

Itinerary for Birmingham's Industrial Heritage Tour

Wednesday 13th July to Friday 15th July 2016

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7.30am Depart from The Hart, Farnham for Birmingham.

Once famous as a "City of a Thousand Trades" Birmingham was a world leader in the production of pens, buckles, buttons, jewellery and guns.

By the 18th century the city had already become the main European producer of such items, together with a range of small boxes and accessories often called

"Brummagem Toys". The "Toy Industry" was dominated by the

manufacturers John Taylor and Matthew Bolton. Bolton, together with James Watt and Erasmus Darwin were co-founders of the Lunar Society which gained worldwide recognition for innovative, pioneering ideas in science, arts, philosophy and commerce. The Lunar Society met during the full moon at Soho House, our first stop on the tour.



Soho House

Soho House was the home of Matthew Bolton for forty three years until his death in 1809. Born in 1728, Bolton lived through a period of great technological and scientific change in which he played a key role, becoming one of England's pioneering industrialists, a man whom his friend Josiah Wedgwood described as "The most complete manufacturer in metals in England".

In 1761, needing a site to build his new manufactory, Bolton paid £1000 for the lease on Soho Mill, the house and land. In 1766 Bolton and his wife Anne made Soho House their home. In the 1790's Bolton had the house extensively redesigned by architect James



Wyatt, with the present façade and a new service wing housing a library and domestic quarters.

The London interior designer Cornelius Dixon and the furniture maker James Newton were brought in to transform the house into a fashionable gentleman's residence where Bolton could entertain distinguished guests in style.

In 1990 Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery set about restoring Soho House as closely as possible to its appearance c.1790.

1pm Depart Soho House for The Drop Forge.

Lunch at The Drop Forge is included.

2,45pm-3.00pm Arrive and check in at The Copthorne Hotel, Paradise Circus.

3.30pm A short walk will take us to Birmingham Art Gallery.

We could not come to Birmingham without visiting the Art Gallery which has internationally significant collections of art and history including the largest collection of pre-Raphaelite artwork in the world. We will have a guided tour of the gallery focussing on the pre-Raphaelites.

The evening is free to explore the city and dine at one of the many local restaurants.

Thursday 14th July

9am Today our Blue Badge Guide, Mary Moore, will meet us at the hotel and we will board our coach for a guided tour of Birmingham. On route we will pass the Bull Ring and the modern Millennium Point. We will, by contrast, see the central Victorian area including the Law Courts and the Council House. We will pass by the Snow Hill Business Centre and both of Birmingham's Cathedrals. Our first stop will be at

10.30am The Museum of the Jewellery Quarter .

When the owners of the Smith & Pepper jewellery factory decided to retire after 80 years of trading, they simply locked the doors, leaving a time capsule for future generations. Today the factory is a remarkable museum revealing Birmingham's jewellery and metalworking heritage and offering a unique glimpse of working life in the city's famous Jewellery Quarter. There will be a guided tour including demonstrations of traditional jewellery making and a chance to get a coffee.

Later on our tour we will visit the village of Bournville. In 1824, John Cadbury opened his grocer shop on Bull Street in Birmingham city centre, selling a range of products as well as expensive cocoa. Chocolate soon became popular and production rapidly increased. Larger premises were opened on



Crooked Lane and Bridge Street, with raw materials needed to make chocolate being brought in by canal boat. By 1879, the Cadbury business moved their whole production to a purpose-built location a few miles outside of Birmingham on what was then farm land. The new settlement was to be “a factory

in a garden” and was given the name Bournville. The Cadbury family were social pioneers, with the building of large, spacious homes, new schools and even swimming pools solely for their workers.

We will return to the centre of Birmingham, for **lunch**, via the University campus.

After lunch Mary will take us, on foot, for a short tour of the new Birmingham Library, a must for Shakespeare lovers, and the International Convention Centre. (The Library is well worth a visit if only for the view from the roof!). Our day will come to a close with a relaxing hour long trip by boat around some of Birmingham’s canal system. A commentary will be provided throughout the trip and light refreshments will be available. Birmingham is Britain’s “Canal City”, with famously more miles of canal than Venice. Birmingham’s canals were originally built for industrial transport over 200 years ago and the industrial heritage can still be seen. In many places, such as Brindley Place, the canal network has been revitalised as a place to work, live and socialise, with canal side bars and restaurants. The canal system is centred around Gas Street Basin, an evocative and much photographed attraction, however, our boat will depart from the International Convention Centre Quay. On our return the hotel will be found only five minutes walk away.

The evening is again free to sample further Birmingham’s gastronomic delights

Friday 15th July

This morning there will be time for a little shopping.

We will then check out of the hotel ready to depart.

Our coach will collect us at 10.30 and take us to the Black Country Living Museum.

At the museum you can travel back in time and discover a fascinating world which portrays daily life 100 years ago in the Black Country. Historic buildings from all around the region have been moved and authentically rebuilt at the museum to show how the people once lived in the heart of industrial Britain.

We will be transported back in time from the modern exhibition halls to the canal-side village, where costumed demonstrators and working crafts people bring the buildings to life with their local knowledge, practical skills and unique Black Country humour. The museum is on a 26 acre site but there are regular buses and trams to take you around.



For a small additional fee you can enjoy a guided tour down a coal mine but if you prefer something a bit less exciting then call in at one of the houses and talk to the “owner” about its history or pop into one of the shops and see what’s on offer. Lunch can be purchased at the Worker’s Institute but, ask any coach driver and they will tell you that, the best thing about the museum is a visit to Hobbs and Sons fish and chip shop. Lunch can always be washed down with a pint at the Glass and Bottle Inn. After lunch there will be a canal boat journey through the Dudley Tunnels however, for anyone who is in the least bit claustrophobic, this is purely optional and a small additional charge will be made for those who choose to take part.

4pm Depart the Black Country Museum for our return trip to Farnham arriving at approx. 7pm.