

People visiting a Rowntree Society pop-up exhibition

Led by volunteers from the local community, the project will gather people's memories of what Rowntree meant to them. Using oral history methods, we will build a collective narrative of these memories - which may include the smell of chocolate, work on the factory floor, a sense of civic pride, commitment to Quaker values, or a shared belief in community.

A team of volunteers, led by a project co-ordinator, will work with different groups, including young people, in workshop sessions to record their memories and explore their shared heritage. There will be opportunities for local people to store those memories and to contribute individual recollections at the workshops. From all these contributions, the Rowntree Society will build a lasting bank of memories for future generations to share and learn from, via a new website page.

We will be starting to build a team of volunteers in the summer of 2013 and the memories collection will start in the autumn 2013.

The Rowntree Society is an independent charity that works to tell the story of the Rowntree family, their business, their passion for reform, and their legacy.

Commenting on the award, Liz Grierson, Chair of the Rowntree Society, said: "We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and are confident the project will bring to life many stories that lie hidden within our community, still untold and unrecorded. Nowadays, young people are increasingly fascinated by our Rowntree heritage,

especially in the light of the growing awareness of York as a city with a long history in confectionery. This project will put them in direct contact with the living memories of an older generation of people who have a powerful story to tell."

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, Fiona Spiers, Head of the HLF Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "Rowntree has played a vital role in the York's lively and varied character but is often overshadowed by York's Roman and medieval past. This project will enable people to share their memories of Rowntree and bring its stories to life, letting everyone get involved and share their past."

Notes to editors

The Rowntree Society was founded in 2001 to further knowledge about the lives and legacy of the extraordinary Rowntree family over several generations and over 200 years. The society helps to build a strong, locally-rooted narrative about the work and legacy of the Rowntree family in the city of York. We act as an information point, helping to put people in touch with each other, and advising on new projects and initiatives locally as well as nationally.

The society was founded by Steven Burkeman in 2001 at a time when it looked as though the Rowntree inheritance was in danger of disappearing altogether from York (apart, of course, from the work of the Joseph Rowntree trusts). With the support of Hugh Bayley MP, he put together a small group of people, including Mark Jones, Gillian Cruddas, John Sunley, Brian Jardine, and Stephen Pittam.

Further information

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