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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Grafters: Industrial society in image and word**

**A New Exhibition of Photographs and Poetry at the People’s History Museum, from 6th February 2016**

In February 2016, the People’s History Museum will open a brand new exhibition curated by internationally acclaimed artist and photographer, Ian Beesley. ***Grafters:*****Industrial society in image and word**, will capture scenes of industrial life in 19th, 20th and 21st century Britain.

To accompany the exhibition’s images, the museum has commissioned a series of new poems from the ‘Bard of Barnsley’, writer, poet and broadcaster; Ian McMillan, creating a voice for the unknown people featured in the photographs as they go about their daily work.

Selected from important photographic archives across the North of England, many of the photographs represented are unknown or unnamed and will have never been exhibited before.

Grafters depicts the role of industrial workers and how they change from objects to subjects; from figures to represent units of scale to the heroes of the photograph. Latterly workers became the photographers themselves, directing and shooting pictures of their own lives, seen through their own lens.

After leaving school Ian Beesley worked in a mill, a foundry and eventually a sewage works during the early 1970’s. Whilst still working in industry he became interested in photography and started by photographing his work colleagues and the environment in which he was working.

Speaking about what inspired this new exhibition, Ian says, “ I became aware that the majority of contemporary and historical photographs of industry I saw; bore little or no resemblance to my experience of industry.

“Photography is a product of the industrial revolution, and so one would expect that photography would have a very close relationship with the representation of industrial society, unfortunately this does not seem to be the case.”

“*Grafter*s is an attempt to understand the history and development of this troubled relationship, from its beginnings in the 1840s through to the present day.”

Grafters: Industrial Society in Image and Word opens on 6th February 2016 and is free entry [www.phm.org.uk](http://www.phm.org.uk)

Ends

**For further information, to receive information about forthcoming events connected to the exhibition and to request images and interviews please contact Nancy Collantine 0161 832 3588** **nancy.collantine@fidopr.co.uk**

**About the curator: Ian Beesley:** Ian Beesley is an award winning and internationally acclaimed artist and photographer. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently at Milan Photo festival, Italy, the International Industrial Photography festival, Shengyang, China, The National Media Museum, Bradford and the People’s History Museum Manchester.

His work is held in the collections of the National Media Museum, Bradford, The Royal Photographic Society, The Smithsonian Institute, Washington, and the National Museum of Labour, Helsinki, amongst many other important National collections.

He has published 25 books and in 2012 he was awarded Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society.

He is currently artist in residence for the Bradford Institute for Health Research/Born in Bradford, artist in residence for the University of Bristol’s School of Social & Community Medicine and artist in residence for Chetham’s Library, Manchester and Gallery Oldham.

**About the poet: Bard of Barnsley, Ian McMillan:** Ian McMillan is an English poet, journalist, playwright, and broadcaster. He lives in Darfield, Barnsley in South Yorkshire

As a solo performer, Ian has worked in schools, theatres, arts centres, fields and has been poet in residence at Barnsley Football Club, Northern Spirit Trains and Humberside Police. He has written comedy for radio and plays for the stage, and worked extensively for BBC Radio 1, 2, 3, 4 and Five Live as well as for Yorkshire Television and Newsnight Review on BBC 2.   Ian is currently presenting The Verb, Radio 3’s Cabaret of The Word, as well as touring solo and with cartoonist Tony Husband and musician Luke Goss and writing weekly columns for The Yorkshire Post and The Barnsley Chronicle.

**Notes to Editors:**

About People’s History Museum

People’s History Museum is a national museum telling the story of the development of democracy in Britain – ‘there have always been ideas worth fighting for’.

The museum holds material from all the major political parties, including posters, leaflets, badges and the world’s largest collection of banners. Other organisations represented include the Trades Union Congress and The Co-operative Group.

The museum is based in Spinningfields in Manchester city centre. The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) is one of the museum’s main funders.

People's History Museum, Left Bank, Spinningfields, Manchester M3 3ER

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