BEGINNINGS

Photographer Chris Coekin is interested in collection here at the People’s History Museum. Closely with the workers on how they wished that the banners portray back the backbone of production. Coekin worked 7 Brass foundry, Wallsend 6 Construction of 5 Workers constructing 3 Construction of drinking 2 Steam engine, Victoria 1 Demolition of housing for — Tyne and Wear Archives — 1900 — 1887-1893 — 29 October 1886 — Photographer unknown — Leeds Museums and Galleries — 1880 — Gallery Oldham — about 1865 — Photographer unknown — Doncaster Heritage Services — 1900 — Museums and Galleries, City of Bradford MDC — Photographer unknown — Photographers and workers to capture this development in Britain, visualising the experience."

INDUSTRIALISATION

"Photographs of Essay and East India and Caribbean workers at work are rare. There are a few fragments of photographers and workers to capture this development in Britain, visualising the experience."

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37 The construction of the Manchester Ship Canal, Manchester — W E Birtles — 1887-1893 — Chetham’s Library, Manchester

38 Doshara, Saha MEI, Salford, West Yorkshire — Gary Watts — Photographers and workers to capture this development in Britain, visualising the experience.

39 Construction of the Manchester Ship Canal, Manchester — W E Birtles — 1887-1893 — Chetham’s Library, Manchester

40 Engineering works, Leeds — Photographers and workers to capture this development in Britain, visualising the experience.

41 Steel-making boiling slag, Dowlais, Wales — Photographers and workers to capture this development in Britain, visualising the experience.

42 Man cages made by — Photographers and workers to capture this development in Britain, visualising the experience.

43 Repassing locomotives, Southwood Works, Newcastle — Photographers and workers to capture this development in Britain, visualising the experience.

44 Bob Scott surveys empty stock, Edward Street Mill, Newton-le-Willows — Photographers and workers to capture this development in Britain, visualising the experience.

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At the back right stands a disabled worker slightly sit on the ground. Two slightly older boys are seated on the wall to the left. The proud workforce present themselves with arms folded. The youngest, probably apprentices, would like to be photographed in the top left, or he would be visible from the top right. At the back right stands a disabled worker slightly sit on the ground. Two slightly older boys are seated on the wall to the left. The proud workforce present themselves with arms folded. The youngest, probably apprentices, would like to be photographed in the top left, or he would be visible from the top right.
“Photographs of newly arrived Asian and Caribbean workers at work are rare. There seemed to be a reluctance by some photographers and workers to capture this development in Britain’s manufacturing sector.”

“Photographer Chris Coekin is interested in how the employees of this factory are the backbone of production. Coekin worked closely with the workers on how they wished to be portrayed. The inspiration came from the symbolism of trade union banners held in the collection here at the People’s History Museum. These images reproduce poses and stances that the banners portray.”

“Around the time of WWI the group photograph of the workforce became more sophisticated. Instead of regimented lines, photographers constructed complex compositions. Examples such as these of railway cleaners would have involved a considerable amount of time, organisation and persuasion.”

Photography is an industrial process born out of the Industrial Revolution. However, representations of workers are often problematic and this exhibition seeks to understand this tense and sometimes difficult relationship. On display are unseen and unpublished photographs from the archives of the north of England’s industrial towns and cities. Each image is placed in a theme that explores the changing relationship between the image, the worker and the landscape. Original poetry by Ian McMillan gives voice to those workers depicted here, silenced and forgotten by history.
“During the closure of the McCormick’s factory in Doncaster workers were asked to direct photographer Ian Beesley on how they wished to be photographed. This tyre fitter stated: ‘I would like to be photographed in the tyre bay, in the middle of one of the biggest tyres, as this was the centre of my working life. I would like to be set down, because that’s what I’ll be doing now I have been made redundant. Can you keep me in focus, but the background slightly out of focus as that will represent my memory, all this will slowly go out of focus in my memory.’”

“Tony Walker’s was one of Bradford’s main portrait studios. Using a huge 1900 glass negative camera, the images produced were firmly rooted in Victorian studio photography. By the 1960s Walker’s style and work were outdated. However, the conventions of the Victorian studio portrait appealed to newly arrived Asian and Caribbean workers who were familiar with the style following its export across the British Empire. The Walker’s archive reveals images with a wealth of symbolism. Watches, money, books and sunglasses illustrated new-found wealth and education.”

“...money, books and sunglasses...”