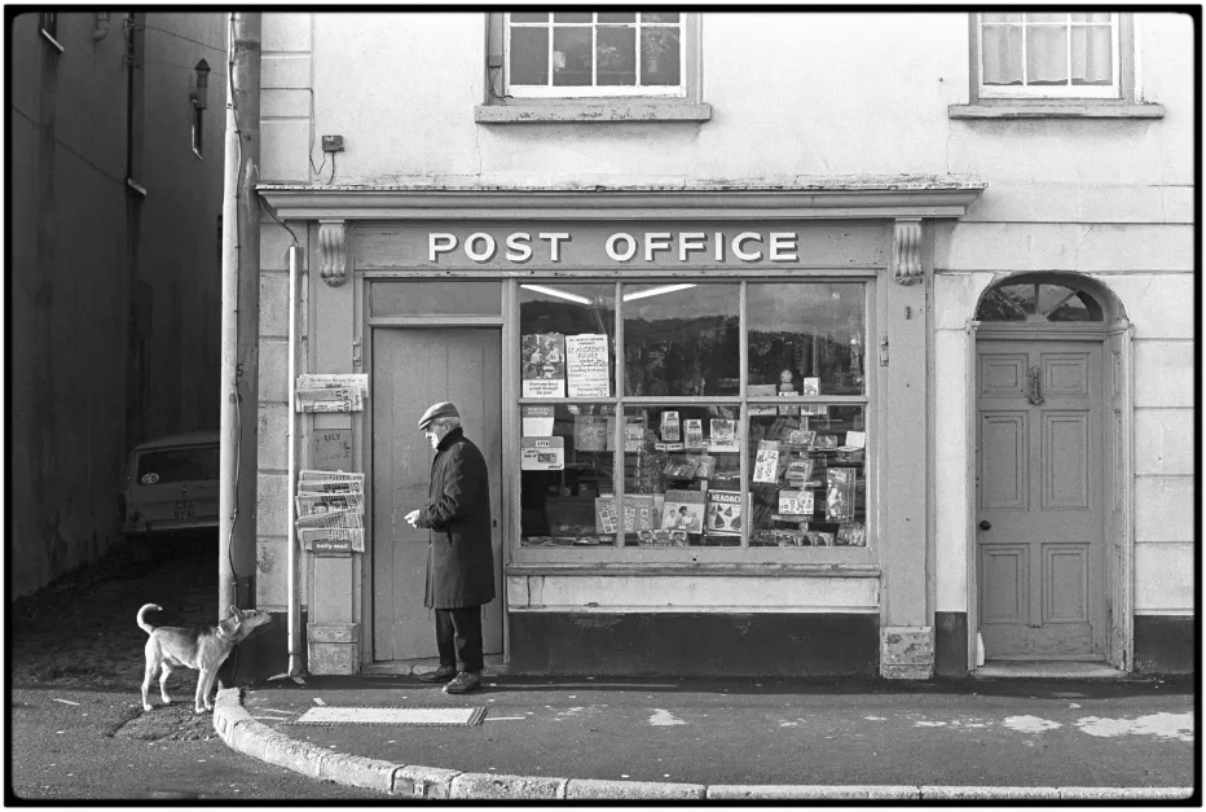
National Lottery grant opens up huge Devon photo collection



‘JR0538-21’, digitally scanned from a Beaford Archive negative James Ravilious © Beaford Arts

Thousands of unseen photographs depicting life in rural Devon in the 1970s and 1980s will be conserved and put online for the first time, thanks to a HLF grant.

The Beaford Archive contains 80,000 images which were mostly taken by the artist James Ravilious between 1972 and 1989.

They show North Devon at work and at play and were taken at 150 locations, providing a comprehensive record of two decades of village life in a small corner of England.

The images are currently housed at the Devon Heritage Centre in Exeter but the majority need cleaning and are at risk of deterioration.

A £547,700 grant will pay for a major conservation and digitisation programme. The negatives will be numbered, rehoused and cleaned and approximately 10,000 will be uploaded to a searchable, specially-created website. People will be able to add their own memories and responses to the scenes and search for images connected to family names or places they’ve lived in or visited.

Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West, said: “Each and every one of these images provides a fascinating glimpse into life in Devon during the 1970s and 1980s. It’s an astounding collection, both because of its sheer size and what it can tell future historians. Demand for our funding is high but our committee felt that this was an important project to support with National Lottery players money and we look forward to seeing how it progresses over the coming years.”

To launch the project and celebrate its 50th anniversary, Beaford Arts have selected 25 images from the archive and are inviting the public to submit photographic responses to one or more of them. The best 25 submissions will be displayed at an exhibition in the autumn alongside the original archive images, celebrating the launch of the three-year HLF-supported project and showing what has changed over the past 50 years.

The 25 images can be found on the Beaford Arts website. The public can submit their own images at the same site or email them by 10am on Monday 5 September.