

Archive Alive! – Bringing history to life

A fascinating collection of local books and archives have been bought by a volunteer-run museum in Settle thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £49,400. The grant will also pay for a member of staff to make the collections accessible to local people through a series of innovative workshops culminating in an exhibition. “We are delighted to be able to not only acquire this important collection of 19th and 20th century documents but also to employ someone to bring it to life!” said Anne Read, Honorary Curator of the Museum of North Craven Life at The Folly. The collection represents communities from Bell Busk to Bentham and from Arncliffe to Tosside and includes posters, photographs, directories and guidebooks.

Fiona Spiers, Head of Region for the Heritage Lottery Fund said “Saving our historic archives is important as they provide such a valuable resource for anyone who wants to explore their past. Archives are bursting with stories, pictures and maps that give us clues about what life was like, and how that has shaped who we are today.”

Local teacher and museum curator, Sue Mackay, has begun work to help community groups and school children to engage with the huge variety of material in the collection. “We have material covering every aspect of life and landscape in North Craven from geology, archaeology, plants and animals, poetry and prints to the history of churches, mills, schools and business – and much more!” said Sue, “ I will be helping people to investigate and respond to the material, hopefully in some novel and exciting ways... for example, Bentham Looking Well (Pioneer Projects) are using the 1828 dictionary of the Craven dialect to create a Craven Alphabet which we will display in our exhibition next spring.”

Sue will be approaching all sorts of groups across North Craven in the next twelve months to begin exploring the collection and organising a series of public drop in workshops for adults and children. She would love to hear from any groups who would like to access the material and work with her towards the final exhibition.

The exhibition will be staged next spring, but before then you can visit The Folly on Tuesday, Saturday or Sunday until the end of October to see the beautiful 17th century building in which the museum is housed and two great current exhibitions – Farmsteads and Farming Life in the Forest of Bowland (produced by the Slaidburn Archive with the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group and Heritage Trust for the North West, funded by the Forest of Bowland AONB) and the Horner Collection of early 19th and early 20th century local photographs.

There will also be an Archive Alive open day on Saturday 19th July, 10.30 – 4.30, where you can

see a selection of the collection and take part in some great activities!

For more information see the museum's website at www.ncbpt.org.uk or ring

Sue on 0797 022 0979 , email sue@ncbpt.org.uk

