

WASC 583

Centunes of mystery disappear.

Chestnut and Walton  
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# CENTURIES OF MYSTERY DISAPPEAR

## First public tour of the E.R.D.E.

FOR the first time in 400 years the Explosives Research and Development Establishment at Waltham Abbey opened its doors to members of the public last week. A cross-section of the public were invited to lunch within the boundaries of the factory, which has kept its mysteries for four centuries, and afterwards they were taken on a tour of the 500 acres of E.R.D.E. on the north and south sides of the town.

In the establishment's magnificent new lecture theatre the visitors heard a short talk by Dr. L. J. Bellamy, Director, on the tremendously varied work that goes on at E.R.D.E. He said the establishment had been shattering the peace of the town with mysterious bangs for many years and there was no reason why members of the community should be prevented from viewing the parts of it that were not

engaged in secret work.

### Protection

He emphasised the safety of the processes that went on inside the factory and said the employees received all possible protection from danger in explosions.

The party saw a film showing explosions in slow motion, which were taken with the factory's unique camera photographing at one and a quarter million frames a second. The film also showed the preparation, moulding, prolonged cooling and machine shaping of the propellant charges for rockets.

An exhibition showing most aspects of the establishment's work, with diagrams, photographs and pieces of equipment was open to the visitors in the new library building.

After lunch the party went on a tour of the factory and saw processes that range from research into the strength, elasticity and other properties of plastics, to the production and investigation of propellants and other explosives.

### BUS STOP SIGN DEMOLISHED

A bus stop sign outside the premises of the White Metal Smelting Company, Highbridge Street, Waltham Abbey, was demolished when a Morris Minor car left the road there on Saturday. The driver, Mr. Leslie Frederick Embleton, of 123, Joiners Field, Harlow, sustained a bruise on his head.

He was taken to St Margaret's Hospital, Epping, and allowed to go home after treatment.

The front of the car was badly damaged.

### GAS CYLINDER STOLEN

A propane gas cylinder worth £5 was stolen from a store in Cheshunt High Street on Saturday. The cylinder was the property of Mr. Darling, of 33, Southfield Road, Cheshunt.

### Ruined mills

During their coach trip to the south site the visitors saw the old ruined powder mills that were abandoned in the 1800's after a series of disastrous explosions.

Among the visitors were the Chairman of Waltham Abbey

Council, Cr. G. Tuck, and his wife, Cr. Mrs. E. M. Tuck, Cr. Mrs. M. Bird, vice-chairman of the council, and Cr. C. E. Hewins.

The factory is the oldest nationalised industry in this country. It was taken over by the Government in 1787, and following the acquisition was extensively repaired and modernised. Production was resumed on a large scale just in time for the Napoleonic Wars.

From then on production of gunpowder was continuous until brought to an end by a German bomb in the early days of World War II. By then other parts of the factory were engaged in making cordite and high explosives and continued to do so until 1945 when the premises were handed over for their present research purposes.

### Anxiety over school meals

Epping M.P. Stan Newens expressed considerable anxiety this week about the future of the present standards of school milk and meals services.

Mr. Newens, who was speaking in the House of Commons, opposed the proposal to end specific grants for milk and meals and substitute it with a general grant to the local authority.

"I feel the ending of these specific grants gives considerable cause for anxiety," Mr. Newens stated. "Will the local education authorities stand to gain by raising the price of meals, or introducing a charge for milk? Pressure on them to take this line will be considerable, especially if the prices of these services begin to rise," Mr. Newens added.

### CONDIT FOR TEEN ASSAULT

"Badly provoked by chairman"

CHARGED with causing harm with a jack handle