

MILESTONES

LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM



Worthing WI Trip to Milestones Museum - August 2nd 2022

After three years of waiting, we finally got to visit Milestones Museum in Basingstoke. A nearly full coach left on time from the Dome Cinema, and we arrived just two hours later at The Milestones Museum on an industrial estate in Basingstoke. It was certainly not as we imagined. It was completely set out under a vast glass roof, rather like an aircraft hangar.

Most of us made for the rooftop café for a welcome cup of coffee. Then to explore all the various displays. We started off on the seaside pier with all the slot machines and pinball games. You could exchange 50p coins for old copper pennies to try your luck.

The steam engine company of Thorneycroft had moved to Basingstoke from Chiswick when the demand for their steam engines grew and grew during the Industrial Revolution. As well as steam driven machinery they also made steam driven motor cars and motor cycles till 1912 when they decided to concentrate on much larger engines and vehicles. The Thorneycroft works was a very large employer in Basingstoke.

It seems the museum was started in order to house a huge display of Thorneycroft heavy duty vehicles and engines, lovingly restored by enthusiasts. There is a huge collection of various machines including a steam driven fire engine, a Victorian tram, steam cars, lorries and many more. There is even a recreation of part of the Thorneycroft factory.

The rest of the museum is devoted to a recreation of street scenes from Victorian times through to the 30's and 40's. It brought back so many happy memories from our childhood. There is a sweetshop selling rationed sweets, a milliners making hats, an operating pub where some of us enjoyed a lunchtime shandy. We all enjoyed the collection of teddy bears dating back to pre First World War and so much more. The time flew by and all too soon it was 3pm and the coach was waiting to take us home.

We arrived back at the Dome at 5pm after a very good smooth journey

A big thank you must go to Dawn for organising the whole trip and to Mary for originally suggesting it.

Valerie Kilburn