

Ken Hawley, founding collector of the Hawley Tool Collection

The collection aims to give an insight into Ken's many facets as a family man, salesman, shop keeper, historian and tool collector.

Ken had said that he had no interest in history until 1950, when he visited a customer to demonstrate a machine. While at the customer's premises, he noticed a joiner's brace of a design that he had not seen before and was able to acquire it. This acquisition was the first of many and features in the exhibition along with personal items, photographs, film and objects from the collection which demonstrate his skills as a researcher, historian and educator.

This temporary exhibition is the second mounted entirely by volunteers at the collection as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund project Sheffield Craft That Built The World – Capturing and Sustaining Knowledge for Future Generations. See further information below.

The Ken Hawley Collection Trust received a grant for £83,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2013 for an exciting project centred on the Hawley Collection housed at Kelham Island Museum. Over a period of three years, the project officer will work with volunteers to gather knowledge on the processes of manufacture of six areas of cutlery and tool making that make up the collection. Current and new volunteer curators are being trained to improve and sustain access to this knowledge into the future.

The project is enabling local, national and international audiences to discover and explore the unique skills used in the making of tools and cutlery. Many of these skills have totally died out, whilst others are only practised by a small handful of craftsmen. Volunteer curators have developed their skills and knowledge to be able to share this with the local community through temporary exhibitions, family learning days, handling sessions, talks, tours, in the gallery and through the collection's website.

Notes to editors

Ken Hawley began collecting tools from Sheffield and around the world in the 1950s and the Hawley Tool Collection is known internationally and recognised as being of national importance having Accredited Museum status.

The Hawley Collection is managed by the Ken Hawley Collection Trust (a Charitable Trust) which was set up in 1995 to preserve the collection for future generations. It was originally housed in the Hawley Building at the University of Sheffield and is now in a renovated building providing a gallery with permanent exhibition space and storage areas. This opened in March 2010 at Kelham Island Museum, part of Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust. This move was made possible by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant which also funded an Audience Development Officer for three years.

An extension to the Hawley Gallery has recently been completed to house parts of the collection stored in other parts of the museum, as well as provide an open store with public handling area and workshops and research spaces for use by volunteer curators. This was generously funded by the River Don Millowners Association.

Current volunteers are very active continuously adding to, investigating and researching the collection and mounting temporary exhibitions in the Hawley Gallery – the most recent focusing on hand file cutting.



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Sheffield craft that built the world