

Thorncliffe Blast Furnaces - 1909

The project will create a digital archive which will bring together a diverse range of collected material relating to life and work during the period from the mid 18th century to the late 20th century in the Ecclesfield civil parish area. Amongst the large amount of material that has already been collected are prints and photographs, books, newspapers and other written documents, including diaries, maps, film and audio material.

Currently collections are held by a number of local voluntary history and archive groups, companies and individuals across the area, held in various but dispersed locations but at long term risk of neglect and material damage. It is estimated that there are more than 4,000 photographs and images, as well as more than 7,000 documents and records, together with other highly relevant but unquantifiable material available for digitisation. In addition, there are other significant collections relating to the former major employer in the area, the Newton Chambers company, which in its heyday employed more than 8,000 people; this large collection includes photographs, images, brochures and newspapers (see appended image). This unique collection will provide a significant resource for research on local and family history, as well as providing links to the area's industrial past enabling younger generations to better identify with the community's heritage.

The heritage is important to local people, as it relates to their understanding of the social and economic development of the area, but also has a regional and national importance as local industries such as Newton Chambers were at the forefront of technological change in iron and coal related products. It is particularly important that the material is made

available and accessible at this time to local schools and young people as many of the industries which were so important in shaping the character of the area have now been lost. The parish council based project will work collaboratively with local history and heritage groups in the area and will actively encourage the involvement of volunteers as well as employing a part time project coordinator over a two year period.

Commenting on the award, clerk to the Council, David Morton said: “We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and see this as an opportunity for all residents in the area to learn more about the community in which they live.”

Notes to editors

Ecclesfield Parish Council is a local authority established under the Local Government Act of 1894. The parish has been part of the City of Sheffield since 1974, although it is a completely independent authority in its policy and decision-making.

The Civil Parish of Ecclesfield covers an area of about 22 square kilometres of north Sheffield and is one of the most highly populated Parishes in the North of England. It comprises much of Ecclesfield village and all of Chapeltown, High Green and Grenoside townships.

Within the parish there are approximately 40,000 residents with over 14,000 households paying a precept for Parish Council purposes within their Council tax.

Further information

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