

Archive image of Colman’s Carrow Works factory workers

Colman’s Connections, a project run by the Heritage Economic & Regeneration Trust, is exploring the history of Norwich during the First World War through the experiences of workers at the Colman’s Mustard Factory, thanks to National Lottery players.

The Mustard at War exhibition was launched this week at the Forum in Norwich, and will run from Monday 2 November to Friday 13 November. The exhibition explores the mustard workers’ roles on the front line, the impact of the war on women, families and workers on the home front, and the part Colman’s played in the war effort. During the exhibition, visitors will be able to see authentic medals and original items owned by soldiers, view a Roll of Honour commemorating mustard workers lost during the conflict, and discover ‘Household Hints’ collated from wartime copies of Carrow Works Magazine.

As the city’s largest employer at the time, the Colman’s war years offer an invaluable insight to the lives of people in Norwich one hundred years ago. It is this local history that the Colman’s Connections project wishes to share with the city. Over the course of the project, volunteers and school children have become ‘Colman’s Detectives’ to research the personal stories of workers at the Carrow Works factories, explore the impact of the First World War on their local community, and to create the exhibition to allow local people and visitors to learn about this fascinating history.

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: “The impact of the First World War was far reaching, touching and shaping every corner of the UK and beyond. The Heritage Lottery Fund has already invested

more than £70million in projects – large and small – that are marking this global Centenary; with our small grants programme, we are enabling even more communities like those involved in the Colman's Connections project to explore the continuing legacy of this conflict and help local young people in particular to broaden their understanding of how it has shaped our modern world".

From humble beginnings at Stoke Holy Cross, Colman's has become globally renowned, and has played a key role in transforming Norwich, making it considerably more than just a local mustard company. During the War, Colman's employed more people in Norwich than any other organisation. As a result of the organisation's 'cradle to grave' philosophy, the voices of Colman's workers who joined the war effort at home and abroad were heard by the people of Norwich. The factory provided support, care and financial assistance throughout the war and in the years following, and as a result many men returned to work at Carrow in 1918.

There is still a flourishing mustard industry in Norwich and many people talk proudly about their relatives who worked at Carrow Works decades ago. Many of the houses built for Colman's employees survive today, and the factory on the river Wensum can still be seen from the opposing bank.

For more information about the book, exhibition and accompanying events, visit the Colman's Connections website or pick up the Colman's Connections leaflet from Norwich TIC, The Forum or Colman's Mustard Shop & Museum.



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Community project reveals history of Colman's during First World War