

Engineering archive preserved for future generations

- Siemens, the University of Lincoln and Lincolnshire County Council have come together to preserve 150 years of Lincoln's engineering history
- The incredible archive consisting of thousands of reels of film, photographs and documents will be preserved for future generations

A vast archive of documents, photographs and films spanning 150 years of Lincolnshire's engineering history has been preserved for posterity.

The Ruston Hornsby (Siemens) Archive contains nationally significant material revealing the central role played by Lincolnshire companies in England's industrial heyday during the 19th and 20th centuries. Much of it has never been seen by the public before.

The project to secure, catalogue and display the archive is being led jointly by heritage specialists and enthusiasts from Siemens, Lincolnshire County Council and the University of Lincoln.

The material was stored in a warehouse at Siemens' Firth Road site in central Lincoln but needed to be moved because of the re-location of the company's Service business to new premises at Teal Park. Work to secure the collection and prepare it for removal began in 2010. The materials have now been transferred safely into the repositories of Lincolnshire Archives. Film materials have been moved to the Media Archive for Central England (MACE) based at the University of Lincoln.

Councillor Eddy Poll, executive member for Cultural Services at Lincolnshire County Council, said: "Lincolnshire has a proud engineering heritage and organisations like Siemens and the University continue to fly the flag today. This nationally significant archive will help recognise the contribution we've made to engineering around the world. The next step is the cataloguing of the material and identifying the most significant items. A team of volunteers with knowledge of our industrial heritage will be needed to help with this, so if you think you can help please get in touch."

The collection includes documents dating back to the formation of Ruston, Proctor and Company in 1857 and details the company's evolution through various incarnations, including Ruston and Hornsby, Ruston, Ruston Gas Turbines, Alstom and latterly Siemens.

Frank Carchedi, director of Business Excellence, EHS and Quality at Siemens in Lincoln, was instrumental in the project to preserve the archive and transfer it to Lincolnshire Archives. Commenting on the archive, he said: "The documents, plans, photographs and films contained in the archive are not just important in understanding the legacy of engineering in Lincolnshire, but they also provide an incredibly detailed account of how the industrial revolution in Britain was experienced by the people at its centre. That story is relevant to all of us, not just engineers, and that is why we felt it was vital this archive was preserved for future generations. As a business with a history spanning 170 years in the UK, Siemens is delighted to be involved in this project. We are thankful to Professor Sleight and Lincolnshire Archives for their help and support on this."

The whole archive occupies around 25 cubic metres and includes around 150 cine film reels, mainly 16mm and 35mm film, including footage showing the development of the caterpillar tracks used on the world's first battlefield tanks during World War, more than 200,000 black and white photograph negatives, plus thousands more glass plate negatives and slides, and around 500 journals and reference books in a variety of languages, some dating back to the 19th Century. There are also hundreds more company reports, documents, plans and engineering drawings.

Professor David Sleight, dean of Public Engagement at the University of Lincoln, said: "Once catalogued, it is anticipated that selected items from the archive will be digitised to make these important records accessible for researchers and the public

locally, nationally and internationally. We pay tribute to those who carefully stored these records away over many years. I am so pleased that after a concerted effort by a team of colleagues at Siemens, Lincolnshire County Council and the University of Lincoln we have found a safe and protected new home. We already know so many retired engineering workers who are keen to help, their collective memories will be vital to catalogue this archive before it is too late!"

People with a passion for industrial history or knowledge of Lincolnshire's engineering past can volunteer to help catalogue the in the Ruston Hornsby (Siemens) Archive. Basic training will be provided by heritage experts from Lincolnshire Archives. People interested in volunteering should contact Dr Mike Rogers on 01522 552029 or at mike.rogers@lincolnshire.gov.uk .

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