
On the British Education System
and
The State Schools in Cambridge (XII)

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In the preceding essays (Vol. IX and X), I mentioned the school lessons, especially science, physical education and project. In Vol. XI. I told you about the school events, but I could not explain another big school event on account of limited space. So in this essay, I will tell you about the big event in which my family and I were much interested.

3. "Discover Industry" Residential Field Trip

On 13th November, '86, we received a school letter entitled "FIELD STUDIES WEEK — 15th to 19th June 1987." The content of the letter is as follows :

To : Parents of children in P4 / R4 (1986 / 87)

FIELD STUDIES WEEK — 15th to 19th June 1987

As you may know from previous years, the Fourth Year children are involved in field studies during a week in their third term, which is a part of the Social Studies topic being followed at that time. There are two options — to remain based at School and make day visits to various places of interest or to take part in a five-day residential field trip. For 1987 both options will be based on a study of aspects of industry — past, present and future. After consideration, we have decided to offer to you and the children an-

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other "Discover Industry" residential tour to the Midlands and South Wales. We hope to visit such places as Ironbridge (the heart of the Industrial Revolution), a cotton mill, glassworks, a canal boat museum, Jodrell Bank observatory and — always the high spot — a coal mine.

The trip is being organised through PGL School Tours and will be the fourth we have made with this company. We shall be staying for three nights at Boreatton Park, Shropshire, where the accommodation is in 10-berth caravans, and at Tan Troed (near Ilangorse) in South Wales where we shall be under canvas for one night.

The total cost to you, which includes travel, accommodation, meals, entrance fees, insurance and necessary organisation, will be £70.00.

Numbers will be limited to a maximum of 52 children because of travel and accommodation requirements and your applications will be dealt with on the basis of "first come, first served"; you may apply for a place, with £15 deposit, from Wednesday 19th November. Details concerning this will follow in a separate letter next week.

To enable Parents to see slides and photographs taken on previous tours and to hear about and discuss the field studies week more fully, there will be a meeting in the School Hall on :

TUESDAY 18th NOVEMBER at 8.00pm.

So we attended the meeting at the school hall on Tuesday 18th November at 8:00 p.m. to hear about and discuss the field studies more fully. On that occasion, we were given a brochure entitled "DISCOVERING INDUSTRY FIELD TRIP 15th – 19th June (1987) — Fourth-Year Pupils — INFORMATION FOR PARENTS." The brochure explains a lot of minute details, such as Aims, Accommodation, Programme, Insurance, and so on. As I am much interested in the brochure, I will write down the point here :

AIMS

The intention of this Field Trip is two-fold.

1. To give the children an understanding of the effects of the Industrial Revolution and a view of industry in general ; this will be achieved through first-hand experience by visiting suitable places of interest.
2. To extend the children's social education by means of a residential period away from School and home.

PGL

PGL Young Adventure Ltd. (a member of ABTA) has been introducing children to outdoor activities for almost 30 years. Boreatton Park is an estate of 240 acres set in the beautiful border countryside just north of Shrewsbury. The Park provides a stimulating but secure environment for the range of activities which take place within its boundaries. The centrepiece is the old Victorian mansion. There is a heated indoor swimming pool, sports hall, large scale assault course and an animal farm.

ACCOMMODATION / MEALS

At Boreatton Park we shall be staying in the residential caravans, which are on an attractive site on the edge of the woods below the mansion. Each accommodates up to 10 children. Teachers will have their own caravan in the same area, within earshot of those of the children! There is a modern high standard toilet and shower block nearby. Throughout the night all pathways are illuminated. Sleeping bags and sheet inners are provided but not pillows — these should be taken if you feel it is necessary, although a jersey put in a pillow case (not supplied) will suffice. Our party will also be allocated a drying room for wet clothing, and other facilities are available in the mansion. Three substantial meals are provided each day and a drink at supper time. A cooked or non-cooked breakfast and the evening meal are served cafeteria-style in the dining room while packed lunches are supplied for when we are out on day visits.

PROGRAMME

We shall be departing from School by coach on the Monday morning and travelling to Boreatton Park where we shall be based until our return on Friday. Visits will include the following :

Ironbridge Gorge Museums

- The Iron Bridge
- Seven Bridge Warehouse and Warehouse Museum
- Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron
- Blists Hill Open Air Museum

Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

- Displays of pottery, porcelain, bathroom furniture, etc
- Bottle ovens

Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, Cheshire

- Georgian Cotton Mill

Crystal Glassworks, Tutbury

- Small co-operative modern firm

Canal Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port

- Historical record of canals, canal people and their way of life
- Covered and outside exhibits
- Short cruise on an inland waterways boat

Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope

- Including the planetarium

Chatterley-Whitfield Mining Museum

- Tour of the mine and above ground workings
- Hesketh Steam Winding Engine
- Travel by underground miners' electric train
- Pit ponies underground

At least two of the museums have won the "Museum of the Year" Award in recent years and all have direct appeal to children.

DAILY TIMETABLE

This will be modified according to our visits, but will be something like this :

Before 7.30am	Organised (!) activities
7.30am – 8.30am	Breakfast
9.00am – 4.45pm	Away on a day visit
5.00pm approx.	Evening meal
5.30pm – 6.30pm	Free time
6.30pm – 8.30pm	Evening activities
9.00pm	Evening drink
9.30pm	Bed (and Lights out!)

For the early morning and evening activities, the children will be divided into groups, each group doing one or two activities in each of the sessions at Boreatton Park and each group being assigned a PGL group leader / instructor (known as a “groupee”). Swimming, roller skating, the assault course, the rope slide and a disco are usually available to us; there will also be a camp fire barbecue if the weather is in our favour.

SAFETY AND MEDICAL MATTERS

The tour is taking place with the approval of the Local Education Authority and the organisation and staffing are in accordance with the Authority’s policy on such matters.

Extra activities (in the early morning or evening) take place under the supervision of trained PGL staff and in our own presence. PGL safety standards meet the requirements laid down by the Department of Education and Science. We have to point out that accidents can happen, particularly while using the assault course and rope slide, but these and the other extra activities are optional. There is a sick bay; a qualified nurse is on 24 hour call as part of the PGL staff and there are arrangements for local GP cover. Every effort will be made to contact you in the event of your child becoming ill or having an accident beyond something of a minor nature.

Information, including any necessary medical details, will be required from parents before we leave. A form for this purpose accompanies these notes – please complete and return it to School immediately.

INSURANCE

The party has been automatically insured at the time of booking. Cover includes reimbursement in the event of cancellation prior to departure due to illness or personal accident, medical and other expenses including the costs of travel for parents to be with an injured child. We have also taken out further cover against the loss of personal baggage, belongings and money, and any enforced curtailment of activities. The full details are available in School should you wish to see them.

TRANSPORT

This will be by coach from and to School, and on each day visit. Exact departure and return times will be notified to you when they are finalised. We shall be returning on Friday afternoon. It is planned to include a short boat journey at Ellesmere Port and a ride on an underground electric train at the mine.

VALUABLES

PGL do not take responsibility for articles of value. Children are not to bring radios or cassette recorders. They may bring cameras but must be responsible for them. Anything which is valuable and required during the day or night should be handed in to one of the teachers and reclaimed when needed.

POCKET MONEY

Each child may bring up to a maximum of £15 for the week. This should be brought to School in one pound coins in a strong sealed and named envelope on the Friday before the trip. Children can ask for whatever money they need at specified "pocket money" times — it then becomes their own responsibility. The party is allocated a safe at Boreatton Park.

CLOTHING AND POSSESSIONS

All clothing and possessions **MUST** be named **AND MUST** also show the name of the School. A suggested clothing list is given in the Pre-Trip

Check List.

MESSAGES

Mr Ellis will be informed of our arrival at Boreatton Park on the Monday afternoon, and will post a notice to that effect in a window at the front of School.

All children will be asked to bring a stamped (first-class) postcard which will be written in time for posting on Tuesday morning.

There will be pay-telephones available for children to telephone home but these cannot receive in-coming calls — and there can be long queues of children waiting their turn! If you need to contact your child urgently, please get in touch with Boreatton Park office and a message will be relayed to your child.

ADDRESSES

PGL Young Adventure Ltd
Boreatton Park
Baschurch
Shrewsbury
Shriogure SY4 2EZ tel : Baschurch (0939) 260551

PGL Head Office :
PGL School Tours
Station Street
Ross-on-Wye
Hereforshire HR9 7AH tel : Ross-on-Wye (0989) 64211

Milton Road Junior School tel : Cambridge (0223) 359324

DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984

For the purposes of the field trip, personal information about your child is transferred on to a computer datafile. At the conclusion of the trip the

medical information will be deleted immediately and the rest of the information shortly thereafter.

RECEIPT

Receipt of these instructions constitutes a formal receipt for completion of your payments for the trip..

On that occasion I received an explanatory note of insurance consisting of three pages. It explains the details about P.G.L. School Party Insurance and P.G.L. Optional Insurance. It is said that the English are a people insuring themselves in case of accident and that insurance business began first in England. By the way, when my family and I planned to make a coach tour of Lake District and Scotland in April, '87, during our stay in Cambridge, a clerk of the travel agency asked me if I would insure us all. Of course, I agreed to do so in case we should have accident. Taking such a thing into consideration, I am not quite sure, but I cannot help thinking they insured at least School Party Insurance.

On 27th November, we got a rather long school letter concerning further details of the Field Studies Week the next June. The point of the letter is as follows :

.... As described in our letter of 13th November, two options are proposed : children may spend the week based at school and do local visits, or they may participate in the five day / four night residential Field Trip to the West Midlands and South Wales. The cost for the latter will be £70 per child based on our taking a minimum of 40 children. As is normal, such a Field Trip is subject to the approval of the Local Education Authority and this is expected shortly.

Our plans at this stage are for the Cambridge based group to be under the care of Mr Ellis and Mrs Carter, while those on the Field Trip will be with

Mr Phipps, Mrs Russon and two accompanying students completing their final teaching practice.

You must decide which of the two options you want for your child. If you wish to choose the Field Trip, but foresee difficulties in paying the full cost, you should discuss the matter confidentially with Mr Ellis. You should do this without delay so that all applications for places on the Field Trip can be received from Wednesday of next week (3rd December). It is hoped that a fund will be established from which assistance may be offered. (The Governors have discussed this matter and given approval in principle.)

On this occasion we are prepared to take on the Field Trip any child who wishes to go, although a maximum number may have to be applied because of accommodation and / or travel restrictions.

Payment for the Field Trip may be made in one of the following ways :

1. Deposit of £15 and two further payments —
Week ending 30th January : £15
Week ending 3rd April : £15
2. Deposit of £15 and two further payments —
Week ending 30th January : £25
Week ending 3rd April : £30
3. In full (£70) immediately.
4. A few people may prefer to pay by weekly installments —
Deposit of £15 immediately; then weekly, commencing 12th December, twelve payments of £4 and one of £7. The split week at the end of term / beginning of next is excepted. These payments must be made on a Friday morning of each week.
5. Payments, with financial assistance, by arrangement through Mr Full settlement may be made at any time after the deposit is paid. Deposits and other monies paid to the tour company, PGL School Tours, are not normally refundable, except under the terms of the insurance policy which comes into effect immediately your deposit is

paid to them.

All cheques should be made payable to MILTON ROAD JUNIOR SCHOOL FUND.

Finally, the attached reply sheet should be returned to School from — but not before — next Wednesday, 5th December. Applications for the Field Trip will be dealt with on a “first come / first served” basis from that date.

At that time, my wife and I had a problem ; my daughter’s bed-wetting. So I went to see the class teachers of the 4th Year for the problem. As soon as I told them about it at school, they told me that there would be no problem about it because they would wake each child every night by turns. To hear that, I was much relieved and paid £70 by cheque, adding that they would take good care of my daughter.

I will mention the other things about the Field Studies Week, but the space is limited, so I will tell you about them in next essay.