...

John O: Maths...

Keith: French!

Connie: Sometimes it's boring and hard and by Friday I'm SO tired. But... it's not fourteen hours a day.

Ellen: I'd love to be able to read and write, but I like working here. Everybody looks after each other. We're very happy.

Connie: I'm pleased to hear that.

Lynda: Are you going to tell her, Connie?

Connie: Should I? Ok... I don't know if you're going to believe this, Ellen. But. We. Err...

Rita: We've travelled here from the year 2022!

Ellen: Pardon?

Ronnie: One minute we're chugging along in 2022, then we passed through a lock and it's...?

Ellen: 1832.

Lily: 1832. Wow!

Ellen: You were right, I don't believe you! 2022?

Connie: Honestly. (Almost bored) We have mobile phones that take photos and watches that receive messages and apps that teach us dances and everything.

Ellen: I didn't understand a word of that! In 2022... Is this mill still here?

Connie: The building is, but most of the mills are closed.

Ellen: How does anyone work?

Connie: There are loads of jobs. People do all sorts... Help me out, guys!

Lynda: Teachers.

Carla: Shop workers.

Kenny: Computer technicians! Never mind.

Barry: I worked on the railways.

Connie: What other jobs are there, Adventurers?

SFX Ding

Connie: People can do anything these days, Ellen. They can fly to the moon if they want to!

Ellen: (Laughs) Now you are pulling my leg!

SFX A horn blows

Ellen: Oh no, it's the end of break!

Connie: How are you getting on, guys?

Carla: We're finished!

Pat: All sorted!

Ellen: You did that so quickly. How can I ever thank you?

Connie: Don't worry about it. We've learned so much from you, that's thanks enough!

Linda: I can see the foreman through the window. He's coming back!

Ronnie: He's got hawk eyes.

Ellen: Quick! There's a tunnel over there for us workers. If you leave that way, he'll never see you!

Connie: Good thinking. Come on guys!

SFX Footsteps and moving around

Ellen: Thank you all so much. You've really saved my bacon.

Carla: Our pleasure.

Connie: It was lovely to meet you, Ellen.

Ellen: It really was. I'm so sorry to say goodbye.

Ensemble: Goodbye! Bye, Ellen. Arrivederci!

Connie: Bye!

Ellen: Bye everybody!

John: It's getting darker, we'd better move quickly!

Connie: Hurry everyone!

Hazel: All aboard!

John: And we're off.

SFX The boat moving away

Scene 5

SFX Canal Boat slowly moving, countryside at dusk

Connie: The light is fading. Do you think we'll make it back in time, John?

John: We'll have to put our foot down. It's another lock we need to go through, that should do the trick!

Connie: What if it doesn't work?

Keith: Let's think positive!

Kenny: We'll get back!

John O: We have to!

Anne: I want to see my Great Grandchildren.

Cyril: My iron!

Connie: I think I'd even miss school! Adventurers, what would you miss about life in 2022?

SFX Ding

Connie: I promise I'll never yawn or fidget in class, or moan about homework ever again.

Chris: Here it comes! Another lock.

John: Ok everybody, this is it! Keep your fingers crossed!

SFX Sound of lock filling up with water

Hazel: That's us at the top.

Keith: Ready to move off, John.

John: Right you are. Here we go, back to 2022!

SFX Boat moving away

Connie: Has it worked, John?

John: I'm not sure it has, has it? Everything looks the same to me.

Lynda: There's a horse and cart! We're still in the past!

Connie: But we went through a lock. And it's not dark yet! What else do we need to do?

Anne: I've got an idea. Why don't we try to visualise 2022? If we picture that we're in the present, it might help to transport us back there.

Connie: Worth a go. How do we do that?

Anne: Everybody, close your eyes.

Connie: You too, adventurers.

SFX Ding

Connie: Not you, John, you're driving!

John: Sorry!

Connie: Picture what it's like in modern day.

Pauline: Holidays in Spain!

Barry: Saturday night take aways.

Carla: Families.

Cyril: My iron.

Anne: Feel the emotions that the thoughts bring up. Really focus on them.

Song - 'Curious'

SFX Boat moving through water

John: You can open your eyes now.

Connie: I'm too nervous.

Hazel: Is anybody else holding their breath? (Breathes out)

Jean: That was very tense.

Connie: Did we do it? Are we back in the present?

John: I can't be sure... what do you see?

Linda: Still the mills!

Barry: There aren't as many people.

Ronnie: The water is clear.

SFX Aeroplane flying over

Lynda: Is that a 'plane?

Jean: A rusty shopping trolley! Fantastic! I've never been as pleased to see one of those.

Connie: We're back! Well done, John!

John: That was a team effort.

Connie: Thank you, guys. What an unbelievable armchair adventure! I learned so many lessons today... and all while out and about near my house! I used to think history happened somewhere else, but when I open my eyes, I can see it's right there. You knew all along, didn't you, John?

John: I'm still learning, Connie. It makes me feel good about myself.

Carla: It was so much fun to learn together!

John: Stay curious, Connie.

Connie: You're the best customers a travel agent could ask for- thank you. Next time listeners, another one of my lovely customers gets to take us on

another Armchair Adventure; inspired by their passions and interests, but for now, it's time to say goodbye. Goodbye.

Ensemble: Bye, bye Connie, goodbye, Au Revoir, Arrivederci, See ya...

Connie: End. Call. Now.

Sound of beeps as Connie terminates the call.

Connie: Excellent.

Outro

Connie: That was amazing... thanks sooo much for joining in. I can't wait to go on another Armchair Adventure with you all next time. Why don't you let us know where you'd like to go on an armchair adventure? Just ask a grown up to message us on twitter, facebook or Instagram. Search for Made By Mortals. Love you guys!

Armchair Adventure Theme Song

Credits