

VISIT TO BUCKLAND PAPER MILL

On 14 December about ten or twelve of us turned up for the tour of Wiggins Teape Paper Mill. The company had produced three excellent guides in the form of William and Harry English and Bert Bailey. They had all completed 51 years service at that location so we stood little chance of stumping them with our questions.

We started at the furnace, which is automatically fed by small coal from hoppers - 350 tons every week - and which drives the turbine supplying all the power required throughout the plant. Some power for lighting can be obtained from the national grid but otherwise the business is self sufficient.

That also applies to the water used for production purposes which is obtained from an artesian well. The depth is not known but in all its history it has never failed to meet requirements which suggests it is below the known water table.

Our guides explained that the main ingredient used is Linters, or cotton seed fibres obtained from the Lancashire and Californian mills. Waste and recycling, as high as 20% also plays its part.

The structure is composed largely of steel, bricks and concrete so any fire hazard would appear minimal. Nevertheless an efficient water sprinkling system was evident throughout.

We watched number two machine producing chart paper for the Admiralty and various shipping lines. It took sixty tons of water to produce one ton of paper but I hasten to add that 90% of that is recycled for reuse as the heated rollers extract it from the product.

My small mind found that it got a bit technical from now. The use of endless nylon fibres and a vibrating mechanism ensured the fibres and water were suitably integrated and as we walked along the machine the heat from the cylinders was stepped up gradually so that the moisture was extracted by degrees. Eventually it even went through a mangling process and a 'Dandy Roll' was used to incorporate the famous Conquest imprint.

Starch was added and a polishing or glazing cylinder played its part and the end product, about seven miles of paper in length on the end roller. I did not note the width so I hazard a guess of four metres.

It was then moved to the 'Autotorque' which transferred it from its metal spindle and replaced that with a cardboard centre. I might add that the machine did that at a speed of 1,500 metres per minute.

The automation that we next witnessed was quite frankly out of this world. The paper was next fed to the Pasaban machine which not only counted the sheets and stacked them, two magic eyes meanwhile cut out anything unsatisfactory and rejected it. (For reuse).

The Wrapmatic machine neatly cut the paper to size before efficiently wrapping it ready for the shop counter and then loaded those packets on to pallets which were then covered by waterproof plastic sheeting. All without a word being spoken as it were. The machine being the complete master.

There was little time left to see number three machine which during our visit was producing what was described to us as a high wet strength, melamine treated product, for the use of the Ministry of Defence.

To summarize. I had never seen automation on this scale before. The whole, backed up by a computer system which only those engaged could possibly hope to interpret. Our thanks go to the management and our three guides who gave us a warm welcome and a very informative and enjoyable evening.

Barry Smith

CHRISTMAS FEAST

As in the previous year the venue for our annual Christmas supper evening held on December the 8th, was the fine old medieval refectory at Dover College, kindly arranged by courtesy of Mr. Jack Ind, the Headmaster.

Our guests for the evening included our local M.P. Mr. David Shaw, the Town Mayor Mr. Bill Newman, Mr. Ind and their respective ladies, and together with 90 other members enjoyed a delightful cold buffet, the size and range of which must surely have catered for all tastes and appetites.

After this splendid meal we were able to enjoy the musical entertainment provided by Michael Foad and a number of members of the Dover Choral Society. His team were elegantly attired in Victorian dress and we were treated to a wide range of well-loved Music Hall favourites, and as is usual on such occasions there was considerable audience participation. Whilst the gentlemen in the audience were captivated by the charm and elegance of those ladies of the chorus who visited their tables, first prize for the most outstanding twinkle undoubtedly went to Ken Berry's wife Delys.

Whilst a lot of teamwork went into the organising of this highly successful event, I would like to make special mention of the efforts of our Social Secretary Lyn Clackett who amongst other things organised the provision of wines and the raffle and negotiated the catering arrangements.



John Gerrard Vice-Chairman

A member of the choral group.