



'Towards a 21st Century Rowntree Agenda' Workshop

Final Report, 27 March 2015

1 Summary

The Workshop held on 23 October 2014 at New Earswick Meeting House in York was part of the "York Remembers Rowntree" project (October 2013-March 2015) funded by Heritage Lottery Fund. This Oral History project created the first in-depth exploration of what Rowntree means to the local community. It also revealed a wider interest in the Rowntree legacy and how powerful and resonant it still is today.

The Workshop brought together 70 people representing a range of disciplines, professions and interests locally and nationally. The aim was to meet, discuss and explore key areas of the Rowntree legacy, gauge the level of interest in these areas and identify future priorities for the Rowntree Society.

The Interim report and subsequent feedback confirmed the high degree of engagement and the breadth and diversity of interpretations. It also secured external endorsement of the Rowntree Society's work in seeking to be an authority on all things Rowntree, responding to new opportunities, and keeping the Rowntree heritage and legacy alive and relevant.

The many overlapping threads and points of common interest identified by delegates fall into four major themes that will now underpin the five-year strategic framework for the Society.

- Business vision (includes business history and industrial welfare)
- Philanthropic vision (includes poverty, housing, ideology and politics)
- Commemoration, place and identity (includes oral history, and the local voice)
- Voicing Rowntree (includes archives, resources, and public events)

2 Building a strategic plan for the Rowntree Society

The Rowntree Society will review its aims, objectives and capabilities and produce a five-year strategic plan by October 2015. From this a workplan will be developed along with a fundraising plan to maximise the possibilities of core funding, partnership funding and project grants, and we will be actively looking for partnerships to take the following initiatives forward.

3 Planned and future initiatives

Business vision

- Hold exhibitions at a number of national locations to highlight the legacy of Seebohm Rowntree, especially in scientific business management and national politics. A (second) grant of £7,500 from Heritage Lottery Fund was awarded in 2015 for this project.

Philanthropic vision

- A publication describing the “intellectual and material Rowntree heritage”. This has been agreed in partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and will be distributed at national venues attended by JRF (to accompany its national Poverty strategy).
- Create and distribute materials on Poverty and Philanthropy for schoolchildren in York which would incorporate practical thinking and find ways of engaging young people with York’s distinctive tradition of progressive social reform.
- Look at the possibility of a major exhibition on the theme of Poverty across the ages in York.
- Look at the possibility of establishing a national network of historic garden villages, in anticipation of increased interest in this movement.

Commemoration, place and identity

- Commission a feasibility report for creating a ‘York Remembers’ network for existing groups, including care homes and local community groups, to address issues relating to loneliness, ageing and dementia. If set up, this network would be taken over and managed by other groups in York.
- Deposition and co-ordination of Oral History memories in public locations.

Voicing Rowntree

- Establish a series of biennial one-day Rowntree conferences on a planned series of themes (e.g. Interpreting Joseph Rowntree’s 1904 Memorandum, the Garden Village Movement Past and Present).
- Develop and edit a volume of essays (based on the conferences), to become a key reference work, to be published for example in 2025 for the anniversary of Joseph Rowntree’s death.
- Co-ordination with holders of Rowntree resources spread across different locations with a view to creating a greater presence, strengthen online knowledge, and access to information about resources.
- A comprehensive update of the Wikipedia entries on Rowntree by specialist historians.
- Life-long learning accredited/occasional courses in the city of York.

4 Continued contact with all our partners

Once again we wish to thank everyone who attended, has given feedback and shown interest in the Workshop. Please contact us at any time and keep in touch with your ideas and thoughts. We look forward to building new partnerships and working with many of you in the future.

From the Trustees and Executive Director of the Rowntree Society

Steven Burkeman
Gillian Cruddas
Liz Grierson(Chair)
Richard Jagger
Brian Jardine
Simon Newton
Susan Palmer
Stephen Pittam
Janette Ray
Chris Webb
Bridget Morris (Executive Director)