

CONSETT IRON COMPANY LIMITED

OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY  
OF  
THE HOWNSGILL PLATE MILL

Some Facts and Figures

Site clearing began in May, 1958.

2 million cubic yards of earth ( $\frac{1}{2}$  million truck loads) were removed in the process.

11,500 tons of steelwork went into the building.

The building itself is 2,000 feet long, 435 feet wide, 75 feet high and the site area is 16 acres.

10,000 tons of Mill and ancillary equipment have been installed.

The mill stand comprises two of the largest steel castings ever made in Britain, each weighing over 160 tons.

The back-up rolls weigh 61 tons and are 60" in diameter. Each work roll weighs 25 tons.

Power is supplied by two electric motors each developing over 10,000 H.P. and together weighing over 450 tons.

$7\frac{1}{2}$  miles of rail track have been installed to service the Mill.

Rated capacity of the Mill is 10,000 tons per week and this figure should be reached before the end of the year.

Plates up to 90 feet long, 120 inches wide and 6 inches thick can be rolled, every one being "tailor made" to each customer's particular specification. Plates up to  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " thick will be sheared and those above that thickness will be flame-cut.

Finishing processes include annealing and normalising (up to 2,000 tons per week), cold and hot mangling of plates up to 4" in thickness, gas cutting and Shot Blasting.

The existing mill will continue to operate in parallel until the New Mill is fully away.

430 men will be employed, equalling approximately two-thirds of the present labour force.

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Special Transport Arrangements

The formal opening of Consett Iron Company's new £14,000,000 Plate Mill at Hownsgill, Consett, County Durham will take place on Wednesday, 26th April, 1961, and will be attended by 700 guests from all parts of the country. Special travel arrangements have been made to assemble the guests and a private train will convey guests from London and the South. Leaving King's Cross just after midnight on Tuesday, 25th, the train will arrive at Newcastle early on Wednesday morning and breakfast for these guests is being arranged in the Royal Station Hotel.

Service trains will bring guests travelling from Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Many of these guests will arrive on 25th April and accommodation has been reserved for them at the Royal Station Hotel, Newcastle.

A chartered aircraft, supplied by B.K.S. Air Transport, will leave Elmdon Airport, Birmingham, at 8 a.m. on 26th April, arriving at Wolsington Airport at 9.15 a.m. Breakfast will be served en route and a motor coach will transfer visitors to Newcastle Central Station where they will join the other guests on a special diesel train which will take them to the Company Station at Hownsgill. This train and the special train from London will carry head boards and side indicator boards painted in the blue and gold colours of Consett Iron Company. The reserved carriages on other trains will bear special window stickers and throughout the journey guests will be accompanied by couriers.

For the convenience of those travelling by road the R.A.C. have kindly agreed to signpost suggested routes to Hownsgill and guests travelling in their own cars will be

provided with a special label to enable them to enter the Mill and the car parks.

A closed circuit television unit has been installed to ensure that all guests may see the entire opening ceremony. Telephone facilities will also be available at the Mill.

After the luncheon, which will be served in a marquee, guests will return to their various destinations, all arriving by 10.30 p.m. that evening.



## A brief History of Northern Durham and its Iron and Steel Industry

Consett is situated in the centre of that part of the present County of Durham which lies between the Tyne and the Wear. This area, which was densely forested and sparsely inhabited in prehistoric and Roman times became, after the Anglo Saxon settlements, a No-man's Land between the Kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira. After the consolidation by King Oswald of these ancient territories into the great kingdom of Northumbria, Northern Durham took a leading part in the rebirth of European culture largely by reason of the immense library accumulated by St. Benet Biscop, Abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow and of the prodigious erudition of one of his Jarrow monks, the Venerable St. Bede. The latter, besides his many scriptural, literary and historical works, wrote books on the 'computus' (which included mathematics and astronomy) and on natural science, which were for many centuries the acknowledged text books on these subjects. Northern Durham continued in the van of European culture until the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, its chief seats of learning, were devastated by the Danes in 793/4. Those barbarians then turned their attention to the South of England and began to make regular settlements there, leaving the North in peace until in 867 York was attacked and fell and the Danes spread over Northumbria, killing and ravaging. Every Church and Monastery in Northumbria was destroyed and Christianity and civilisation here might have been eclipsed had it not been for the devotion of the Northumbrians to their great Patron Saint Cuthbert. With their wives and children they accompanied the Bishop, carrying their Patron's body with them as they fled from place to place from the Danes for nine years. Meanwhile, Alfred, King of Wessex, won a decisive victory, which he attributed to St. Cuthbert, over the Danes in 878 at Ethandun in Wiltshire as a result of which the Danes were restricted to their Kingdoms of East Anglia and York. To prevent the old Kingdom of Northumbria (now confined to the North of the Kingdom of York) being at the mercy of the Danes, King Alfred arranged that the people of St. Cuthbert should settle in the land between the Tyne and the Wear, which he gave to the Bishop as a franchise free from all service. To safeguard this franchise he decreed that the body of St. Cuthbert should rest at Chester-le-Street near Lambton Castle and the Danes, who were greatly in awe of St. Cuthbert, respected the integrity of the franchise so well that there is hardly a Danish place name to be found in Northern Durham. This franchise was later gradually extended by purchase and gift until it included all the land between the Tyne and the Tees as well as widely separated parts of Northumberland and Yorkshire. In all this land of St. Cuthbert, which later became known as the Palatinate of Durham, the writ of the King of England did not run; the Bishop enjoyed all royal rights.

The Palatinate continued through the Middle Ages to be independent of the English Crown but in 1536 the Bishop, while retaining his jurisdiction, was subordinated to the Crown; in 1836 the jurisdiction was removed from the Bishop. The County Palatine still retains its own Court of Chancery which is now the only remaining vestige of the old independence of Durham.

The body of St. Cuthbert rested at Chester-le-Street

for over 100 years until in 995 fresh invasions necessitated its removal to the impregnable fortress of Durham. One ship's crew of the invaders was defeated and slain at Lambton, a dim remembrance of which has been transmitted to this day in the Durham tradition of the "Lambton Worm".

In 1104 the great Cathedral which now stands on the peninsula above the Wear became St. Cuthbert's final resting place and for centuries the priory of which it was the centre became, on that account, one of the greatest monasteries of Europe, noted not only for its strict observance and great learning but also for its material wealth, founded to some extent on coal and iron.

The heaps of iron scoriae which still remain scattered over the West of the County point to the working of iron here at a very early date; there are remains of an ancient, windblown Blast Furnace at Lanchester (4½ miles from Consett) of Roman or earlier origin. Although later records are somewhat sparse they are sufficient to show that from that time Iron has continued to be made in Northern Durham. Independent smiths, as well as the Abbey of Durham, were making iron at least as early as the 12th Century, especially in Weardale and in the 14th Century the Abbey was making steel to form the cutting edges of iron implements and armaments. These products were exported from Durham all over England and abroad.

Cardinal Langley, Bishop of Durham, had a Foundry and forge at Bedeburn between Hamsterley and Wolsingham in the first decade of the 15th Century, where there was still a forge in the early 19th Century.

The waters of the River Derwent which flows at the bottom of the hill on which Consett stands were supposed to have properties particularly useful for tempering steel and, as a result, steelworks tended to be built on its Southern bank. Steel was being made at Shotley Bridge just below Consett late in the 17th Century.

It is interesting to note that the law book of the Crowley Iron Works, which in 1690 was transferred from Sunderland to make steel at Swalwell and Winlaton on the Derwent, contains an arrangement whereby the workpeople could seek remedy for a grievance from a tribunal consisting of the Works Chaplain and two members appointed by the Management and two by the workpeople. In this Sir Ambrose Crowley was a precursor of Sir David Dale (Managing Director of Consett 1864-1873, Chairman 1884-1906) who was the founder of Conciliation Committees. The arrangement was a prototype of the neutral Committee arrangements now operating in the industry.

It will be of interest to our Guests that the blue and gold flag flying over the Works is that of St. Oswald, King of Northumbria, which is the proper flag of the County of Durham.



CONSETT IRON COMPANY LIMITED

OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY

OF

THE HOWNSGILL PLATE MILL

BY

THE RT. HON. LORD MILLS, K.B.E.

H.M. PAYMASTER GENERAL

WEDNESDAY, 26TH APRIL, 1961

TOAST LIST

"The Queen"

Proposed by THE CHAIRMAN

"The Guests"

Proposed by THE CHAIRMAN

Response by The Rt. Hon. LORD MILLS, K.B.E.  
H.M. Paymaster General

"The Contractors"

Proposed by THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Response by M.A. FIENNES, Esq.,  
Managing Director,  
Davy-Ashmore Limited



Y O K. O Medday Tue April 26

COMMUNICATORS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE COMPANY NOT TO INDIVIDUALS

Cablegrams  
STEEL CONSETT  
Telegrams  
STEEL PHONE CONSETT  
Telephone  
CONSETT 341

# Consett Iron Company Limited, Consett, Co. Durham.

OUR REF. BA/AC  
YOUR REF.

17th April, 1961.

News Editor.  
Pathe News,  
4th Floor,  
Film House,  
142, Wardour Street,  
London, W.1.

new castle  
80 Hotel  
Y J  
Y - Y

Dear Sir,

Following a telephone call to your office this afternoon I have pleasure in enclosing a book about our new Plate Mill which is being opened on Wednesday 26th April by the Rt. Hon. Lord Mills, K.B.E.

There will be about seven hundred guests at the ceremony and special transport arrangements such as private trains to the actual mill site have been made.

I also enclose a ~~view~~ photograph of the Mill rolling plates. The cover of the Consett Saga gives an excellent view of the exterior of the Mill.

If you feel that you would like to pursue this perhaps you would let me know as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,  
for CONSETT IRON COMPANY LIMITED.

? Transpal

Bryan Askew.



Cablegrams  
STEEL CONSETT

Telegrams  
STEEL PHONE CONSETT

Telephone  
CONSETT 341

*Consett Iron Company Limited,*  
*Consett,*  
*Co. Durham.*

OUR REF. BA/AC  
YOUR REF.

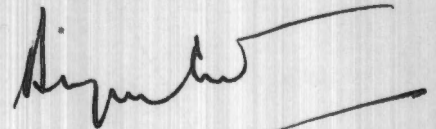
21st April, 1961.

Miss Field.  
Pathe News.  
142, Wardour Street,  
London, W.1.

Dear Miss Field,

I have pleasure in enclosing literature and travel tickets  
as promised on the telephone this afternoon.

Yours sincerely,



Bryan Askew.

P.S. Will the camera man please assemble in the Mill not later than  
11-30 a.m., on the Platform provided for Television Cameras  
and Press.