



Some Things We Choose To Remember,
Some Things We Choose to Forget

Brendan Jackson



These images and small fictions by Brendan Jackson were inspired by working with the various collections at Snibston Discovery Museum in Coalville. Set in different periods and in the voice of different characters, the fictions in this book re-imagine lives and circumstances that surrounded these objects. We all collect things of importance to us, tokens or trophies, repositories of time and memory, but over decades and generations the original significance of these are forgotten. History is clouded, rewritten, rediscovered as new stories are unearthed.

They were created as part of an innovative Transform arts programme which is at the heart of Snibston's regeneration programme. Snibston is set on the site of a former colliery which is nationally important, and includes a Heritage railway, outside play areas, the former travelling Century Theatre, and a large country park and nature reserve. The museum displays a diverse and rich collection of historic objects telling the story of technology and design and how it impacts on our everyday lives from the past to the present day and into the future.

Through a series of commissions, the Snibston site and its collections are the creative inspiration for works produced by artists of national and international repute. Over a two year period, the artists were invited to explore the site and engage with local people to create new artworks that related to the history and heritage of Snibston and Leicestershire.

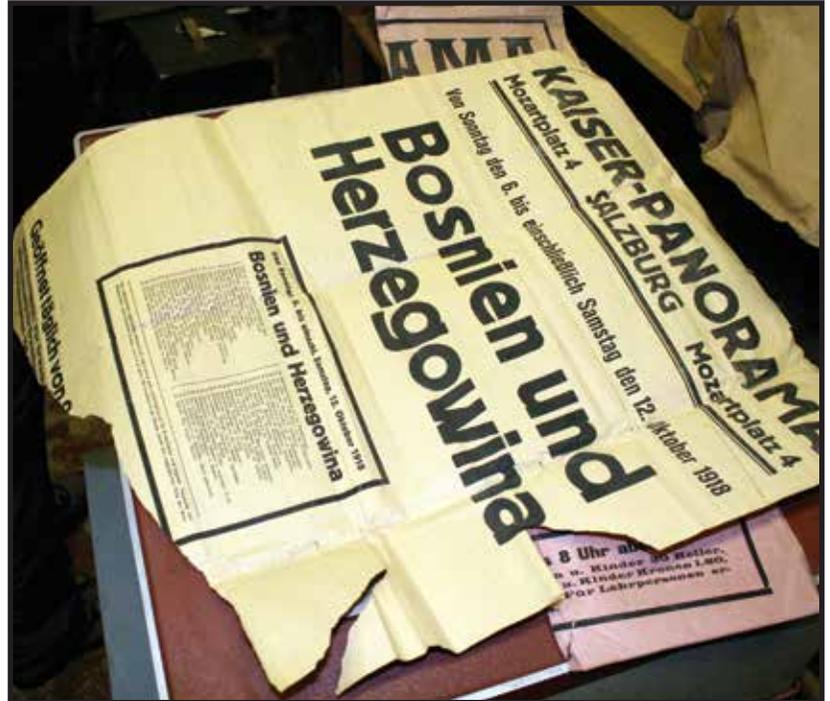
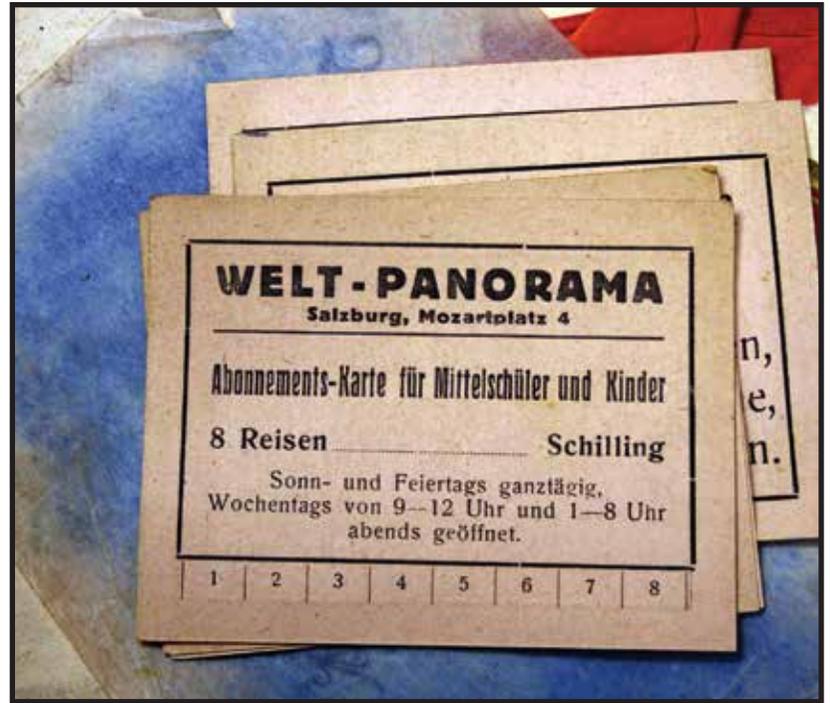
Maurice Maguire, Curator for Transform, Coalville 2011.



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Introduction

These stories and photographs were made during a residency at Snibston Discovery Museum. My starting point was conversations with the staff who work here, then delving into the collection in the stores, investigating those objects currently not on or never on display. On one of my first visits I was shown a dismantled 'panopticon' or – more accurately – the Kaiser Panorama, a large circular wooden device for viewing stereoscopic photographs. We know little about how it came to be here, other than it was 'Left in store temporarily in 1969 by a Polish gentleman for about two weeks but never collected. Ownership vested in County council under Section 41 of the Local Government (Misc Provisions) Act 1982.' The information in the database only supplies this information:

- *12 double veneered and polished panels with brass eye pieces and electric cable, switches, etc.*
- *2 single veneered and polished panels, one with etched glass in top half.*
- *Approx. 80 other pieces of wood, comprising mainly numbered circular joining pieces of wood and metal, padded and covered boards for leaning on, and unpolished wooden pieces for internal structure.*
- *Also, 4 metal curved pieces to form circle of gas jets with candle holders attached, and circular attachment with 13 hooks.*
- *Miscellaneous boxes contain black/white double image slides, extracts of German newsprint, etc.*
- *Found to be in reasonable condition, and treated for woodworm 22/04/98.*

Though invented in the 1880s, judging by the advertisements in which many of the glass slides are wrapped, this Kaiser Panorama was still touring Austria between 1917 until as late as 1929, at a time when these kinds of viewing devices had been completely supplanted by moving pictures and the cinematographic technological supremacy of Eastman-Kodak. On 12th October 1918 it was in Salzburg, where it showed views of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 13th December 1929 it was in a suburb of Vienna, where it revealed the Landscapes and Cities of Alpine Countries. These surviving images are of architectural and artistic marvels, spectacular landscapes and city views from Tsarist Russia, Italy, Germany, Greece, Constantinople and other great European capitals.

The essential 'mystery' behind this object helped shape these stories. Rather like the coal that was once dug out of the ground here and used to produce heat and light, fragments of stories were unearthed from conversations about the nature of the collections and then this raw material was reshaped – an intertwining of facts and fictions, memoir and flights of fancy – then combined with photographic images for an installation at the Museum. These first took the form of a series of large prints on watercolour paper, folio pages which were hung on display alongside some found objects, then combined in the form of a handmade book, thus offering a new object for the collection.



Krawall in Wien

The cafés were not yet invaded by *Frontkämpfervereinigung* thugs, but we knew they were waiting for us in the alleyways. The signs were ominous. It was an outrage that the innkeeper got away with murder, but the protests have got out of hand. It shocked us all. Thick smoke rising over the roofs. Machine guns mounted on trucks, rattling away in Mariahilferstrasse. Mob violence and looting in our fair city of theatres and musical comedy. Even the Orient Express stopped in its tracks by strikers!

We've kept our doors closed and I fall into melancholic reflection. Who will bother now to admire our architectural and artistic miracles? We did good business at the turn of the century, with this very Kaiserpanorama. These were new ways of looking at the world and city dwellers were insatiably curious then, not angry and hungry. Our realistic depiction of exotic lands and different visions was a first rate educational undertaking, not mere frivolity. In England and Ireland, Professor Kinetograph presented his cinephotographic entertainments – 'The Sea Cove' and 'The Fire Brigade' proving most attractive. In France the light projections of Mr Joly and Mr Pathé had some novelty it must be said, but I was more impressed when I heard Mr Carron speak of his plans for a 'Machine of Sensational Emotions', to allow the public to participate in a freefall of over 300 metres encased in a specially constructed chamber. I never heard from him again. He certainly never attached it to the Eiffel Tower, as was his stated intent.

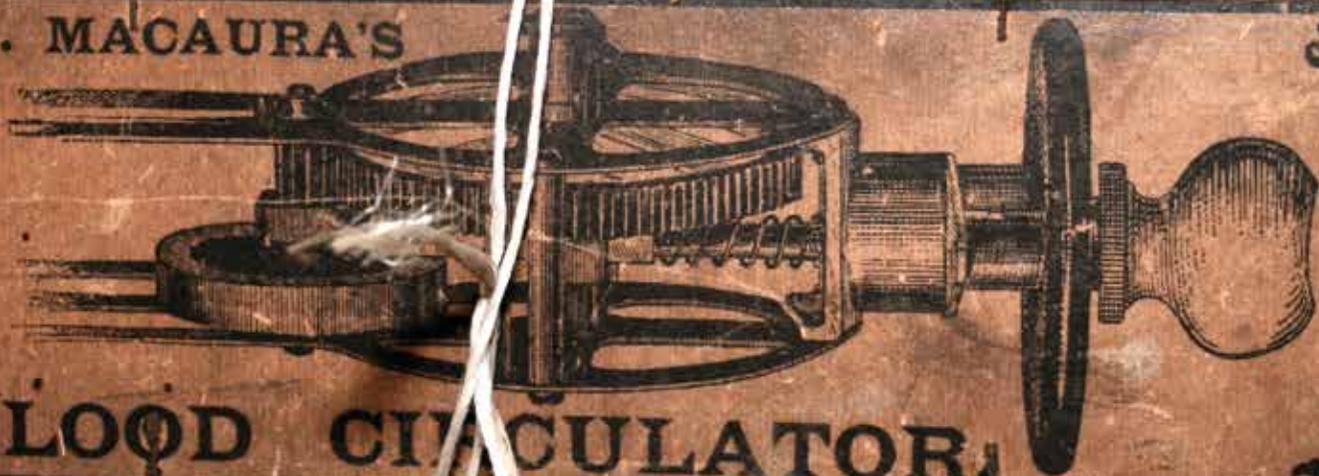
Once the crowds queued for our efficacious yet humble attraction, to undertake an armchair journey to the old iron market in Cremona, the waterfalls of the Tirol, the Amalfi Coast,

the catacombs of Palermo, the landmarks of the Bosphorus, to venture within the walls of Moscow Kremlin and even the Tsar's bedroom. We claimed it was the cheapest and most comfortable way of traveling the earth, and we were true to our word. It was slower than the train and far less wearisome on the eye.

We took our device throughout the territories where German was spoken, where this technological phenomenon was greatly admired, though latterly we must rely on traveling fairs in small settlements in the thickets of Bohemia to draw a decent crowd. There our rhetoric still has resonance. *Not everyone can stand in front of the Pyramids, ascend to the mountain heights or see the wonders of Greece and Rome! Here, tonight, the Treasures of the World, True to Nature, for children and adults to appreciate architectural and artistic marvels!*

Mr Kafka's opinion is that cinema spectators are disturbed by movement, that our stereoscopic photographs have more life to them because they allow the eyes the peace of reality. This is a view we endorse, though I fear these people now, so full of intolerance and impatience, stimulated by battling on the streets, will more greatly relish the Moving Pictures and their strident musical accompaniment. I hear they will soon be produced with colouration and speech appended; thus ideologues will be better equipped to spread their poison to the agitated masses.

DR. MACAURA'S



BLOOD CIRCULATOR

Galvanic Therapy

The dawn of a new century was not an auspicious time as far as Mr Ablewell was concerned. The German and French challenging British sea power, Roberts and Kitchener dispatched to South Africa to quell the troublesome Boers, Socialism on the march, and continuing problems with Matilda, his dear wife of six months. He had entered willingly into matrimony late in life, to a woman 25 years younger. His years of army service and managing plantations on the Malay Peninsula had not prepared him for this shock to his system. Though he openly professed great admiration of her pluck, she turned out to be a fiery little thing, taking up correspondence with the National Union of Women's Suffrage. Although he prided himself on being a Liberal, some freethinking ideas espoused by his wife were quite peculiar. Furthermore, he suffered two other rivals – her Mother and the Catholic Church, neither of whom he could abide. The Doctors reported his spouse prone to hysteria, which influenced her judgement and her mood. It was a common enough condition, treated by regular doses of laudanum, trips to Scarborough to embrace the sea air and mesmerism to allow her to reveal her innermost feelings. All to no advantage.

Mr Ablewell was often away on business trips and at such times absence did indeed make the heart grow fonder. He and his wife sent poems to each other, expressing their desire for fulfillment and affection and their common love of nature. On one such occasion, at a trade fair in Leeds, he observed notices for a lunchtime lecture on the subject of 'women's problems'. This was presented by renowned physician and inventor Dr Macaura – an avuncular American, likely of Irish extraction,

two factors which did not count in his favour. Most likely a charlatan, well practiced in the selling of snake oil, Macaura was indeed quick talking and full of himself – yet quite convincing. He spoke passionately of his instrument 'The Pulsocon', patent pending. He explained how his vibrating device, when applied judiciously to parts of the body, offered relief from not only hysteria – bringing a healthy glow to the face, as he put it – but also a potential cure for deafness, polio, anaemia, writer's cramp, nervousness and constipation.

The device was hand cranked but the Doctor assured the audience that one day it would be powered by electricity. *Surely electricity and rubber will be the engines of progress that propel the Empire into the future*, he said, a sentiment Mr Ablewell wholeheartedly agreed with. Macaura concluded by stating that it was the duty of those who took the Hippocratic Oath to be fired by imagination and inquisitiveness, to tame the excess of God's creation, to order the Universe, arrest decay and amplify life. When questioned, he admitted 'The Pulsocon' could not yet offer a remedy for tuberculosis or cancer and had little success in treating baldness. He recommended the audience maintain a good diet, be modest in their consumption of tea and coffee, drink plenty of clean water, avoid alcohol and breathe deeply.

Mr Ablewell immediately placed an order with the British Appliances Manufacturing Company for two of these devices. As a pragmatic man, he understood that machines as well as human bodies may break down.

E K C O R A D I O

FREQUENCY MODULATION BAND

88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99

MW LIGHT LONDON MARSEILLES ATHLONE I
EUROPEAN HILVERSUM 2 HILVERSUM I BRUSSELS I
LUXEMB'G WEST LIMOGES PRAGUE I
WEST MIDLAND SCOTTISH B.B.C. 3
B.B.C. 3 N.IRELAND WELSH NORTH

METRES

200 250 300 350 400 450 500 550
1000 1200 1400 1600 1800 2000

LW OSLO MOTALA ALLOUIS METRES
KALUNDBORG LIGHT MOSCOW

VOLUME



TUNING



The Golden Age

I was fond of dancing and listening to the radio. My dearest friend ended up marrying a strict Wesleyan who disapproved of such frivolity, who finely attuned her to a rigorous schedule. On Thursday evening she cleaned all the brass and silver ware in the house, and on Friday the fireplace needed black-leading and the tiles given a good scrub. I told her she'd have been better off with a good dose of Pentecostalism. Go past their church hall and all you could hear was lively music, joyful singing and handclapping. She didn't listen did she, more's the pity?

Father talks about Chamberlain broadcasting on that fateful day in September 1939, all the family sat round the radio. He said when they heard that speech it felt like it was the end of the world – and I suppose it was in a way, with the changes that came after. When they first had a set Grandmother would not switch it on, she was so terrified of electricity. They listened to Henry Hall and the BBC Dance Orchestra and of course knew all the words to the songs – 'Away with dull care, The day is set fair, A wireless set near, To bring us good cheer!'

How they used to sway under the palm trees of 'Bahama Mama, That Tropical Charmer' and roar along with 'The Man on the Flying Trapeze'. Father told me that Lord Reith insisted the orchestra wear dress suits while they performed for broadcast, even though no-one could see them. The radio brought a different world into the living room. Electricity is indeed a marvel.

The world hissed and crackled and our thoughts were carried far beyond the municipal square in Leicester. Hilversum, Motala, where were these places, what contrasting lives were lived there?

Later on, I loved to listen to 'Rockin' to Dreamland' with Keith Fordyce, when it was broadcast once a week on Luxembourg, a place that hitherto only existed amongst Father's considerable stamp collection. I was transfixed by 'Mystery Train' by Elvis Presley, 'The Great Pretender' by The Platters, 'Blue Suede Shoes' by Carl Perkins.

Mother gently disapproved of the land of liberty across the big pond. She said she's heard enough of the Yanks in the war to last two lifetimes over – why couldn't we enjoy Doris Day singing 'Que Sera, Sera' instead? I resorted to crouching under the bedclothes at night with a crystal set built by my brother, the aerial attached to the iron bed frame. I found those far off places, off the map, the sound of the otherworldly.



Far from Adelaide's Bower

Look in an easterly direction from the top of this old pit bank. Look towards the lump of Bardon Hill, amidst one of the ancient deer parks. A Victorian antiquarian claimed that the hill *'commands a greater extent of surface than any other point of view in the island... like an ocean view from a ship out of sight of land'*. There, on your bank holiday excursion or Sunday stroll, you might see the twin towers of Lincoln Cathedral. All around you, Leicestershire, flat as a calm sea, with Bardon Hill the highest point in the County, made higher by a communication mast planted there. One fine day in 1840, a 48 year old widow, born in the dense forests of Thuringia, ascended the summit to appreciate the wondrous prospect and partake of a small banquet – though it could be more modestly called a picnic.

Adelaide, the Dowager Queen, had recently bequeathed her name to a small settlement in the Australia colony. She was accompanied by her sister, the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar. Both were guided by Lord Curzon and his father, the 1st Earl Howe, her stalwart Lord Chamberlain of many years. Would they have looked this way in admiration of the headstocks of surrounding pits and their smouldering spoil, or concentrated on distant rural beauties, the humpbacks of the Malverns?

It is unlikely there would have been any venison pate and cucumber sandwiches for the mine workers of Coalville on this day, no *'meal of elegant trifles'* – chitterlings more like, and bread dipped in fat, from a pig kept in the back yard.

The Royal Gaze may have easily ignored the tracings of spreading industriousness, as much was hidden, mile upon mile of underground tunnels giving up the coal that fired the engine

rooms of our burgeoning Empire. The names of the coal seams – Nether Lount, Splent, Minge, Upper Main, Clod, Roaster – would have meant nothing to her. She may have preferred to think of Malta or Madeira, all the better for her delicate constitution.

Today, this pit bank is merely a hill of uncertain height, landscaped and remodelled. Walkers and their dogs take in the fresh air, no longer a warm stink emanating from beneath the ground. The view from the brow is a fine one, even on a bleak and cold day, as down below, playing the first leg of the FA Vase semi-final, Coalville Ravens overcome the visitors from Kings Lynn by three goals to nil.

The band plays vigorously, the excited crowd chant *'We're on our way to WEM - BELL - EE!'* Then, to the watchers perched on top of this made-earth:

'OI! YOU!

WANKERS ON THE HILL!

WANKERS! WANKERS! WANKERS!

WANKERS ON THE HILL!'



HANDLING COLLECTION
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From the House of Constant Progress

With three tiny children to raise, she would agree wholeheartedly with Plato that *Necessity is the Mother of Invention*. While you might not think of yourself as poor folk, you had very little. Money is tight and expectations of Christmas gifts have to be carefully considered. Once they are tucked up in bed, there'll be many late hours – over several nights – knitting and sewing in preparation for the commemoration of the Saviour's birth and the phantom visitation from the jolly fat fellow. When the nimble fingered good work is done, a few McVities digestives and a tot of whisky will be left on the hearth, alongside the carefully wrapped presents, the most important of which is a Tressy doll.

Dispatched across the country to delight thousands upon thousands of young girls, the doll is made in a factory in Coalville and not in a magic workshop in Lapland. She has sideways glancing eyes, hard vinyl arms, straight legs and – amazingly – hair that grows. There's a little screw in her back you move round with a key, which makes her hair longer or shorter. Everyone at school wants a Tressy with her stylish outfits. It is these that you labour over in the wee hours. You have patterns to follow, little corduroy coats, summer fashion dresses and miniature dufflecoats. You sew them convincingly to pieces of card and wrap them up in cellophane so they look shop-bought. Who could tell the difference?

The day approaches. The excitement is palpable, wafting in the cold air like the smell of fresh baked mince pies. The letter to the North Pole long since sent up the chimney, the writing all but illegible in truth, but Santa has elves to help translate correspondence, whether Finnish, Albanian, Irish or Glaswegian. Christmas morning does not disappoint. Tressy dolls come forth in homes the length and breadth

of the land. And this is not just a mere plaything – it holds far greater purpose. It carries within its body not just lengths of synthetic hair but also the heartfelt legacy of Alfred Edward Pallet, the founder of Cascelloid Company. Without this dreamer, there would be no 'House of Constant Progress', the domain of play, innovation and inspiration. Who else would believe a glue made from rabbit bones would help construct an unbreakable plastic? Their mission is to bring joy to children of all stations, turning out all manner of toys and games, model cars, trucks, dolls and dressing up equipment.

Tressy's time on this earth is limited, not simply because of the instability of plastics. Born overseas, Tiny Tears soon arrives to great acclaim. England win the World Cup and Tiny Tears reigns. Sales go through the roof. Rolling off the production line at Coalville, the baby tops the charts year after year. But for now, a memory to hold close of that Christmas morning, the frost heavy on the windowpanes, the fire lit in the hearth, a few biscuit crumbs left on the plate, a half empty glass of whisky which Father downs ceremoniously, the twinkling lights of the tree, the torn wrapping paper, the doll with her sideways glance. It brings tears to my eyes to think about it.

OUTDOOR PORTIER
N^o. 5.
LEICESTER
STATION

160

Local conditions would appear to be most peculiar

We watched the Will Hay film at The Regal. Oh, we did enjoy it. Far more cheering than 'The Edge of the World' I'd say. It was just the thing to brighten a glum foggy day, from the first moment to the last. *'The next train's gone,'* the elderly deputy stationmaster says to him. We won't forget that. All that earnest bumbling and buffoonery will keep us in good spirits. First he's tapping the train wheels as if he knows something about it, then drenching the civic dignitaries under the water crane, then encountering the gunrunners from Buggleskelly in the haunted windmill and then a terrific chase to entrap them all.

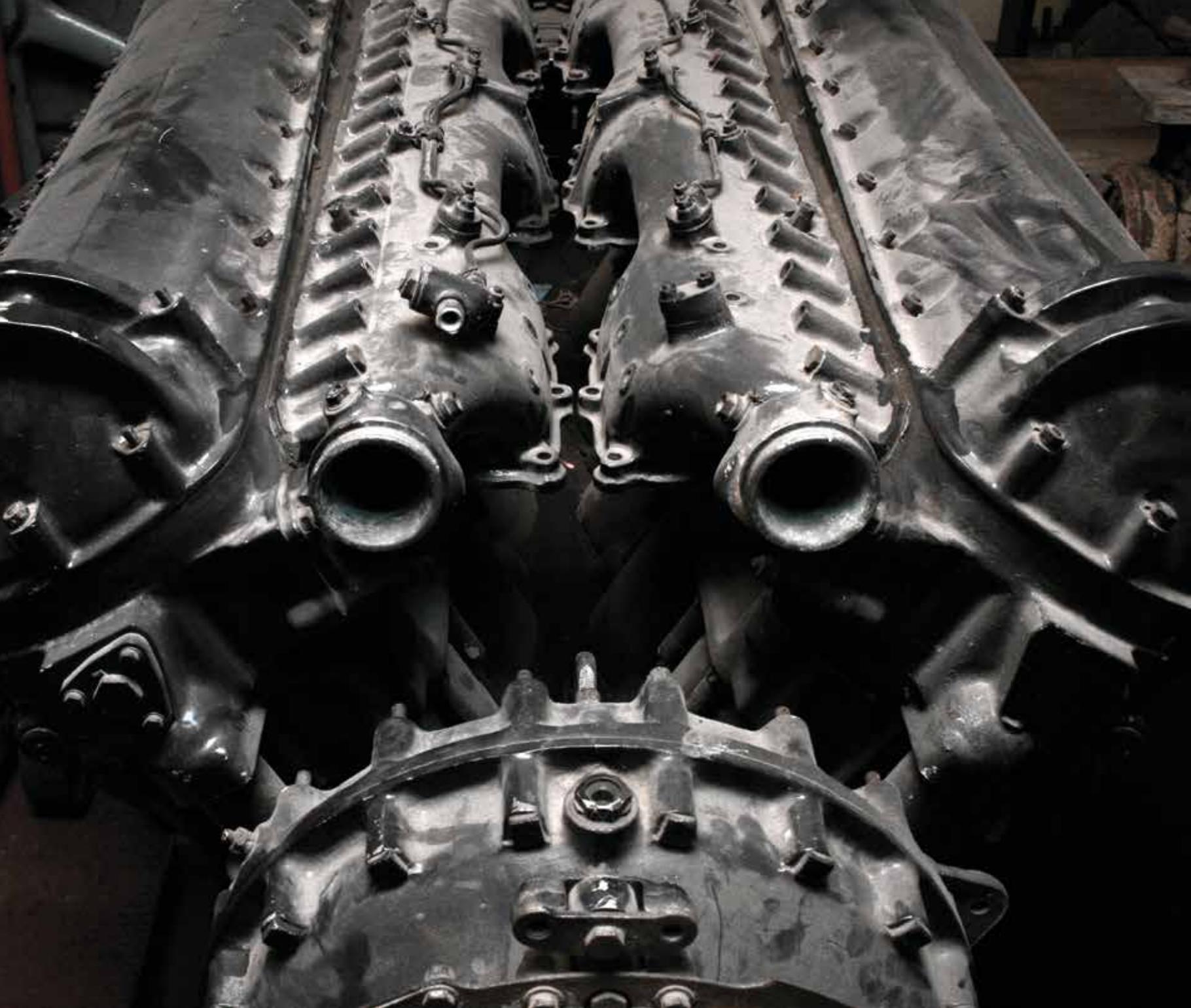
Sadly, I was reminded of our local porter, who used to have a regular perch on the front row. He liked to sit close to the screen due to some eye malfunction. His Christian name was also William. He used to be a fine figure of a man, my Aunt told me, before he went to the war. *At least he came back, even in part,* she said, when his older brother did not.

By all accounts, William was a gentleman through and through. He kept himself to himself. He never married. Neither did my Aunt. She resolutely remained a spinster to the end. She told me she was heartbroken when Douglas Fairbanks married Mary Pickford, yet despite her unrequited love she still took great enjoyment from his movies – 'The Black Pirate' being a particular favourite. I remember still the smoky darkness of the cinema, how she'd squeeze my hand tight and whisper to me, *We've left the real world behind, deary, and entered the world of dreams.*

William passed from our world some years back, of complications from his service in Mesopotamia, a body poisoned by accumulated strain and fatigue. I am sure he would have thoroughly enjoyed this comedy tale of missing trains and smugglers. He was still young,

they said, but he always seemed advanced in age to me, a stooped figure, peering through his spectacles, a sweep of grey hair above his forehead. Out of his uniform, an unfamiliar sight, he seemed shapeless and quite undistinguished. It was said he was competent and diligent in his work, though never hurrying, his every move measured and particular. He was kept busy enough. He had at times to be out and in porter and no doubt signalman too. He would lift a weary hand to return our wave as we walked from school along the embankment at the end of the afternoon.

I can still picture him on the end of the platform as we left on day trips to Skegness or Birmingham, making sure all parcels were loaded securely. I never liked Birmingham that much. Dirty place. Others may hold a different opinion as to its virtues, singing as they do in the old music hall song: *'Oh, Mr Porter, what shall I do? I want to go to Birmingham and they're taking me to Crewe...'*



In times of turmoil

Model aeroplanes hang from the ceiling, attached by variable lengths of black thread, cello tape, drawing pins. Airfix kits lovingly assembled, glued, painted, decaled, arranged in a frozen aerial ballet. The fighters in the sun – Spitfire, Focke Wolfe, Hurricane, Messerschmitt – and the heavy bombers below them – Heinkel, Avro Lancaster. If you can persuade your Dad to let you use his Super 8 cine camera, perhaps you might restage a more realistic dogfight, suspending them off the laundry line, dowsing the wing or tail with lighter fluid and setting them on fire.

Both the Spitfires and Lancasters were powered by Merlin engines, made not far from here, tangible symbols of our engineering ingenuity. Those engines lifting them up into the sky, carrying them aloft, these Godly heroes. The world in motion, the world in miniature below; the red brick housing estates, ribbons of A roads and waterways, ancient field systems and forests, the crumpled lines of the Pennines. Your Dad knows all the facts and explains them to you. Over 7,000 parts in a Merlin engine. *Helped us win the war, didn't it? Not to mention 'Miss Shilling's Orifice'*, he says with an innocent look worthy of Frankie Howerd. We are not merely a nation of shopkeepers, good at crossword puzzles and complaining. We are tinkerers in our small workshops, in the shed at the bottom of the garden, in our old garage. We breathe oil and grease, shaving and shaping metal. Technology has been our saviour, along with our dogged spirit with which we stayed the course, start to finish. Do you think it's possible to turn the clock back? I don't think so.

When Robert Oppenheimer detonated his gadget and stared at the first nuclear flash blossoming from the desert sands and thought to himself *'I am become death, the destroyer of worlds'*, he knew we'd

opened up Pandora's Box. There is no going back. It doesn't matter what devotees of ancient scripture say, we can't go back to the way things used to be. Never, ever.

We are on a perpetual journey. We are never at rest, inquisitive souls of planet earth, as it spins on its axis carrying us eastwards. At the equator you might think you're standing still but you are travelling at speeds of 1,000 miles an hour. And then the earth itself moves around the sun at over 60,000 miles an hour. We can ignore the warning of Daedalus. We race on, across time zones of our own making and seasons of our changing. We take powered flight for granted, the constant allure of the heavens, riding the high winds above the clouds. It's incredible to think that the first powered airplane, that product of the careful mathematics – the Kitty Hawk they called it – was only in the air a matter of seconds. It flew less distance than the wingspan of a Boeing 747. Speed and velocity, these are how we measure our progress, with change and decay all around us, part of the human condition.



The Threadbare Bear

She found him in Woolworths in Barnstable, on her day off, shopping with her sister. She bought him with five shillings from her own earnings. Her sister chose an identical teddy. Neither had a toy like this before. There was never any money in the family, but since she turned fourteen and worked as a domestic she had carefully saved her pennies.

His fine pelt was blonde and mohair. He had the look of a Steiff, that most illustrious of toy bears, with his humped back, long snout and long thin arms, though he was not as well groomed or glamorous. Nonetheless, she loved him dearly.

They were inseparable from that moment. For the next ten years they talked and cuddled, until she went away to a new life in the army. She came back with a husband and a baby. With the war on, factories turned over to military needs and hard times everywhere for long years after, there was a lack of suitable teddies, so she allowed her son to play with him, her most precious bear.

Ted took the rough with the tumble. He soon found out that boy children are definitely different in their essential nature to girl children. Less conversation, more action, affection expressed less through hugging and more through displays of strength and making loud bangs. There was nothing in the 'Just William' books that they didn't get up to. He'd find himself flung from trees as a parachutist, with a chute that never quite opened. He'd climb mountainous banisters and spend nights camping in a cold desert back yard, then clamber up fences to keep lookout for the savage warriors from the next door and then join in furious battle with them.

Too often a well-aimed arrow with a rubber sucker on the end would narrowly miss his glass eye and bounce off his forehead. He

knew he was well loved though, given his own chair at every birthday to be celebrated, that of his dear Mistress, her first born, and her two subsequent babies, both girls who eventually – as the world recovered – eventually got their own teddy bears.

By the time the boy grew tall and left home to seek his solitary fortune, Ted had lost a good deal of his fur, his embroidered pads had worn thin, his joints were weak and he had less enthusiasm for adventures. Though he was a rugged little fellow under his soft exterior, it was – quite frankly – a blessed relief. He was glad to be left with Mom, whose grown up touch was as light and tender as he remembered from that day when she had first lifted him from the shelf. Time enough now to go down to the woods for a teddy bear's picnic, just the two of them. He was happy in her company, now as then, through the summer and winter, all down the days.



The Heatings

A fire underground is a terrible thing. It once took fifteen days to put one of the buggers out, the wood bars charred to a crisp, the stones of the roof hanging and dropping. On grey grim days of piercing rain and the atmospheric pressure drops, we keep alert for gas seeping out of old tunnels. See, some of the thick coal seams are prone to spontaneous combustion. Nasty business to deal with. You check and double-check your kit, the tanks full of oxygen – one tank for one hour – clean and disinfect the mouthpiece. The buzzer would go and we'd be called down to combat the heatings. The winding cage drops you down gentle, to ensure no damage to our equipment. If any men are injured they'd be got out quick and brought up to infirmary.

The trick is to smother out the fire, cut off the air to it, shutter up the arches to stop the air pulling into the gob. You'd have to know where the air flows were. Marked blue on the map for fresh air drawn to the fire, red for the air sucked away, bringing with it the perilous gases. Only men with breathers were allowed in the red tunnels.

We'd be listening for any peep out of the hooters we carried. You can't put your trust in your memory and a good sense of direction. Five blasts means attention, four means move forward, three for retire, two for halt and just one for someone in distress. You followed your training, gut instinct from days of drill practice with your team. Sucking oxygen into your lungs soon enough made the stomach ache, but you ignored it and carried on.

They once did a right lovely job of herringboning the tunnel down here. It was all foreign wood and slow burning. It's hard to see with all the dust swirling. You keep an eye on the canary as you work. It's quiet as the grave. No singing, no banging, talking, whistling, no shoveling and dragging. Eerie it is, only the sound of your feet on the

ground, heart pumping and you sucking on the oxygen. This place is riddled with old workings. Only two mile from the pit bottom to some of the stalls, but it's an interminable distance when there's smoke and darkness, fear and sweat.

Night times you'll go out into the back yard, away from the embers of the fireside. You need that bit of fresh air to clear your head. It's nippy out. You can hear the rattle of the cage over the pit-head. The late shift going down to dig out the debris of ancient forests. You appreciate the filling of your lungs in cooling gulps, looking up into the coal black sky and you think of stars as the flickering lights of a thousand lamps below. There, deep below, eternal night. You cloak yourself in a moment of calm, holding the feeling close for when you will need it the most. The full moon low on the horizon, the colour of a rind of cheese.



Take Me Back, Baby

She didn't care much for the lads hanging round outside the window, lounging on their bikes, throwing down their sweet wrappers, stubbing out fags on the sill, collars turned up, hair greased back. *Can't a woman get her hair done in peace?* Who wants someone with a face like the backside of one of the Bash Street Kids glaring through the glass while you're waiting to go under the dryer?

Our Julie says to her, *If you ask me, it's the influence of all those American pictures the kids watch these days. Full of beatniks and thugs. No more Cowboys and Indians, just lads with a surly attitude at odds with the world.* She liked that Montgomery Clift though. *Now, in his films, she says, he always seems so foreign and mysterious, a man with a secret or two. And those lovely lips.*

You do hear some stories under the dryers if you don't doze off while your pin curls set. Women's talk. What's been going on in what household, where to get the best bargains with these new Green Shield stamps, who was seen kissing on the railway bridge after dark, who will be the first round here to dare have that pixie cut you see in all the magazines?

Some of the older ladies reminisce about Father Degen, who kept a monkey and a parrot, collected shoes for poor children and organised popular dances and whist drives. He wrote all those pamphlets advising the modern miss on how to behave, didn't he? He proposed that *'Hockey, lacrosse, tennis and dancing are healthier forms of exercise than street flirtations, which are always perilous.'* A nice enough man, but men think they know it all, don't they just?

Wouldn't do nowadays, says one old dear, *You can't tell a child anything, they know more than's good for 'em. Deserve a bloomin' good clip round the ear, the lot of 'em.* Then they have a good chuckle about

them gas dryers they used to have in the salon, fried your hair to a crisp and turned your head quite giddy with the fumes.

Honestly, it's only Tommy Steele that makes her feel giddy, in that special way of his. Under the warm metal helmet, she's closed her eyes and already drifted away to the front row of De Montfort Hall, screaming for the Boy from Bermondsey, his legs astride, his body and guitar wobbling in unison. Her heart flutters as his Steelmen rock the joint. She doesn't care for The King Brothers – Max Bygraves can rave about them all he likes – or Art Baxter and his Rockin' Sinners, no thank you very much. She can't be bothered to queue for Buddy Holly and the Crickets.

She's loved Tommy from the very beginning and she's going to marry her cheery chirpy Cockney entertainer one of these days and be gone, to live within sound of Bow Bells, far from here.



Men of Good Fortune

Aah, some are destined to have the luck of the Irish or that of the Oul Divvil himself and others are ill fated. Didn't the father of the steam locomotive, God rest his soul, a gentleman inventor from Cornwall, die in penury after making and losing his fortune in the South Americas? You would have envied him once, if you saw the crowds spread out on Bloomsbury field at his Steam Circus in the summer of '08, paying a full shilling a time to perilously ride round on a circle of rickety track. Mr Stephenson spoke well of him, said he was indebted to the fellow, even petitioned the Government to award him a pension – to no avail.

It was not all cleverness and showmanship. You needed fortitude and foresight and a good business head. We had not grown one between us. We was only good for digging and hefting, poor eejits you might think. Yet the power of the mind, when attached to the power of the arm, is a formidable thing. Where would you be without the fruit of our labouring? We know it as well as any man could and better than most. Excavating hereabouts we soon enough had a notion the turned earth offered riches beneath.

He was a canny man, our Mr Stephenson, getting us to dig up half the country to lay down the rails. What imagination and industriousness to be sure, thinking up things all the time, and how to put them to use. Now I do confess I would be driven mad if I had to think so greatly. Not much imagination needed for shoveling dirt and breaking rocks. We dig where instructed, simple as that. Dig down as far as China if he asked it of us.

Ditches, cuttings, gullies, tunnels, piling up embankments, then the laying of track. In all weather, shine or frost, we'd be getting the work done. Backbreaking it was, but we was jovial folk as long as we

had our beer and bait. The locomotives ate up that coal and it was not cheap, so it made sense for Mr Stephenson to have his own pit. He purchased some land, then got the big fellows down from Durham to work it. Their fierce guttural tongue was a mystery at first, even to the Sligo boys.

Good diggers are always needed, even in hard times. Left handed or right handed, no matter. Hard handed men who know the difference 'twixt a spade and a shovel. The irons rails go down, the whole country is on the move. Folk no longer fear travel at such a velocity, no eyes bleared or lungs paralysed. The Duke of Wellington did not approve, spoke out against the railways, thinking they would act as a premium to the lower orders to go uselessly wandering about the land and fomenting public disorder. You might conclude that big fella from Dublin did not favour our fine company. And himself did end up passing away on the platform of Brighton railway station. That put a smile on our face.



Let There be Light

It's there in the Bible for all to see, in the First Book of Moses. *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.* Couldn't be more clear. I expect this old lamp has seen some things by the light it cast. This old codger didn't expect to still be here. It was once merely one of the assets belonging to the London and North Western Railway. It had a home in the signalman's box, tucked into the corner under the bridge where Saffron Road passed over the line.

It's barely changed – a bit worn in places perhaps – but the world around it, that's a different story. The railway's seen it all, slate from Wales, guns for Russia, refugees from Belgium – who could forget the terrible fuss when that fellow from Ghent used the wrong oil for the hot cross buns? All that trade and commerce, milk and meat and strange folk passing through, business and pleasure, the hems of skirts getting shorter. The railways spread people and disease and knowledge, soon enough spanning the globe from Spanish Town to Bombay. Even the Swiss invested in one.

Many complained of the dense smoke of foetid gas and clanking iron, the blasphemous songs and appalling curses from those working on board the infernal machines. Farmers worried that the smoke would injure the fleeces of their sheep. Wordsworth and Ruskin opposed the feverish contamination and vandalism wrought upon our green and pleasant land by the railways but Progress could not be halted, the titans of technology hurtling us forward to a new utopian age.

To think that in 1753, a trip from London to Shrewsbury would take almost three and a half days by coach but by 1835, the journey would only take twelve hours and forty minutes by train. Didn't Turner capture the mood of the day so well in his magnificent painting 'Rain, Steam and Speed'?

Mr Darwin would have the world evolve from the fish in the sea, with no Garden of Eden for us to be cast from. Since our earliest days we have craved light and shunned the darkness, taming Promethean fire and now time. *'A fool always wants to shorten space and time, a wise man wants to lengthen both,'* mused Ruskin, but nothing lasts forever

The world will end in light. Our illustrious scientists predict that the exhausted sun will grow brighter, then expand to consume us with one last dying breath. The oceans will evaporate, the atmosphere dissipate, earth becoming a dead planet, the sun then shrinking to a tiny cinder, fading away. This old lamp will be no more.

ER'S
SOUTH
SINGLE
NORTH
RETURN

E 6551
BOYER'S
SOUTH
SINGLE
NORTH
RETURN

H 5975
BOYER'S
SOUTH
SINGLE
NORTH
RETURN

D 1262
BOYER'S
SOUTH
SINGLE
NORTH
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D 5547
BOYER'S
SOUTH
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La 1687
BOYER'S
SOUTH
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BOYER'S
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C 517

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H 8211

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C 2753

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Ticket to Ride

It was said that Mr Boyer Senior was inspired by a visit as a young man to the Thomas Cook Building in Gallowtree Gate, in awe of that frieze of magnificent panels which illustrated the greatest of all excursions. His own vision was a bit more parochial. He didn't imagine trips to the summit of Vesuvius, rather a dependable public bus service between Rothley and Leicester.

It was a much needed thing and the first of its kind in the county, though they took some time to replace the horses and trams. And it was not so reliable at first, with those newfangled petrol engines overheating, mechanical problems of all kinds, but Boyer persisted, providing a service at a price folk could afford.

They'd say, *It takes six things to run a bus, four well oiled wheels, the driver at the front, the conductor at the back*, and with this philosophy their family business ran smooth as cream. And they did have the friendliest drivers and conductors you could ever wish for. They'd always wait for a regular customer. No-one ever missed the bus and no-one ever had a bad word to say about Mr Boyer and Son.

They brought mobility, they offered an escape from mundanity, with town, market, village, hamlet and farm linked together. There was always a Boyer's bus to take you somewhere or other. We'd take the trip into Leicester at Christmas for pheasant and candied fruit. If you asked them to put on a trip to Cleethorpes it'd be no trouble to them. They even kept going through the Blitz.

They weren't like those sleek shiny metallic buses of the sort that took Marilyn Monroe and her infatuated cowboy along the dusty road from Arizona to Montana in that film 'Bus Stop' – though we harboured some dreams of riding one like that to our own version of the Blue Dragon Cafe. No, they were rather small and homely.

Sentinels, they was called. And they never had a double decker cos their garage roof was too low to take 'em. You really couldn't miss 'em, with their distinctive yellow livery in later years, a cheerful sliver of sunshine motoring along the country lanes on a dull intemperate day.

Young Harry Boyer was a great benefactor to our church, every year organising a trip for the choir to the pantomime at the Leicester Opera House as well as a special annual outing. Once we got to go as far afield as London and took a boat along the river to Windsor. It was a grand affair.

If you ask me, he deserved more than a clock from his staff the sad day the company was sold to Midland Red.



Pleasing Decay

Her beautiful head is cracked in five places now. Her skin is still gleaming and lucid. Her body and legs are sound, apart from two cracks on her chest and her right arm leaks sawdust where the leather joins the cloth. There are some tears to her bodice, which is slightly stained. Her hair, still in perfect ringlets, has lost none of its colour. She is in good condition for her age. Over 150 years have passed since she came into the world, naked and hairless – before the transatlantic cable, the Indian Mutiny, the discovery of the source of the Nile, the suburbs, the carpet sweeper, the telephone or toilet paper. For many years she was abandoned in a box in the corner of another museum.

She was first dressed by the family, who provided her with a hand sewn muslin dress with lace collar, a petticoat, shift and pantalettes. These may have been clothes formerly in the possession of the child whose company she is commanded to keep. She cannot remember, it was so long ago. Her hair was made from cuttings from the child's own rich brown locks. She has a bonnet and ribbons, black quilted satin shoes. Her lower arms are made of dyed kid leather. She has no fingers. Around her delicate neck they placed a bead choker and a heart shaped locket with a piece of quartz.

She has the proud look of a Montanari doll, though she is not of that lineage. She has piercing dark glass eyes set in a head and neck made from poured wax and plaster. Her head will not shatter completely when dropped like a china and bisque head doll would, but she is quite fragile. Her sweet delicate features could be easily crushed, scratched and nicked if treated without care, the colouring of cheeks and lips rub off. It is for these reasons that she does not make a daily appearance and must never be treated roughly. The child may be allowed to converse with her or cradle her gently on her lap whilst

under the supervision of her governess, Mother and Father. Together they may listen to a delightful passage from Mrs Gatty's 'Parables From Nature' or 'Aunt Judy's Tales for Children'. *Animals under man - servants under masters - children under parents - wives under husbands - men under authorities - nations under rulers - all under God. It is the same with all - in obedience of will is the only true peace.* How true! And how bright and cosy the drawing room looks on such a day, a place of contemplation and tender sentiments, apricot sherbet and seed cakes.

It is a sheltered life here, for both doll and her young mistress. The child will never know the existence of a scavenger and piecer, amidst the unceasing clatter and bang of machinery. Instead she may be safely groomed to be virtuous, dutiful and ignorant of intellectual opinion. She will learn '*Sweetness is to woman what sugar is to fruit*'. But what great days these are! The nation has gas lighting – or at least some do – the Penny Post, Christmas cards and the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace, our redoubtable army about to confront the Russians in the Crimea to address the Ottoman problem. The world lies at our feet.

RAID WAR

When air raids are announced, warning will be sounded, in some cases by a siren and in other cases by a warbling note.

When air raids are announced, warning will be sounded, in some cases by a siren and in other cases by a warbling note.

WAR SHOULD COME

The object of this leaflet is to let you know what to do in the event of an air raid. This does not mean that war is expected. You must be prepared for the possibility of war. Further leaflets will be sent to you in various ways in which you can be of help.

The Government are taking all possible steps to protect the country. We have made plans for ourselves, so far as we can. In your turn, you can help to make our plans more effective. You must tell when or how you can help and act in accordance with the instructions. This may be very short. This is what you ought to do.

WHAT FOLLOWS, and

RAID WAR

S MASKS

You have already got your gas mask. It is important that you keep it safely and in good condition. Do not use it for anything else, or get it dirty. In war, gas masks and hooters

When air raids are threatened, warning will be sounded, in some cases by a siren and in other cases by a warbling note. This does not mean that war is expected. You must be prepared for the possibility of war. Further leaflets will be sent to you in various ways in which you can be of help. The Government are taking all possible steps to protect the country. We have made plans for ourselves, so far as we can. In your turn, you can help to make our plans more effective. You must tell when or how you can help and act in accordance with the instructions. This may be very short. This is what you ought to do.



LONDON

Business as Usual

Due to onset of his arthritis, her Father relied on her to sound the siren when it was needed, and that was often. She takes some grim satisfaction in this task, winding it till her arm ached. The mournful wail of the siren, deeper than the whistle of a bomb, louder than crying children, worse than a scream. No streetlights, the windows blacked out, the sky rumbling, a bang that shakes the bed, Mother mumbling cheerfully, *Lord preserve us, that was a near one...*

She can recall the first war against the Hun, when the horrors of aerial bombardment of civilians was not a nightly affair. She remembers back then, a four year old looking out the window one grey wintry evening, seeing that giant cylindrical balloon drifting over the town. She did not have the words for it then. It was a baffling spectacle, a ghost in the mist, a phantasm.

After this childhood vision, for years she dreams of flying. Amy Johnson becomes her heroine. She tries to imagine being thousands of feet in the air, cocooned in the intense cold, the compass and flight instruments freezing up, the weight of the ice on the airship making it cumbersome to control, the feeling of being lighter than air.

Later she learns the strange name given to this creature – Zeppelin – and its brutish purpose. This floating object, which carries men from the Imperial German Navy above her house, drops bombs on Loughborough, mistaking it for Liverpool. At first old Kaiser Bill says he will not target London and no attacks will be made on historic, government buildings or museums.

He isn't true to his word. How much worse it is now, over two decades on, whole cities reduced to rubble. As Flanagan and Allen defiantly sing *'Poor old soul, you'll need a rabbit-hole... So, run Adolf, run Adolf, run, run, run'*, an inferno rains down from the sky, and our

lads over the Ruhr wreak out death and destruction too and half of them not returning.

The dirigible she saw on that far away day, that foretold the future, loses its way over Scotland some months later. Damaged by ground fire, it drifts towards the Norwegian coast. As it runs out of fuel, it hits the cliff and the crew jump out, several breaking their legs. The hydrogen filled envelope skims the calm surface of the fjord and the Norwegians burn it.

The warning of a raid comes through, breaking her reverie. She rushes to the siren.



Residual Energies

I've always had a bit of fascination with the supernatural, ghosts and all that kind of stuff, though I've never had the pleasure of meeting one. I've been to haunted castles in Wales on gloomy nights and wandered along old Roman roads under a waning gibbous moon. I've avidly followed the proceedings of the Society of Psychical Research, even once collected photographs of pet animals apparently being followed by orbs, though I've never been convinced that these apparitions are anything more than air-borne dust particles caught in the camera's flash. And I really can't resist those National Trust properties where the guides helpfully point to a bloodstain that will never scrub out as proof of a chilling event in the past. I fondly recall being glued to the TV watching 'Tales of Mystery and Imagination' on the second BBC channel when we still had a black and white set.

I once persuaded a museum curator in Walsall to show me the gruesome Hand of Glory, found in the attic of an old coaching inn where things go bump in the night. He said it belonged to an unknown child, hanged from the gibbet, the left hand severed and then used in magical ceremonies. As a child myself, I've shook hands with the mummified hand of a Crusader in the basement of a Dublin church. That was my late Father's idea of a good day out – when a good night out often involved searching for the Headless Horseman on some bleak rainswept common. I've attended several ghost hunts and even stayed at the Station Hotel in Dudley, where the famous psychic Derek Acorah claimed some terrible residues could be found. Not a dickie bird, to be quite frank, though the wedding party in the ballroom that night was particularly rambunctious.

Now, I read the other day – in The Daily Telegraph of all places – that over the past quarter of a century there's been a record number of

sightings in the UK. Nine hundred and sixty eight to be precise, though how this can be an accurate figure I don't know. There's never been a better time to record residual energy or experience a marked drop in temperature, encounter ghouls, boggarts, hell-hounds, banshees and miscellaneous magic goings on. The paranormal is becoming, well, quite commonplace.

Yorkshire's the number one location for apparitions of all kinds. Leicestershire doesn't even make it into the Top Ten. So, you know, the last place I expected to find one or two hauntings was right here on my doorstep. One of the lads tells me his favourite place is over in the lamp room. He's been to a lot a places hunting ghosts and come up with bugger all. But the lamp room here, he's had some experiences, putting his lamp down and the next minute finding it's moved, and he's the only one in there on a Saturday. He says he even had a Victorian penny tossed at him once. It's something there's no explanation for. And as for this place, it gives him the chills. I'm told that if you stand on the stage of this very theatre you might feel one go right through you. It's like you're going dizzy, a draining of energy, a quite nauseous physical sensation.

Nothing so far. No thickness in air or tingling chill. Maybe one of these days. I live in hope. Where there's a will there's a way.



O night, spread thy wings over me as the imperishable stars

In the darkness of morning they passed the house, the tramping of feet, the muffled voices, coming closer. They were not cheerful voices. That came later at the end of their toil. The clear sound of hobnailed boots on the metal road – we called it ‘The Dawn Chorus’. We grew up with it in our bones, like the sight of a splendid sunset behind the headstocks. There was one man who came ahead of the rest, always, with the stars not yet gone. He had a club foot, he couldn’t keep up with the others. To overcome his impairment, he left his hearth early in the pitch black and so his peculiar steps were the first to be heard below our window. A shuffling irregular sound, I could always recognise it.

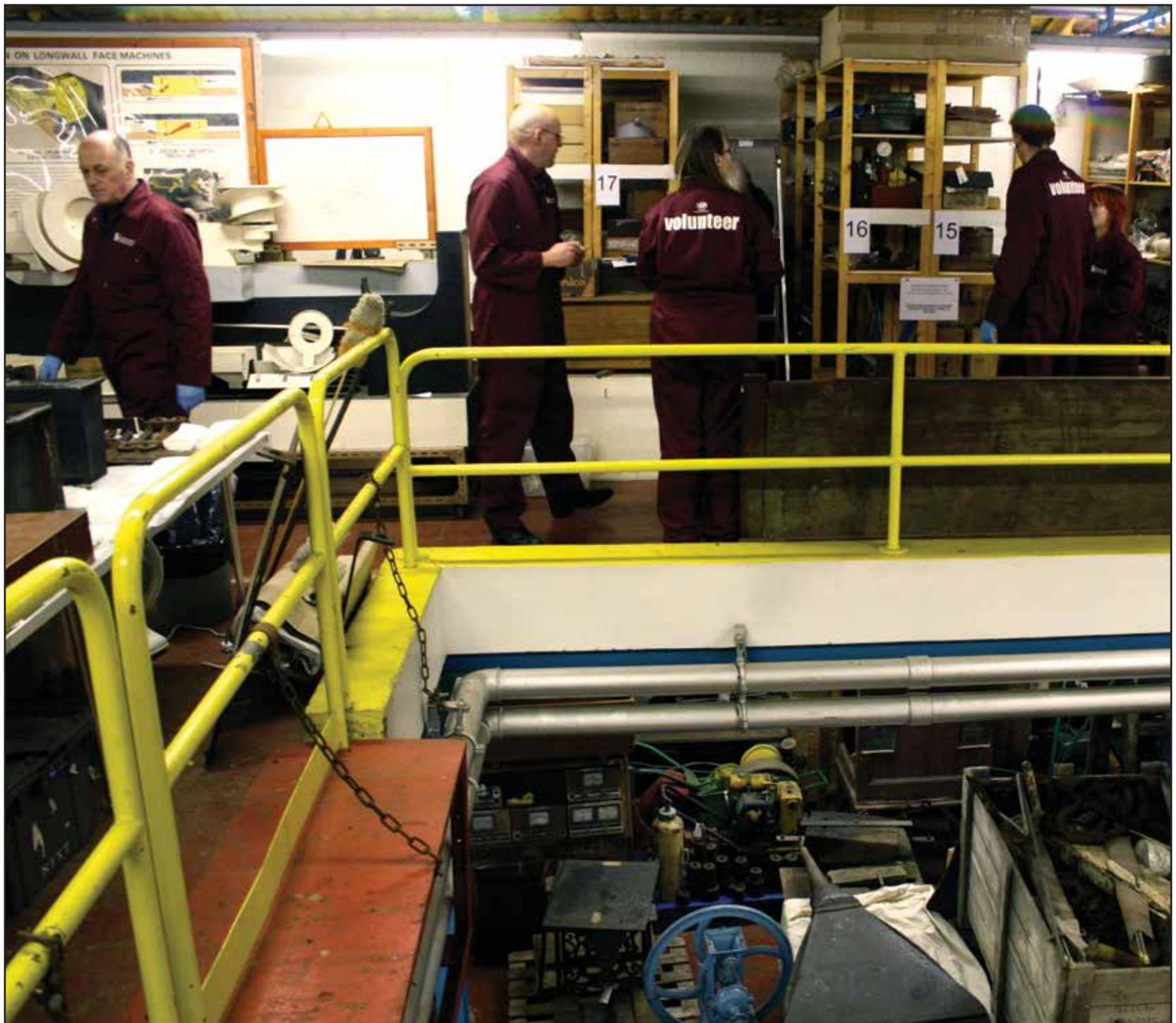
He was a big tall man, not best suited to holing, though they said he was a hard worker and a restless soul, barely taking the time to eat his snap in the stygian darkness. I read that Lord Byron the mad poet had a similar deformity, as did the Roman Emperor Claudius and the boy Pharaoh of Egypt Tutankhamen, so I suppose he was in good company there. Though he was not in my estimation a mad poet, a stutterer or a young man by any stretch of the imagination.

I saw him at the fayre on occasion. At a distance we thought the place looked like Fairyland and his weary dark countenance seemed out of place amidst the flashing lights and fancy paintwork. The jollity of the Knock-Down-A-Coconut, Hoopla or Magic Mirrors struggled against his dour and taciturn temperament. Even The House of Horrors did not raise a smile. He was a creature of that subterranean realm, of remote tunnels and hand-hewn caverns, a world some of us were destined for.

After the miners went on General Strike, when it spread from John o’ Groats to Lands End, it was a terrible time. The strike pay from the

unions soon ran out, the food ran low, and many a miner’s child was sent away for adoption. Rabbit’s beautiful but not when it has to make do for breakfast, dinner and tea. We’d never seen the like. The ponies were up in the fields with their blinders on. He would be leaning in the line at the Salvation Army soup kitchen with just a stump of bread. When one shopkeeper donated some crates of bananas there was a mean scrap, people were that desperate.

After that winter, we didn’t see him again, or hear his dragging footfall of a morning. Of course, many of them never went back to any work, spirits broken. You could see it in their eyes. Once burning bright, the light of pale stars extinguished.



The objects: reference note

Page 9: *Krawall in Wein - Kaiserpanorama and collection of stereoscopic glass slides, circa 1900*



Konrad Bercovici reported in his 1928 book 'Nights Abroad' that his train from Munich to Vienna was stopped as the conductor announced 'Krawall in Wien' - Trouble in Vienna. In 1927, a group of conservative paramilitaries overreacted at a socialist demonstration in the village of Schattendorf. Fights broke out and after heckling by a fascist barman and his son, angry Social Democrats threw rocks at his pub and tried to break in. The barman fired a shotgun at the crowd, killing a 40-year old war veteran and an 8-year old child. In Vienna, in July 1927, despite pleading guilty, the defendants were acquitted of the killings. Crowds outraged by the verdict went on a rampage, burning the Palace of Justice. The Social Democrat Party defence militia, the *Schutzbund*, were unable to contain the rioting. The trouble escalated - by the time the riots ended, 89 people, including four policemen, were dead and 600 were wounded. The *Frontkämpfervereinigung* (Front Combat Union) was a right-wing militia group, which later was absorbed by the Nazis.

The 1890s were a time of numerous inventions to satisfy the craze for the collective consumption of new visual and physical experiences. Monsieur Carron from Grenoble planned to build a 'Machine of Sensational Emotions', which would carry 15 passengers a time, dropping them from the Eiffel Tower at speeds of 172 miles an hour to land in a water filled pond shaped like a champagne glass. He estimated it could be operated profitably for a fee of 20 francs each trip per passenger, but he did not attract sufficient investors to realise his attraction.



The Kaiserpanorama was a large circular wooden device for viewing stereoscopic photographs. When fully assembled, around its circumference were 24 viewing stations, where you would sit and peer into stereoscope lenses of rear-illuminated photographic glass slides, which were sometimes hand-tinted. An internal mechanical drum rotated every minute, presenting the views in sequence. These were images of what we might call 'wonders of the world'. Made in the 1880s by August Fuhrmann, a German physicist, inventor and entrepreneur who stated: 'My invention is to satisfy up to date needs for instruction in visual arts for students and the public using 3D stereoscopic glass slides to show nature in its true form.' When the Kaiser Panorama opened in Stockholm in October 1889 the attraction was advertised as 'the cheapest and most comfortable way of traveling round the earth.' In 1910, Fuhrmann was said to have supplied exhibitions to more than 250 branches run by independent 'panoramists' across Europe. His central archive eventually stocked up to 100,000 stereoscopic views. Fuhrman marketed his device for both children and adults as 'a first-rate educational undertaking', gaining endorsements from pedagogues and scholars.

Franz Kafka wrote about visiting a Kaiserpanorama (Diaries 1910-1923) - which he said was 'the only attraction' in Friedland. He wrote, 'The pictures alive, as in cinematography, for they afford a gaze into the quiet of reality. The cinematograph gives the spectators the disquiet of their movement, the quiet of reality seems more important.'

A working example of the Kaiserpanorama can be found in Warsaw on Al. Jerozolimskie, there called a Fotoplastikon. <http://fotoplastikonwarszawski.pl/>

Page 15: Far from Adelaide's Bower - The View From the Pit Bank, 1993 to present

The grounds around the former colliery spoil heap at Snibston have been reclaimed to form woodland and an open rough grassland area. At the heart of this Country Park is the Grange Nature Reserve. Once the gardens of the Colliery Manager, it is now an important ecological site for wildlife. It has a late Victorian arboretum with a diverse range of mature native and foreign species of tree, a wetland area with boardwalk, an established wildflower meadow and two well-stocked fishing lakes. The Grange became Leicestershire County Council's first Local Nature Reserve in May 1993. 'Made-earth' is a local expression to describe soil disturbed by digging, when a bank or mound is artificially made, though it may not be peculiar to Leicestershire.



From the 1840s the aristocratic tradition of afternoon tea was beginning to infiltrate to the lower classes. In her 1861 book 'Household Management', Mrs Beeston described afternoon tea as '*a meal of elegant trifles*'. The site on Bardon Hill where the Queen Dowager took afternoon tea has been since known as Adelaide's Bower.

Coalville Football Club went to Wembley Stadium on Sunday 8th May 2011 to play in the FA Vase Cup Final, where they were defeated 3-2 by Whitley Bay.

Page 17: From the House of Constant Progress - Tressy Doll, 1960s

Plato was credited with the expression '*Necessity, the Mother of Invention*'. He also wisely noted that '*you can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation*' and said that '*life must be lived as play*'.



Tressy was made in the early 1960s by Palitoy in Owen Street, Coalville. Tressy was first produced in the UK in 1964 and discontinued in 1979. They were made under license from American Character Inc, Broadway, New York. Cascelloid was founded in 1919 by Alfred Edward Pallett in Coalville to produce celluloid and fancy goods. It was bought in 1931 by British Xylonite Company and the word 'Palitoy' was created as a trademark in 1935 for their toy division.

In the 1930s trade press were calling Cascelloid 'The House of Constant Progress', because of the variety of product ranges being manufactured and their development of new materials and manufacturing techniques. In the early 1930s Pallett bought the exclusive worldwide rights to manufacture products using Plastex, a new form of 'unbreakable' plastic which included the secret ingredient of glue made from rabbit bones to provide a degree of elasticity, making it more durable than celluloid.

Palitoy was sold to General Mills in 1968, and became the Palitoy Company in 1980 when Palitoy, Denys Fisher, and Chad Valley broke away from General Mills. It closed as a business in 1984.

Although it had been available in the USA in the 1950s, it was not until 1965 that Tiny Tears first appeared in the UK, after Palitoy purchased the rights. In 1966, Tiny Tears won the National Association of Toy Retailers' Girls Toy of the Year Award. 1966 also saw the arrival of the hugely successful Action Man.

Page 19: Local conditions would appear to be... - Out porter armlet No 5, Leicester, brass, 1930s

The Regal was one of three cinemas operating in Coalville in the late 1930s. Formerly the Olympia Picture House, it was rebuilt and opened in 1933. The others were The Grand Cinema, which opened in 1920, and The Rex which opened in 1938.

'The Edge of the World' is a 1937 film by Michael Powell set on one of the isolated outer islands of Scotland.



'Oh, Mr Porter!' is a 1937 British comedy film with Will Hay, the story of an railway worker sent as a stationmaster in Ireland, who finds himself in charge of two incompetent rogues and the station used by gun runners. The plot was based on the Arnold Ridley play 'The Ghost Train' and was later remade with a naval setting as 'Up the Creek' (1958) with David Tomlinson and Peter Sellers. The title was taken from 'Oh! Mr Porter', a music hall song. Will Hay (1888-1949) was a music hall comedian before he went into the movies in his mid-40s. He was also a keen astronomer and noted for discovering a white spot on the planet Saturn in 1933. He was fluent in French, German, Latin, Italian, Norwegian and Afrikaans. Writer Jimmy Perry said that the trio of Captain Mainwaring, Corporal Jones and Private Pike in 'Dad's Army' was inspired by watching the three main characters in 'Oh, Mr Porter'.

'Local conditions would appear to be most peculiar' is a line from 'Oh, Mr Porter!' used by Will Hay, who is on the telephone to head office, explaining away another mishap. A porter was employed for general duties at a station - loading and unloading trains, handling luggage, freight and parcels. A porter would receive from the company - on an annual basis - a full suit, cap and an extra pair of trousers. On smaller stations, the roles of porter and signaller were combined. Badge porters worked under the supervision of railway staff but were paid by the passenger, according to an agreed scale, mainly carrying luggage outside the station area.

Page 21: In times of turmoil - Merlin Engine (Type T24 - I), built at Ilkeston, Derby, 1948

Airfix was founded in 1939 by Nicholas Kove, a refugee from Hungary who originally manufactured rubber inflated toys. As the oldest UK manufacturer of scale plastic model kits, it has been producing kits for the mass market since 1952.

Frankie Howerd (1917-1992) was a British comedian and comic actor known for his risqué double entendres.

Julius Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967) was an American theoretical physicist and professor of physics at the University of California, Berkeley. He is often called the 'father of the atomic bomb' because of his job as scientific director of the Manhattan Project, the Second World War programme which developed nuclear weapons. The first atomic bomb was detonated on July 16th, 1945 at the Trinity test in the Jornada de Muerto desert, New Mexico. The test director commented to Oppenheimer, 'Now we are all sons of bitches.' Oppenheimer later said the detonation brought to mind words from the Bhagavad Gita: 'Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds'.

'The gadget' was the code name given to the first bomb tested. Two bombs were prepared for use - the first at Hiroshima on August 6th, the second at Nagasaki on August 9th, bringing about the surrender of Japan and the end the greatest conflict in human history.



The Rolls Royce Merlin is one of the most celebrated piston aero engines of all time - liquid-cooled, 27-litre (1,650 cu in) capacity. It powered the Spitfire, the Hurricane, Lancaster, Mosquito and the Mustang, together with some variants of the Halifax, Beaufighter and Wellington. The vast majority of Spitfires produced were fitted with variants of the Merlin. In the 1930s Rolls Royce began a project to develop a new 1,100 hp engine under the designation PV-12. PV stood for 'private venture' as the company received no government money for development. However, in 1936, the Air Ministry revised their requirements for new fighter aircraft. One of the most fundamental changes was the need for airspeeds over 300 mph (480 km/h). Once they heard about the performance of the new Rolls Royce engine, the government decided to invest in further development.

It weighed 1,375 lbs (623 kgs) and had more than 7000 parts. One weakness was that it cut out under negative g force during a steep dive. Me-109's had fuel-injected engines and were not affected by this but Spitfires and Hurricanes were. This problem was partially solved in 1941 by a diaphragm fitted across the float chambers designed by Beatrice 'Tilly' Shilling. It was popularly known as by 'Miss Shilling's Orifice'. Production of the Merlin engine only stopped in 1950, by which time over 150,000 had been made.

In Greek mythology, to escape imprisonment Daedalus made wings from feather and wax for himself and his son Icarus. Icarus ignored his father's warning and in flying too close to the sun, the melting wax caused him to fall to his death. There is a similar story in Hindu mythology. Orville Wright (1871-1948) and Wilbur Wright (1867-1912) requested a patent application for a 'flying machine' nine months before their successful flight in December 1903, which Orville Wright recorded in his diary. The craft soared to an altitude of 10 feet, traveled 120 feet, and landed 12 seconds after takeoff. They were not sure how many seconds it was actually in the air as the watch stopped.

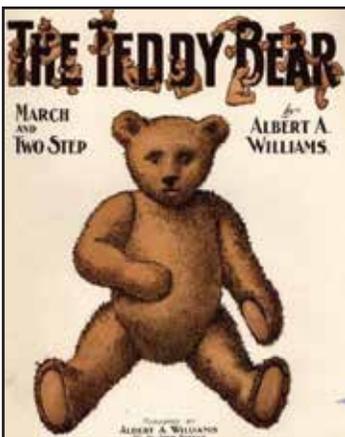
The hymn 'Abide With Me' by Henry Francis Lye (1793-1847), contains the words: *'Change and decay in all around I see, O thou who changest not, abide with me.'*

Page 23: The Threadbare Bear - Teddy Bear, 1930s

The name Teddy Bear is attributed to United States President Theodore Roosevelt (1858 - 1919), whose nickname was Teddy. After a bear hunting incident in 1902, an enterprising toy manufacturer created a stuffed bear cub and called it 'Teddy's Bear' - he received permission from Roosevelt to use the name.

The Steiff company was founded in 1880 by Margarete Steiff. Their motto was *'Only the best is good enough for children'*, producing high quality goods. In 1899 Margarete Steiff registered patents for 23 of her soft toy designs, including a dancing bear and a bear handler with a brown bear. Her nephew Richard created a stuffed bear in 1902 (unaware of the Roosevelt story), exhibiting it at Leipzig Toy Fair in March 1903 and exporting 3,000 to the United States. In 1907, Steiff manufactured 974,000 bears alone.

Five shillings in 1932 is worth about twelve pounds in modern terms. In 1930, the first teddy bears were made by British firm Merrythought with designs by Florence Atwood, who was profoundly deaf. During World War Two, Teddy Bear factories were utilised for military production, some suffering bomb damage.



The 'Just William' stories by Richmal Compton – the story of a mischievous 11 year old and his adventures, first published in 1922 – remained essential reading for boys for decades.

The first vocal version of the popular children's song 'Teddy Bear's Picnic' was recorded in 1932 by Henry Hall and his Orchestra. It was used for more than 30 years by BBC audio engineers to test and calibrate audio equipment because of the large tonal range of the music.



Page 25: The Heatings - Breathing apparatus, liquid air type, mounted on shoulder harness. Made in Rotherham by Guest & Chrimes Ltd, Blacketts, 1900-1920

Guest & Chrimes Ltd were a large Brass Founders and Manufacturers based in Rotherham. Their equipment was used by mine rescue teams and for general exploration or recovery work underground. A liquid-air breathing apparatus for mine rescue was first made available in 1911. The 'liquid air' type breathing apparatus stored pressurised air and released it through a reducing valve and mouthpiece to the wearer. Its ability to store air at pressure allowed rescue teams to spend longer periods of time underground in the poisonous, carbon monoxide filled environment that existed after a fire or explosion. The first aid in Leicestershire Mines was second to none. The first mine rescue station was built at Tankersley in Yorkshire in 1902 but operated without breathing apparatus for several years.

Gob was the name used for that part of the mine from which the coal has been removed and the space more or less filled up with waste.

Page 27: Take Me Back, Baby - Early salon Hairdryer, large metal hood on a tail, adjustable metal stand on wheels, Eugenie Ltd 1950-1970

Alexander Godefoy is credited with inventing the hair dryer for his salon in Paris in 1890. He based it on the vacuum cleaner. He soon made the first electric hair dryer. It was clumsy and difficult to use, as it had a collection of tubes which blew air onto the face and hair. It was not portable or handheld and could only be used by having the woman sit underneath it. Subsequent gas-powered hair dryers were eventually replaced by the electric helmet or hood kind of hair dryers. These were used everywhere for the next 50 years or so and were especially popular because of the particular curled hairstyles of the 1940s and 1950s.

Montgomery Clift (1920-1966) was Marlon Brando's leading acting competition in 1950s Hollywood. In that decade the pixie cut was popularised by actresses such as Audrey Hepburn.

Father Degen was the parish priest at St. Saviour's Coalville. He penned 'Ten Commandments for Miss 1927', whose final commandment was: 'Do not go through life expecting to be attired in silk and chiffon waited on hand and foot, and never doing any hard work. Few men can afford to keep a luxurious and expensive fashion plate. You must learn to be useful as well as ornamental.' Please keep this leaflet in your handbag for handy reference, he advised.

Born in 1936, Tommy Steele was Britain's first teen idol and rock'n'roll star, with a number one single in the UK before Elvis – a version of 'Singing the Blues' in December 1956. 'Take Me Back, Baby' was a song on his 1957 album and movie 'The Tommy Steele Story'.





Page 29: Men of Good Fortune - Cast iron fish bellied rail, Belvoir Castle Tramroad, early 19th c.

In 1815, the Duke of Rutland built a horse drawn railway in Leicestershire to carry coal and supplies from the Grantham-Nottingham canal to his home at Belvoir Castle. It operated until 1918. Fish bellied rails were first used in 1798. They were made in three foot to six foot lengths, and were so named because of their curving shape.

The engineer and inventor George Stephenson (1781-1848) helped build the Leicester and Swannington Railway, which opened in 1832 - his son Robert was the engineer. Having seen the success of William Stenson's coal mine at Long Lane (Whitwick Colliery, which opened in 1824) they decided to purchase the estate at Snibston and sank Snibston No.1 pit nearby in 1831. In 1833, they sank Snibston No. 2 mine through several seams of coal down to the Roaster seam at a depth of 721 feet.

Richard Trevithick (1771-1833) was a British inventor and mining engineer. In 1808, his Steam Circus in London, where Euston Square is today, ran at a terrifying speed of up to 12 miles an hour. The ride suffered from weak tracks and public interest quickly waned. His locomotive was called 'Catch Me Who Can'.

By 1850, there were 10,000 miles of railway track in Britain; by 1901, this had grown to about 35,000. In 1847, there were more than a quarter of a million workers digging the railways. They were called 'navvies', a term originally use for the 'navigators' who built the canals. Many of them were Irish immigrants, supplementing local labourers. 'Bait' is a dialect term to describe a packed lunch eaten at work.

The Duke of Wellington died in 1852 on the railway platform at Brighton. He was 83 years of age. He was a witness to the very first rail accident, when he opened the Liverpool-Manchester railway in 1830 and a Member of Parliament was run over by one of the engines. Although he was publically critical of railways, he was not averse to making money from share dealings with their companies.



Page 31: Let There be Light - Station Lamp, Glen Parva station, L&NWR, 1850-1900

'And God said, Let there be light: and there was light' is from Genesis 1.3, King James Bible. Paraffin lit hand lamps gave signals to the guard or driver at night - white, red or green - by turning the top to bring coloured glasses between the flame and lens.

The first rail line to be built in any of Britain's colonies opened in 1845 in Jamaica, the line running 15 miles from Kingston to Spanish Town. The first passenger line in India opened in 1853, running 21 miles between Bori Bunder, Bombay and Thane.

'Nothing is heard but the clanking iron, the blasphemous song, or the appalling curses of the directors of these infernal machines', was the particular complaint of a Quaker who called himself 'Ebenezer' writing a letter to the Leeds Intelligencer in 1831, complaining about the arrival of the railway on his doorstep. According to W.T. Jackman's 1916 history of transportation in Britain, 'A farmer in Northampton refused his assent to the proposed London and Birmingham Railway on the ground that the smoke would injure the fleeces of his sheep.'

During the late 19th century the London and North Western Railway was the largest joint stock company in the UK, collecting greater revenue than any other. The L&NWR described itself as the 'Premier Line'. It was formed in 1846 by the merger of the Grand Junction, the London and Birmingham, and the Manchester and Birmingham railways.

John Ruskin (1819-1900) was an influential English art critic and social thinker. He was against what he called the 'vandalism' of personal homes and national treasures by rail construction, and was involved with Wordsworth's campaign to keep railways out of the Lake District.

'Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life' by Charles Darwin was first published in 1859, the same year that Isambard Kingdom Brunel – builder of the Great Western Railway – died.

William Turner exhibited 'Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway' at the Royal Academy in 1844. It is in the collection of the National Gallery, London.

Page 33: Ticket to Ride - Wooden ticket dispenser, Boyer's Bus Service, Rothley, 1930s

Boyer & Son established the first public bus service in the Midlands in 1911, with a garage at Rothley. It was absorbed into Midland Red in 1959.



With the development of the pneumatic tyre and valves to maintain the necessary tyre pressure, the number of companies operating bus services grew sharply between 1920 and 1930. In 1923 it was estimated that a bus fitted with the new tyres could complete a journey in a third of the time that it would take for a bus fitted with solid rubber tyres.

Thomas Cook (1808-1892) was born at Melbourne, near Leicester. The Thomas Cook building in Leicester was built in 1894 as a memorial to him, with a frieze of four panels illustrating his career. They show the very first trip which he organised in 1841, a train from Leicester to Loughborough to a Temperance meeting; an 1851 excursion to the Great Exhibition in London; men and supplies being taken in 1884 to the war in Sudan; the recently opened Forth Bridge in 1891, one of the marvels of Victorian railway engineering.

Page 35: Pleasing Decay - Doll, circa 1850

'Pleasing decay' is a term used to describe the mellowing and mouldering process on wax, due to exposure to the elements, humidity and temperature. Wax was originally used for making religious effigies to inspire believers and to aid those recovering from an injury or illness. Towards the end of the 18th century there was a new craze - waxworks which were displays of famous figures, like the ones at Madame Tussaud's in London. By the beginning of the 19th century wax had become the most popular material for professional doll makers. It was favoured for its translucence and how it closely resembled skin - perfect for making dolls and realistic facial features.

Explorer John Hanning Speke telegraphed, early in 1863, that the Nile source was traced. 'What Led to the Discovery of the Source of the Nile' was published in the year of his death, 1864.

The British Perforated Paper Company began selling toilet paper - though not on a roll - in England in 1880.



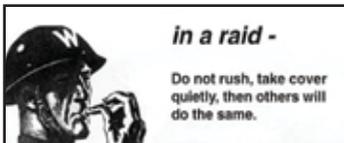
Augusta Montanari was born in England in 1818. Her wax models first attracted attention at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London in 1851, when she exhibited dolls of both sexes and all ages. They were a sensation at the show and probably the first ‘character’ dolls ever shown. In 1871, one of the leading doll manufacturers, John Edwards, said: *‘We are not a great toy-making nation but we admittedly beat the whole world in dolls.’*

‘Parables From Nature’ – by Mrs Alfred Gatty, a vicar’s wife in Yorkshire – were published between 1855 and 1870; a series of stories written after a long and careful study of natural history, combined with elements of fantasy, along with messages of Christian faith and morality. She also wrote the popular ‘Aunt Judy’s Tales for Children’. *‘Animals under man - servants under masters...’* is from one of the parables, ‘Kicking’, the story of a rebellious colt.

Young working class girls were employed as scavengers and piecers in Victorian textile factories. Scavengers had to pick up the loose cotton from under the machinery. In 1859, a 13-year-old scavenger in Wigan, Martha Appleton, caught her left hand in a machine, severing all her fingers. She lost her job because she was no longer able to work efficiently. Workers like Martha were expected to work 10 hours a day.

Until the later part of the 19th century, child labour was commonplace for both boys and girls in these factories, coal and metal mines. Children were a cheap source of labour. In 1851 children and youth (under 20) comprised 30% of the total population of coal miners in Great Britain. In Leicestershire for every 1000 employed in the mines, 400 were described as children and young persons. William Dodd, who worked in a textile factory, told of his experiences in the 1841 pamphlet ‘A Narrative of a Factory Cripple’. He wrote: *‘In the spring of 1840, I began to feel some painful symptoms in my right wrist, arising from the general weakness of my joints, brought on in the factories. The swelling and pain increased. The wrist eventually measured twelve inches round and I was worn down to a mere skeleton. I entered St. Thomas’s Hospital and on 18th July, I underwent the operation. The hand being taken off a little below the elbow. On dissection, the bones of the forearm presented a very curious appearance - something similar to an empty honeycombe, the marrow having totally disappeared.’*

‘Sweetness is to woman what sugar is to fruit. It is her first business to be happy – a sunbeam in the house, making others happy.’ This was the view expressed by Rev. E. J. Hardy in ‘Manners Makyth Man’, 1887.



Page 37: Business as usual - Hand operated World War 2 air raid siren

Every village, town and city in the United Kingdom used to have a network of dual-tone sirens to warn of incoming air raids during World War Two. These were then kept to use as warnings of a nuclear attack. With the end of the Cold War, the siren network was decommissioned in 1993 and very few remain. In 1937, the government created an Air Raid Wardens’ Service and during the next year recruited around 200,000 volunteers. They were responsible for the sounding of the sirens, reporting damage, sealing off affected areas, taking people to shelters, and notifying the emergency services. They helped to clear the streets of debris, and enforced the blackout regulations.

‘Deeper than a whistle, Louder than a cry, Worse than a scream’ was how Langston Hughes described an air raid siren in] his 1937 poem ‘Air Raid Barcelona’.



Amy Johnson (1903-1941), born in Hull, was the first woman to fly solo from Britain to Australia in 1930.

Flanagan and Allen were popular music hall comedians, who changed the lyrics of the 1939 song, 'Run, Rabbit, Run' to make fun of the Germans during the Blitz. It was said to be Churchill's favourite song.

Zeppelin L20 flew over Coalville on the 31st January, 1916. It bombed Loughborough, killing ten people and injuring eight. The target of the raid was actually Liverpool. Navigation by night proved difficult for the crews, even for an airship standing still in the sky trying to get a fix on its position either visually or by a radio bearing from Germany. The L20 ran out of fuel after a raid on Scotland on 3rd May 1916. Damaged by ground fire, it drifted over the North Sea and eventually crash-landed near Stavanger, Norway. The Norwegians, fearing the dirigible would blow over the nearby town, fired into the wreckage floating on the fjord, which exploded and burned.

Page 39: Residual Energies - The Century Theatre, 1952 to present

The Century Theatre is believed to be the only solid structure, fully equipped, mobile theatre in the world. It was built in a Hinckley yard between 1948 and 1952, by local engineer John Ridley. Using converting wartime military trailers and tractors with an aluminium superstructure and hydraulic rams, he created a professional-quality theatre building that could be folded up and moved (very slowly) by road. Once unfolded, it provided an auditorium for 200 people, a stage with proscenium arch, along with living quarters, kitchen and dining room, lighting deck and box office. It was run by a company whose aim was to take quality drama to communities throughout Britain, helping with post-war cultural reconstruction. Many of the actors had been inspired by their involvement with travelling players during the Second World War, when the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) supported actors to take shows to theatre-less towns and hostels attached to munitions factories, to boost the morale of the British people.



It toured the country until 1974, when it remained in residence at Keswick in the Lake District until 1997. It was a 'very successful matrimonial agency' according to Wilfred Harrison, one of the founder members. Many famous names are associated with the theatre including Laurence Olivier, Agatha Christie, Enid Blyton, Judi Dench, Helen Mirren, Tom Courtney, Derek Fowlds and Eileen Derbyshire.

Now permanently based at the Snibston, primarily as an historical artifact, it has a programme of theatre, music, comedy and educational activities for the community. It also has its own ghost, apparently, with paranormal and psychic nights proving quite popular attractions.

The Hand of Glory refers to the dried and pickled hand of a hanged felon, often the left hand. A candle made from or held in such a hand was believed to have magical powers such as the power to unlock doors.

Page 41: O night, spread thy wings over me as the imperishable stars - Steel toe capped boots, leather and steel, used in pit, 1960-70s

'Snap' is the expression use to describe snacks or food that a miner took down into the pit to eat during their shift.



In May 1926, a General Strike was called by the Trades Union Congress to support the miners in their quarrel with the mine owners, who wanted to reduce their wages by 13 per cent and increase their shifts from seven to eight hours. At first, the number of strikers across the country was between 1.5 and 1.75 million. There were riots in several cities. The Roman Catholic Church declared the strike a sin.

The TUC soon backed down and the miners were left to struggle on, until they were starved back to work. By the end of November most miners were back at work, though many trade union members lost their jobs and remained unemployed for years. Those that were taken back on were forced to accept longer hours, lower wages, and local wage agreements. In 1927, the Government passed the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions, which made all sympathetic strikes illegal, and ensured that trade union members had to voluntarily 'contract in' to pay the political levy.

The Leicestershire Miners paid out more strike pay than some other unions. They paid 1 pound for members, 10 shillings (50p) to half members and 2 shillings (10p) for each members' child not at work. However this could only be paid for three weeks in full; then half the rate was paid for one week, a quarter for two weeks, before funds ran out. By mid-July, 130 children had been sent away from Coalville for temporary adoption.

After 153 years of operation, Snibston Colliery finally closed in 1985. The County Council then decided to turn the derelict site into a recreational area, building a major new museum of industry and working life. The Discovery Park opened in 1992.

'O night, spread thy wings over me as the imperishable stars' is one of the inscriptions on the gravestone of the archeologist Howard Carter in Putney Vale Cemetery. In 1923, he uncovered the sarcophagus of Tutankhamun in the Valley of Kings, Egypt.

Thanks to:

All the staff at Snibston Discovery Museum in Coalville; particularly Nick Pell, Curator, Mining & Transport; Fiona Ure, Curator, Home and Family Life; Carolyn Abel, Principal Curator; Maurice Maguire, Lead Artist, Transform Programme; Michele Smith, Operations Manager; David Wilford, Senior Working Exhibit Technician. Also thanks go to Chris Abel for German translation of materials relating to the Kaiserpanorama.

Further reading:

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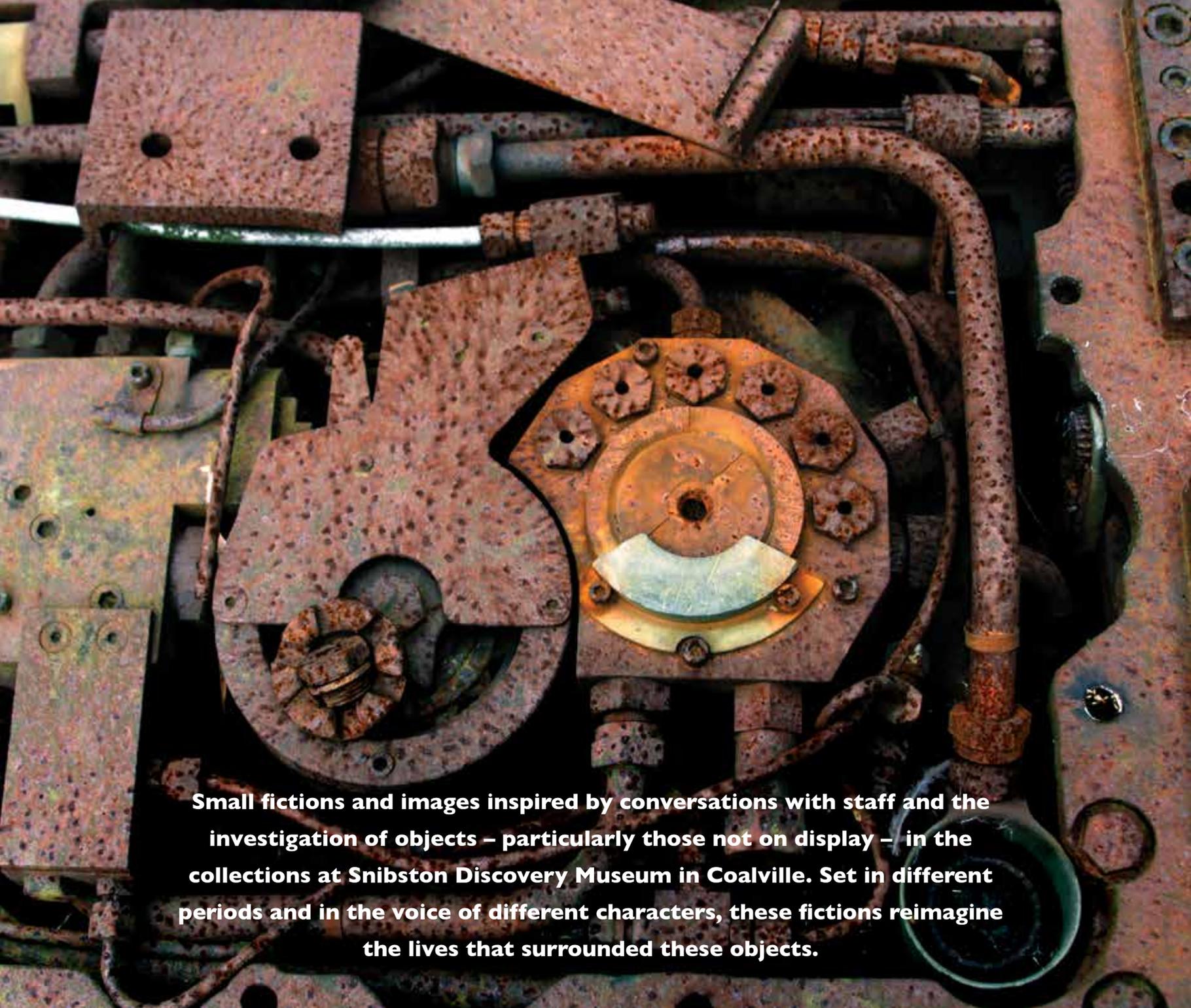
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Small fictions and images inspired by conversations with staff and the investigation of objects – particularly those not on display – in the collections at Snibston Discovery Museum in Coalville. Set in different periods and in the voice of different characters, these fictions reimagine the lives that surrounded these objects.