

DCS Members ‘tune’ into a proud heritage

“Ask not for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee” – Ernest Hemmingway

The Diecasting Society and some industry colleagues enjoyed an excellent visit to the Taylors Bell Foundry Museum at Loughborough (UK) on Wednesday 16th November.

Consisting of two Grade II listed Victorian factory buildings, the John Taylor Ltd Bell Foundry is a unique place with global architectural and historical significance. John Taylor & Company continues a line of bell founding which has been unbroken since the middle of the 14th Century. From 1784 the business was operated by a member of the Taylor family and in 1839 it moved to Loughborough as a condition to recast the Parish Council bells.

It is now proud to operate the largest working bell foundry in the world.

Since 1859, the Loughborough Bell Foundry has cast more than 25,000 bells that are hung in over 100 countries around the world. Single bells, peals of bells, chimes and carillons plus sets of handbells are still produced at the company.

Closer to home, Taylor bells hang in nearly every cathedral in England and thousands of parish churches, from London’s St Paul’s Cathedral to York Minster and from Truro’s cathedral in the south to Newcastle’s cathedral in the north of the country.

Led by an extremely knowledgeable guide, the tour started with a short introduction and video explaining in detail the casting of a bell from start to finish.

The group then climbed to the viewing platform which gives an overview of the Victorian casting hall.

Here the bells are cast – the oven is situated at the back of the hall. The viewing platform offers a good view of the sand moulds for the iron support frames and fittings, the sand pit where bells are cast and an array of inner and outer moulds where the designs and bell forms are made by hand.

The group was then escorted to the main works hall where bells from across the country and the world await dispatch or repair.

A visit to the wood making shop followed, where the group discovered ash is used in the production of bell wheels and then a visit to the tuning shop where an insight was given into how the bells are tuned. There is even an aluminium bell which, sadly, sounds awful so is not to be recommended, however it used for exhibition work as it’s light to transport.

In 2020 the foundry was awarded a £3.45m National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, to enable restoration and the heritage of the foundry to be maintained and protected. It was good to hear that the funding is also being used to train more bell makers and help the foundry expand production.

The work at the site is creating jobs, encouraging tourism, is keeping heritage skills alive and most of all, ensures a future for a unique and valuable heritage.

Let’s ring a bell or two for this news!

Following the success of this visit, the first for a while due to Covid, the DCS is now looking at further technical visits to add to the calendar in 2022.



Diecasting Society president, Stuart Gregory, rings the bells



Bells awaiting further work



Main works hall

MAKING a commitment to the future of our industry

DCS Member company HCM Engineering opened its doors recently to an apprentice and student ambassador to highlight the versatility of the manufacturing sector and the importance of a resilient supply chain.

As a second-year apprentice at AE Aerospace, Edan Harper, is enthusiastic and keen to develop his understanding of how through a strong engineering base, manufacturing has much to offer. He explained: "I met four people at a MAKE UK dinner who invited me to visit their companies for a tour of their facilities." One of those four was Simon Hanson of HCM Engineering.

With the full support of his employer, Harper thus embarked on a whirlwind excursion to SDE Technology to view their presswork, sand casting and haulage capabilities; Bauomat, robotics and automation; My Workwear, an insight into the production of a range of workwear; and HCM Engineering.

He was quick to record his opinions and post them in conjunction with AE Aerospace and MAKE UK to highlight exactly what it meant to him. "It enabled me to see a different side



Simon Hanson welcomes Edan Harper to HCM Engineering

of manufacturing and how I could bring some of the ideas back to AE Aerospace," he said.

Of his visit to HCM Engineering, Harper explained what stood out for him. "They do similar work to what we do, and it was good to see the machines they use. It was also great to see that they have a sister company in India and to know that companies in other parts of the world can work together."

AE Aerospace is a machine to print, subcontract precision machining company, which serves the aerospace, marine, civil and defence industries. Edan Harper is one of three second-year apprentices at the company, which has a total of 15 apprentices on board.

"It's an amazing manufacturing sector and I can see how much of what others are doing can benefit our company," he enthused. AE Aerospace issued a statement to thank MAKE UK members "For creating this opportunity for Edan to widen his knowledge and understanding of engineering."

For Simon Hanson the benefit is spreading the word and supporting those entering the industry. "It's about showcasing our businesses to attract the next generation," he said. "Show them real life, not just inside of manufacturing technology centres, universities and Catapult centres. Getting them to understand the supply chain and the strength and depth of our industry."

Hanson is keen to inspire youngsters but says we must remind them that there is a wide-reaching supply chain, and the sector is not all about blue-chip media grabbing names, but a whole host of other companies undertaking amazing work.



Edan Harper takes the opportunity to view as much technology as possible during his tour of other manufacturing facilities

The Diecasting Society



CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2021/2022

We are pleased to announce the following will be taking place, subject to the further easing of Covid restrictions.

Friday 9th September 2022
DCS National Golf Day
 Moor Hall Hotel, Sutton Coldfield

Friday 7th October 2022
Diecasting Society Technical Conference
 VOCO St Johns Hotel, Solihull, West Midlands

For more information about all events visit:
www.dcsoc.org.uk



Join the Diecasting Society

Membership is open to both individuals and companies who have an interest in the manufacture of die cast metal products. That interest might be as a foundry or a supplier to a foundry.

Each member receives the *Diecasting Society Newsletter*, and reduced rate attendance at all the Society events, both technical and social. Annual membership is £45.00 for an individual member and £235.00 for companies (which includes four reduced rate places for named employees at the company). The cost for a student or trainee is just £8.50.

To start enjoying the benefits of membership email: dcs@icme.org.uk or visit www.dcsoc.org.uk