

MINISTRY OF WORKS PRESS NOTICE

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MOW/31/53
P.I. 233/27/17LIONS AND UNICORNS FOR THE MALL CORONATION DECORATIONS

The 17 ft. tall Lions and Unicorns which are to surmount the four Coronation arches in the Mall are now in course of completion for the Ministry of Works at the workshops of Messrs. C. Hall (Metalworks) Ltd., at Coleridge Gardens, London, N.W.6.

They are being constructed of tubular steel to the design of Mr. James Woodford, R.A. the sculptor who also designed the Queen's Beasts for the Annexe to Westminster Abbey.

Two pairs will be mounted on each of the four arches so placed as to face each other when viewed from either end of the processional way. Each figure will contain 160 feet of steel tubing $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches in diameter, of which only three feet - the part which goes against the mast - is straight. This involves an unusual amount of bending by hand and welding for each figure.

Mechanical bending and forming would result in regular and uniform curves and rob the figures of their character and moulding. Every bend is therefore made by hand on an ordinary blacksmith's forge, and the craftsmen then fit them in to the design on a full-scale drawing stretched on the floor. The joints are then welded, each animal having some 250 separate welds, about 120 ft. of welding in all.

A tracery of mesh infilling, made from mild metal strip $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, completes the bodies of the lions and unicorns. It is joined to the outline by 600 spot welds, and about 400 feet of infilling is needed for each figure.

They will weigh 5 cwt each and every arch will thus bear a weight of one ton. The figures will, however, appear to be standing on aluminium spun balls, 1 ft. 2 ins. in diameter, used as a mask to give a final artistic finish and lightness to the whole structure.

When flood-lit at night the Lions and Unicorns, standing some 80 ft. above the ground, with the great golden coronets suspended beneath between the arches, will be most spectacular. Satisfactory lighting tests have already been carried out on the experimental arch in Regent's Park with the figures in position.

The coronets, also, are being made by Messrs. Hall Ltd.

10th April, 1953.