

Picture of Barnsley Co-op's largest store. Copyright Barnsley Arts, Museum and Archives

The project focuses on the Barnsley British Co-operative Society archive, which will be catalogued and digitised, enabling the collections to be accessible to the public for the first time. At the heart of the project there will be a focus on collecting stories, memories and experiences about the histories of local village and community life based around the Co-op.

The Barnsley British Co-operative Society was the heart of many Barnsley communities, there was a shop in every village and people relied on their local Co-op for everyday essentials. Many people still remember their Co-op divi share number and have fond memories of time spent working and visiting Co-op shops.

In partnership with Barnsley Alzheimer's Society, reminiscence sessions will be created to help people with dementia and their carers to look back at their time spent in the Co-op. Cawthorne Junior School will be working with the museum to develop new learning sessions, and there will also be open days for the public and opportunities to volunteer and get involved in an exhibition in 2015 at Experience Barnsley.

Councillor Roy Miller, Barnsley Council's Cabinet Spokesperson for Place, said: "These archives will provide a fascinating glimpse into the borough's social history. The Co-op formed an important part of many people's lives and was a well-loved institution. Thanks to this HLF funding, the stories of the Co-op will be recorded for future generations to enjoy."

Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund, Yorkshire and the Humber said: “Archives are bursting with stories, pictures and maps that give us an insight into what life was like. The Service Please! project will enable people to engage with their local archive, share their own stories and experiences to help bring the past to life.”

Further information

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