

A Visit to Scunthorpe May 8th 1934

On Tuesday, the 8th. of May, a party consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Storer, Mr. Shiells and eight members of the Science Sixth paid a visit to the Frodingham Iron Works, and the Appleby Steelplate works, near Scunthorpe. We travelled by car, arriving at Scunthorpe at 10. 30 a.m. Here we much regretted to hear that Mr. Westwood, who had arranged the visit, was ill and unable to conduct us round the mines. However, his chauffeur led us to the mines, where someone else was to meet us and show us round. At the mines however, all enquiries for our guides proved unsuccessful, and finally Mr. Storer and Heywood took the cars round to the offices at the other end of the mines, about 2 miles away, to try and find the missing guide. The rest of us filled in time by watching a huge steel shovel at work, scooping up 5 cwts of ironstone at a time, and swinging round and emptying its contents into waiting trucks with uncanny accuracy. After about twenty minutes Mr. Storer returned with the guides, and the visit officially began.

In reality the mines were only quarries. The surface layer consisting of about 10 feet of sand which was dredged away and thrown to the waste side or loaded into trucks and sold for building purposes. The dredger removing the waste sand was considered to be the mechanical marvel of the visit. It slowly moved along the sandbank scraping up the sand in buckets, then the sand was thrown on to an escalator band moving at a terrific rate, which conveyed it 140 feet across the quarry on to the waste heap. The machine contained 3 separate units, one to provide power and move it along the bank, another to work the bucket dredger and yet a third to turn the belt. Most of us walked along a footbridge along side the conveyer belt, and experienced the thrill of being suspended 150 feet in mid-air above the ground level. Beneath the sand was a layer, 35 to 40 feet thick, of ironstone, containing about 23% of iron. Holes were drilled 20 feet deep by pneumatic drills into the ironstone layer. The holes were charged with explosive and detonated with an electric battery, breaking up the rock to be dealt with by the steam shovel. We were fortunate to come across a section almost ready for blasting and after a short wait everyone took shelter whilst Mrs. Storer impressively pushed down the plunger and was rewarded, after the second attempt, with a loud "woof", as the whole earth shook and tons of ore changed from solid rock to small pieces. After this several of us had a really good shaking, as we demonstrated to the workmen how not to use a pneumatic drill which was worked by compressed air at a pressure of 85 to 90 lbs. per square inch. Further down the mine a few specimens of peat were taken from a storehouse. The peat was cut from the surface layer at that point in rectangular pieces, put on racks to dry, and, as it dried it shrank to about a quarter of its original size. The peat was then used to drive a small engine.

At last we emerged at the other end of the mines, quite dirty, and eager for dinner. But alas, there were still the pump houses to look round. First a modern building containing two air compressors supplying air for the drills at a pressure of 100 lbs. per sq. inch, the pressure being sufficient to work the drills half an hour after the compressor had stopped working. The compressors worked at a voltage of 2,500 volts and took 15 amps. Next we visited several disused pump houses. They were filled with big steam engines once used to pump away water drained out of the mines. These had been replaced by a comparatively small electric pump which cleanly and efficiently dealt with the water. Then we had to walk a distance of about half a mile, but being weak with hunger, it seemed at least five miles to the offices. At last, at about 1.30, we said goodbye to the guides, who presented us with some enormous fossils in addition to the ones we had picked up as we came through the mines, and expressed a wish to see us, or at any rate, a similar party from School, again. We then jumped into the cars and left for Scunthorpe, being told to make a hasty dinner as we were due back at the Appleby Works at 2.15.

Before we leave the mines, here are a few facts. The mines consisted of two wings, the one traversed being two miles long. About 1.5 million tons of ore are dealt with a year, this being sold to the neighbouring iron-works to be smelted. 30 miles of railway track and 14 engines are used by the mines but the whole concern is owned by the Winns, who are known locally as the owners of Nostell Priory.

Beelzebub. H.

Feeling a little less tired and hungry, we arrived back at 2.30 p.m. for our tour of the Appleby Steel-plate works. After an enquiry by a German as to whom we wanted to see, we were provided with a Scottish guide to take us round to see these British works. We were considerably impressed with the size of the buildings and the loud rumble of machinery busily at work. On the 2nd. floor of one of these girded buildings we saw two open hearth furnaces, each of 250 tons capacity. Here pig-iron, from the blast furnaces is fed in along with scrap iron, limestone and coke, and mild steel is formed. The molten steel is cast into iron moulds called ingots and these are taken to a second building where rolling is done; heating is done by producer gas at 1,100 degrees C. We saw the basic slag, which is formed above the steel, being run off in a molten stream into trucks. It gives such an intense blue-white glare that the workmen have to wear blue spectacles. This slag is tipped molten on to the slag heaps where it remains a dull red for several seconds. The ingots are stripped by grab cranes and re-heated to regain an even temperature. They are then rolled to a thickness of 4 ins, and cut by a sheering machine into slabs a yard square. The rolling mills are electric and operated from a cabin by levers. The slabs are re-heated and taken by swing cranes to another lot of rolling mills where they can be rolled in varying thicknesses. Electro-magnets are used for lifting the plates to cutting and planing machines. Here they are cut to the required size and the waste is sent back to the furnaces. The surface of plates is sometimes polished up by emery wheels used in a similar machine to a lawn mower. One of the latest electric planing machines we saw could plane all four sides at once. The last process is cleaning the sheets. This is done by a first washing in sulphuric acid and then two in water. The plates are then dried and sprayed with oil and stacked ready for sale. We also visited the testing houses, where the tensile strength and the breaking point of specimens of steel are measured. If these specimens do not conform to a fixed standard the steel has to be re-melted.

We spent a very edifying yet interesting afternoon, and our thanks are due to Mr. and Mrs. Storer and Mr. Shiells for so kindly organising the day for us.

L. J. (Price)

So this is London July 20th 1934

Excitement and anticipation replaced the usual morning drowsiness on each face, when our party of 64 scholars and Staff members started off for London at 6. 15 a.m. on July 20th - just 10 years after a similar School party visited Wembley. The early morning mist soon lifted, and when not too busy with breakfast, lovely views could be seen. King's Cross at last! We hustled into the waiting charabancs and were taken via Kingway, the Strand, and Whitehall to Westminster Abbey. This visit was spoilt through lack of organisation, the whole party, of over 600 people were left to wander about at will, and the impression left on one's mind, was disappointment rather than wonder and awe. Unfortunately we only viewed the Houses of Parliament from the exterior, but we were considerably impressed by their dignity and magnificence. We then drove out to Hampton, where we lunched at Nuttall's Cafe, but we were not introduced to Betty, the illustrious member of the family. The court was duly visited, and a lasting impression of the size and arrangement of the beautiful pile of old buildings was gained, although we had not time to spend in the different Halls awaiting the re-visitations of "Bluff King Hal".

En route for Windsor, the road was marked with directions to facilitate the Ascot traffic. Runnymede we saw, peaceful and deserted, except for the workmen removing the stage on which the Pageant of History had been re-enacted. Windsor left, surely the most Regal impression of the day, the whole visit was automatic, even to the guides sermonettes. We were held entranced and silent in St. George's Chapel, by its splendour and beauty, whilst the verger recounted its history. It was most pleasing to find both here and at Hampton, the pride and care taken in the upkeep of these truly splendid buildings. We have no fear of the Americans buying and removing these heritages.

The three hours steam down the Thames was thoroughly enjoyed, the river was lovely and the riverside mansions were the envy of all. At Bourne End we were picked up by the charas, and taken back direct to London. We were fortunate in heading the party, and escaped most of the Aldershot and Ascot traffic. The other motors were not so fortunate. Anxious parents and friends wondered what the truth was, when told that one of the steamers had run into a mudbank in the Thames.

However, three hours late, we steamed out of King's Cross, many of the party were snoring and soon looking elegant, others had forty winks and were then resurrected whilst the entertainers with the portable magic eye told joke after joke to a rather listless audience. School In the morning but fortunately, bed came first.

L.J. 6s (Price)

Easter in Devon 1935

On Easter Saturday our party of sixteen past and present girls from School left the smokiness of Hemsworth to spend a week visiting the beauty spots of Devon. The tour, arranged by Sir Henry Lunn Ltd. was similar to the one our party of boys enjoyed the previous Easter and included four day trips from Exeter, our centre. There were no organised trips on Sunday or Monday, but thanks to Miss Griffiths who knows the best places to see, we spent part of both days sight-seeing. Most of us braved a soaking on Sunday morning to attend the Cathedral service, and as the weather changed. favourably in the afternoon we went by bus to Teignmouth. From here, a weary uphill climb brought us, tired and hungry to Labrador Bay. We had tea at the Hotel, formerly a smuggler's den, situated on a ledge half-way down the sheer face of the red sandstone cliffs, with the sea roaring far below and the gulls screaming round about. Such charming places, we had always thought only existed in novels.

Monday morning was wet again and so we spent it looking round Exeter's fine old buildings. As the weather was still unpromising in the afternoon we set off for Sidmouth and were amply rewarded for our venture by glorious sunshine which greatly enhanced the beauty of England's Riviera.

Tuesday - Exmoor ponies. After visiting Tiverton, and driving through beautifully wooded country we reached Malmsmead. Here the fun began with stubborn Exmoor ponies, which refused to be pushed, coaxed, or even led any way but the one they had in mind. Then when they had gathered impetus and sensed which way they intended to go, screams, kicks, and reins could not prevent their going at an alarming fast speed for a pony trot. A few aches were the only regrets of this amusing relaxation. We went on to Lynton and Lynmouth, and after driving down Countisbury Hill and other similar ones our char-a-banc broke down in South Molton and required an hour's doctoring before we could set off again. The return journey was through peaceful lanes with violets and primroses growing in profusion along the banks, and past villages of thatched cottages snugly nestled amongst thick woods, far remote from Yorkshire.

Our visit to Plymouth on Wednesday aroused our just pride in the daring escapades of the Devon sea dogs. We were pleased to see that the rather unimposing front is undergoing improvement to make it more in keeping with the grandeur of the Hoe.

En route for Torquay on Thursday we were very obligingly conducted round the Royal Watcombe potteries where we marvelled at the ease with which experienced craftsmen can shape unwieldy lumps of clay into beautiful vases. At Kent's cavern we again broke our journey and were delighted with the splendour of the caves. From Torquay we enjoyed a sail to Paignton and to Brixham, an old world fishing town.

We spent our last day in Devon on Dartmoor. We had lunch close to the Druid Hut Circles and then went on to Widdecombe. Here we visited Beatrice Chase's cottage and met the authoress in person. On our return journey we climbed Hey Tor Rocks, but the view was somewhat misty.

On Saturday, April 27th, we caught the home train with much regret, to leave such delightful scenes behind. Everyone acclaimed it the most enjoyable week they had ever spent. Our heartiest thanks are due to Miss Griffiths for having so kindly arranged and looked after our tours, and we hope that after such a success a similar holiday can be carried out next year.

L. Jaggard (Price House)

The Oxford Trip May 1936

On the morning of May 22nd., numerous somewhat excited boys and girls, wearing H.G.S. hats and caps, congregated on the stations of Nostell, Hemsworth, and Moorthorpe, at the astonishingly early hour of eight o'clock. No one ought to have been more astonished than the members of the Staff who accompanied us, as, with the exception of one partial invalid, the whole party was on time, and even the latter managed to scramble aboard. The occasion was of course the trip to Oxford, when one hundred and forty pupils and six members of the Staff "did" the ancient, historic "seat of learning" in the truly American style.

Once aboard the train and the fun began. Probing back into the dim distant past one wonders however the train managed to hold to the rails, so great was the commotion and excitement of that first hour. Calm having been restored, and the boys "persuaded" not to lean out of carriage windows (headless bodies are such a nuisance to dispose of), the train Staff upset the temporary quietness by serving lunch. From that moment, very few thought of sitting still, but those who could view the countryside, were well rewarded by what they saw. Two points of interest did claim some attention - the aerial masts of Daventry, and the stream-lined rail-coach at Banbury.

On arrival at Oxford, we found (eventually) motor-coaches waiting to conduct us round Oxford. The next two hours were fruitfully spent sight-seeing. Different things captured the interest of different people, such as the magnificent grounds of the Colleges, especially Worcester, the splendour of St. Mary's Church, the Bodleian Library, Sir Joshua Reynolds' famous window at New College, and King Edward's apartments at Magdalen College. But one thing will be remembered by all - the wonderful mace of William de Whykam, Bishop of Winchester, at New College. Even the non-artists were impressed by its workmanship, and to those who could fully appreciate its artistry, to see it must have been worth the whole trip.

After touring Oxford, the party proceeded to the river, where two river-steamers were awaiting us. A good deal of rivalry existed between the boys' and the girls' boats, but the former managed to get away first, to the great elation of its passengers. The journey on the steamer was about four miles up stream; tea was served on board, and the boats returned about 5.45 p.m. to moor for the final Inter-College race at 6.30. The girls' boat had to moor nearer the starting point, but they were fortunate in seeing the only "bump". The walk back to the station, which in ordinary circumstances would have afforded us an opportunity of obtaining mementoes was marred by a heavy downpour of rain, which made Oxford seem more like Manchester on cricket days. Nevertheless it was a very wet but highly satisfied party that left the train at the various stations of Moorthorpe, Hemsworth, and Nostell.

Firman 6s and Rutter 5b, both of Talbot House

A Visit to France July 1936.

"The boat train for France via Newhaven and Dieppe leaves at ten o'clock, number one platform." This is what I heard as I pushed my way through the huge crowd at Victoria Station. After being knocked this way and that, I got to the ticket barrier. I quickly passed this and rushed for a seat in the train, which was getting full up although it was only five minutes to ten.

After travelling for two hours we arrived at Newhaven where the Channel Boat awaited us, with steam up, ready for its crossing to Dieppe. Those people who thought they were going to be seasick were sitting near the deck rails with long and haggard faces. When I had passed safely through the Customs, not forgetting to have my passport stamped, I heard a French railway porter shouting "Le train pour Rouen a droite. " I then selected a comfortable seat near the window where I was able to watch the French countryside pass quickly by.

With a screech and a hiss of steam the wheels of the train stopped, I was at last at my journey's end, Rouen, where my friend was waiting for me at the ticket barrier. He greeted me with. "Bonjour monsieur, avez-vous fait bon voyage?" and a shake of the hand. To my surprise I found I had to go on a noisy tramcar which did not go very fast but seemed to be clang-clang-clang all the time. At last I found myself in a very comfortable chair drinking a cup of hot coffee, with my French friends seated round me, asking me hosts of questions.

Every evening at 7.30 p.m. dinner was served. We had. soup first, then meat and vegetables, followed by sweets and coffee. Once the rest of the family had snails, which they said were very tasty, but I refrained from trying them. While we were eating this dinner, cider and wine were served and sometimes champagne. During and after dinner, they always discussed politics and events of the day, whilst smoking a cigarette which smelt just like our cigars. At ten o'clock we went to bed unless we went to the Casino or to the Cinema. I thought the Cinema was very funny; there was an afternoon and an evening show. Half way through the picture they had an interval, when everyone present rushed out to drink wine.

The shops in France are very fashionable and on every large step window one sees printed. "English spoken". I saw on many windows "English" spelt without a capital letter. I would advise people who eat a lot of sweets not to go to live in France because sweets which would. be cheap in England, cost one shilling a quarter in France.

Rouen is a magnificent city. Two of its most famous sights are the place where Jeanne D'Arc was held prisoner and the place where she was burnt. The Cathedral of Rouen is a beautiful building and its stained glass windows are lovely. It has three steeples, all built at different times. One can climb the centre one and get a fine view of the city and the river.

Jean, my friend, told me that he did not like the English Sundays, because there was nothing to do. In France, after early morning Mass, Sunday is a holiday. First you see the women-folk going to market, then in the afternoon the men-folk go to football matches (football matches are only played on Sundays and it is a very crude unskilled game that they play). Their wives, meanwhile, go to the cinema. In the evenings they enjoy themselves in the cafes drinking wine and listening to dance bands playing the latest music.

My holiday seemed to pass very quickly, for there was always something new to see and learn. One of my greatest thrills was coming from Rouen to Dieppe travelling in the auto-railway. This is a streamlined train driven by electricity which travels at 90 miles per hour all the time. The sea was very calm for both my channel crossings. I arrived home safely after eighteen hours' travelling. I am now eagerly awaiting my next visit to France.

" Micky ", Price.

School Visit to the Engineering Works December 1936

On Saturday, December 5th., 1936, some hardy members of the Sixth and Fifth Forms, braved the cold, the rain, and the snow, and cycled fourteen miles to Chapeltown. Some (dare we say) less hardy members of the School went by car. At Chapeltown we were shown over the very extensive works of Messrs Newton Chambers and Co. The works include vast pattern-making, machining and moulding shops, a coal mine and a blast furnace. The firm produces its own gas and electricity, and employs about six hundred men.

In the pattern shop we saw cunning operations performed on wood with a speed and accuracy that astounded us. We pictured ourselves laboriously performing similar operations with key-hole saw and file. In the machine shop, gigantic lathes, drilling, drilling and planing machines were observed. One boring machine, costing four thousand five hundred pounds, was almost human. In the casting shop it was intensely interesting to see the molten metal being poured into moulds, also to see the very heavy castings being picked up as easily and delicately as if they were one pound weights. (Here, we thought we were going to lose Turner, as a moulder attracted by his merry face, called him over to him, and appeared as if he wanted to adopt him).

The hundred feet Blast Furnace, with molten iron pouring from its tapping hole, was an object of thrilling interest. Most of the slag was drawn off via the Slag Hole, but when the level of the iron fell below the Slag Hole, the slag had to flow out with the rest of the iron, but was prevented from flowing into the 'pig' beds by a sand barrier. The molten metal flowed along long channels into special sand beds, where they formed 'pigs' about four inches in diameter, four feet long, and weighing about one hundredweight. The ore used came chiefly from Lancashire and yielded about twenty seven per cent of iron. The proportion of ore to coke in the furnace was about four to one, with a sprinkling of lime. Conveyors took this load to the top of the furnace and deposited it round the bell. The bell was lowered by a lever below, so that no man was required on the charging platform. Instruments showed that the 'blast' pressure was about fifteen pounds per square inch, and the temperature of the air entering the furnace was eleven hundred degrees Fahrenheit and air leaving at the top three hundred degrees Fahrenheit. The hot furnace gasses heated the hot air to the blast. Gasses given off, chiefly carbon monoxide, were used to drive the huge double-acting, four thousand horse power electricity producing plant, and for heating boilers for steam engines. The furnace went for seven years continuously without going out. It then needed re-lining. It produced seventeen hundred tons of iron weekly.

We were pleased to learn that the firm was full up with orders. In fact men were working on night shifts and Sundays. Most of the men were on piece work, and, without overtime, appeared to be able to earn about four pounds weekly.

The School Journey to Paris April 1938

On Wednesday, 13th., April (1938) we left Hemsworth for Paris for an eight days holiday with Miss Walker and Mr. Nelson. Except for the boy who distinguished himself by eating a four course lunch after he had been warned of the danger of seasickness, the journey passed uneventfully until Dover was reached. Since this was our first crossing, Miss Walker, believing in the old adage that "prevention is better than cure" dosed those who wished with. "anti-seasickness mixture".

We were met at Calais, after a crossing lasting one hour, by an official of the 'School Travel Service' under whose auspices we were making the journey. This gentleman and Miss Walker steered us safely through the customs and to the train. The official detained Miss Walker for a few moments with the result that when a ticket collector entered our compartment we were overwhelmed by the rapidity of his speech. We called for Miss Walker, who, when she came, found out what he wanted, so that he left us in comparative quietness. The rail journey upon which we now embarked was the most uncomfortable that I have ever endured. At the Gare du Nord we were met by a 'bus which took us to the "Hotel Home Joli" which was to be our home for the next week. Arriving there the manager, after expressing relief that Miss Walker could speak French, supplied us with an excellent supper.

The next day was spent seeing Paris, with its fine monuments and buildings. We saw the Church of the Sacred Heart, Notre Dame, The Tomb of Napoleon, who is buried in seven coffins, and the Arc de Triomphe with the Grave of the Unknown Warrior over which burns the Eternal Flame. That evening we went to a cafe in the Latin Quarter where we learnt to tip the waiter ten per cent of the value of our drinks.

Friday saw us at Malmaison, the summer residence of Napoleon, where he signed his second abdication. We were told that the name was chosen because the building had been, at one time a sanatorium. Leaving here we went to Versailles where we saw the marvellous paintings on the ceilings. In the palace we also saw the Hall of Mirrors, where the Treaty of Versailles was signed. This Hall is a huge ballroom with windows overlooking the beautiful palace gardens. That night some of the party went to the pictures and I heard from a reliable source that Shirley Temple can apparently speak fluent French. (During our stay we wished we could).

Saturday morning was spent writing home and in the afternoon we went with Miss Bromley to the Louvre. This again is a great place for artists but I could understand only those works whose meanings were obvious. On leaving the Louvre we went first to a cafe, then for a river-trip and passed some of the Pavilions, relics of last year's Paris Exhibition.

On Sunday we found, much to our surprise, that the shops and markets were open. These street markets were a constant source of entertainment to us, to whom they were very strange. We readily agreed to Miss Walker's suggestion that we should go to the Zoo in the Bois de Boulogne. Here after gaining a admittance at half-price, by the use of Mr.Nelson's "Laissez-passer", we were entertained by the elephants and seals at feeding time without extra charge.



L-R: Mr. Nelson, Miss. Walker, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Tuesday and our last day was spent as was Napoleon's before his abdication. We had ample evidence that he did depart from there, when we saw the "Cour des asieuz" and various rooms arranged just as he left them. We passed through I think sixteen miles of forest en route, a pleasant holiday. We also visited the village and the house in which Millet, the painter, lived and were shown the fields and spire depicted in the "Angelus". In the town of Fontainebleau we had lunch and were charged five francs for a cup of coffee at a cafe to which we were taken by our guide, who was a popular figure with us for the rest of the day - he must have thought money was little or nothing to us! However we forgot our troubles when looking round the Palace. The floors were done in "wood-mosaic" and the walls were draped with beautiful tapestries. There is in the palace grounds a carp pond in which are carp which are supposed to save markings which date back three hundred years. Although some of the carp rose to the surface when we threw bread into the water we did not see any marked ones, which made us inclined to doubt the truth of the story we had heard.

This visit ended our tour and next day we departed for home. The return journey was again broken of its monotony by the feat of the "boy with the cast-iron stomach", who, after eating six eggs, and two sandwiches, followed by bananas arid cheese, disappointed us by not even looking pale during the seventy miles of the crossing. The tour was enjoyed by all, and. I am sure my fellow travellers are hoping, as I am, for future holidays of this type.

Mellor Vla, Talbot