Historic collection of Derby photographs to be



German Prisoners of War in Sutton Bonington

W W Winter Photographers of Derby, which was established in 1867, has received a £51,800 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to start preserving and cataloguing their glass negative photographs.

The studio has been photographing people, industry and street scenes in Derby for over 140 years. Dating from between the late 1800s to mid-1900s, the large glass plate negatives depict everything from prisoners of war who were interned in Derbyshire between 1915 – 1918 to studio portraits, street scenes and everything in between.

The glass negatives to be preserved represent just a very small part of the archive held by W W Winter's, which continues to grow, and anyone being photographed today becomes part of this unique collection.

Debbie Adele Cooper, Artist in Residence at W W Winter's, said: “W W Winter’s have been at the forefront of photographic innovation throughout the decades and hold a vast amount of photographic ephemera and knowledge. The archive at W W Winter's is as much about the history of photography as it is about the history of Derby.”

While W W Winter's archive represents a large selection of Derby's history, the studio does not possess the knowledge or the funds to develop and care for the archive and many of the negatives have become badly damaged. W W Winter's will also start cataloguing the archive within this project, as they are currently unable to answer many requests from the

public wanting access to photographs in the archive.

Louisa Fuller, W W Winter's photographer, said: “We know there is a vast collection of photographs of Derby residents and city scenes, but within our day to day operations we do not have the resources to work with the collection, and thus until now it has sat dusty in the cellar unseen. This funding provides an exciting opportunity to engage an archivist to work with Winter’s volunteers to explore what the archive holds and to find ways to make this publicly accessible, we are very grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund for making this possible.”

HLF has only recently allowed private owners, including commercial businesses, to directly apply for Lottery Funding and W W Winter Ltd is the first business in the East Midlands to benefit from this opportunity. This recent change in HLF’s criteria recognises the importance of the heritage that some businesses possess and the often urgent need to preserve this for future generations and open it up for public benefit.

Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF East Midlands, said: “From the days of Queen Victoria through to the swinging sixties and beyond, this vast archive of photographs shows us the changing face of Derbyshire life through the lens of one small photography studio. It’s a hugely important historical collection.

“Businesses such as W W Winter's would not be able to fund the care and preservation of their archive without HLF support which is why, in certain circumstances, we have decided to fund businesses for work that conserves and opens up the important heritage they possess.”

As part of the project W W Winter will be developing a not-for-profit steering committee called the ‘Friends of Winter’s’ who will take on the running of the conservation project.

W W Winter’s studio will be open to the public from 11-13 September for people to view gems from their archive on display. There will also be talks on the history of photography by Geoff Blackwell from the Royal Photographic Society. Places are limited, booking is required call 01332 345 224 or email office@wwwinter.co.uk.

Further information

W W Winter Ltd: Angela Leeson or Louisa Fuller on 01332 345 224.