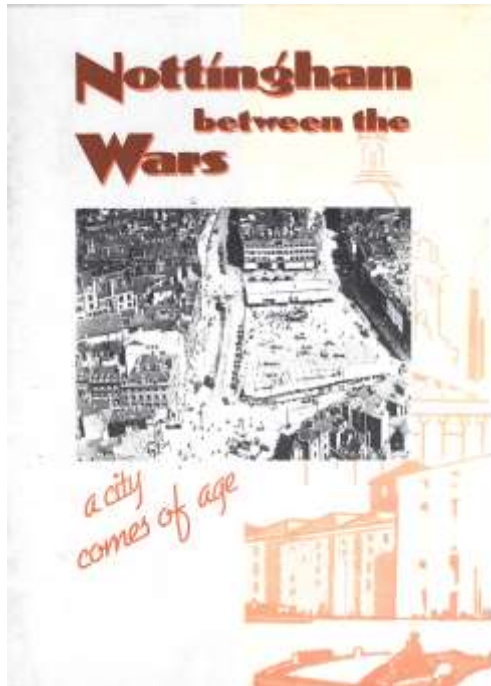


Chapter 26: Local and Regional Events

During this period, there were a number of royal visits to the local area. In August 1923, grandad noted that the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VIII, [visited Nottingham](#). He laid a foundation stone for the war memorial and gardens on the Victoria Embankment.¹ He also opened the Memorial Nurses' Home², visited the Boots works (see below) and [visited the Ellerslie House Home](#) for Paralysed Soldiers and Sailors.³



The Prince and the Nottingham Works. Turning now from the accounts to the business happenings of the past year, the outstanding event was the visit by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales to the works at Nottingham last August. The hearty welcome accorded by the employees showed how much the honour was appreciated; and the keen interest shown by his Royal Highness in all he saw had a stimulating and encouraging effect upon the whole of our staff.



Top left – 1992 book(let) produced by Nottinghamshire County Council on “Nottingham between the Wars”
Top – extract from 1924 Boots AGM minutes which recalls the Prince of Wales’ visit to the Boots Nottingham works in August 1923
Above – front page of a booklet commemorating the royal visit to the Boots works
Left – the Prince arrives at the Boots works

¹ There is a photograph of him being driven along the Victoria Embankment on this visit on p14 of the book “Nottingham between the Wars”.

² Which was [within the grounds of the General Hospital](#).

³ This [home](#) opened in 1917, this continued to operate into the 60s although its remit broadened beyond soldiers and sailors only.

Six years later, in August 1929, grandad noted that the Duchess of York [opened a new hospital](#) near Mansfield. This was [Harlow Wood Orthopaedic Hospital](#). The opening was conducted by both the Duke and Duchess of York who later went on to be King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.



Postcard of Harlow Wood Orthopaedic Hospital that was posted in 1955. The card was sent by Rose to Nellie Ashton in Cleethorpes. Rose was at the hospital for minor foot surgery. She had apparently marked the ward where she was with an "x" but I cannot see this.

In March 1931, grandad noted going to vote although I am not sure which election this relates to as the general election in 1931 was held in October.⁴ He did sometimes note local elections, for example, the Urban District Council Elections in 1919 and again in 1922. I came across some details of local elections in 1937 in a [cutting from the Nottingham Evening Post](#). These show that, across Kirkby, ten Labour candidates were elected, six independents and one Communist. One of the independents was G A Wyles who I believe was grandad's solicitor.

Image Source: [Find My Past](#)



Local election results in Nottingham Evening Post in April 1937. Asterisks denote sitting members

What was the Butty System?

Essentially, it was a form of subcontracting (or what might now be called outsourcing!). A worker who had saved some money could buy tools, timber, horses etc. and could set up his own business. The owners then contracted him to mine and supply coal and he in turn hired and paid the men. There was no oversight of the system just a focus on getting coal to the surface at the agreed price. There were many reports of extremely poor working practices as a result.

Source: [Healey Hero](#)

As well as national strikes⁴, there were several regional miners' strikes in [1919](#) starting in Nottinghamshire in January protesting against the ["butty" subcontracting system](#). On 21 January 1919, grandad noted that the men at Summit colliery came out on strike. However, the strike was relatively short-lived and he noted on the 26th that the night shift at Summit had resumed work. But, there was a further strike in March with grandad noting that the Summit miners came out on strike on the 17th and they were joined by miners across Nottinghamshire on the 19th. In July 1919, grandad noted that the *"colliers started working seven hours"* and this appears to relate to a compromise supported by Government, part of which included

⁴ See Chapter 25.

imposing a [maximum seven-hour working day](#). However, this did not satisfy anyone and grandad noted that the colliers were back on strike in October 1919. Grandad also noted that there was a railway strike from 28 September 1919 to 6 October 1919.



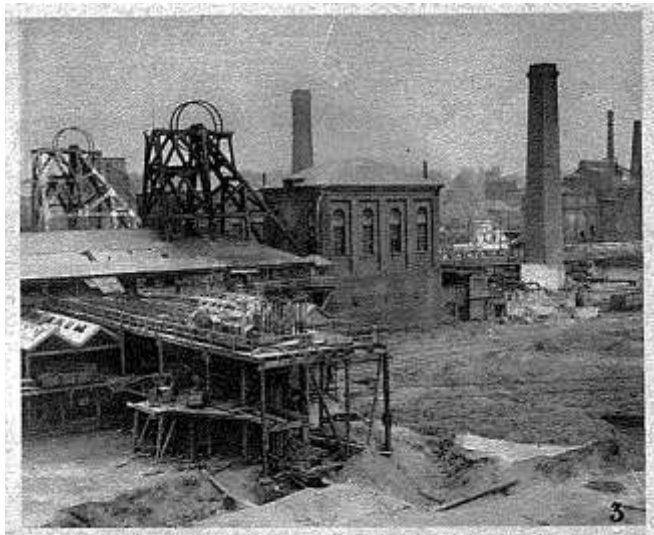
TO STRIKE OR NOT TO STRIKE?—Black Country miners marking their ballot papers at the pithend after the day's work. An overwhelming majority voted for a national stoppage.



COLLIERS' HOLIDAY.—The colliers of Yorkshire have always formed a respectable community of dog-lovers. Some of them exercising favourite whippets while awaiting news of "strike" negotiation results.



LONDON STRIKERS PARADE WITH A BANNER.



Images of the 1919 miners' strike from news cuttings

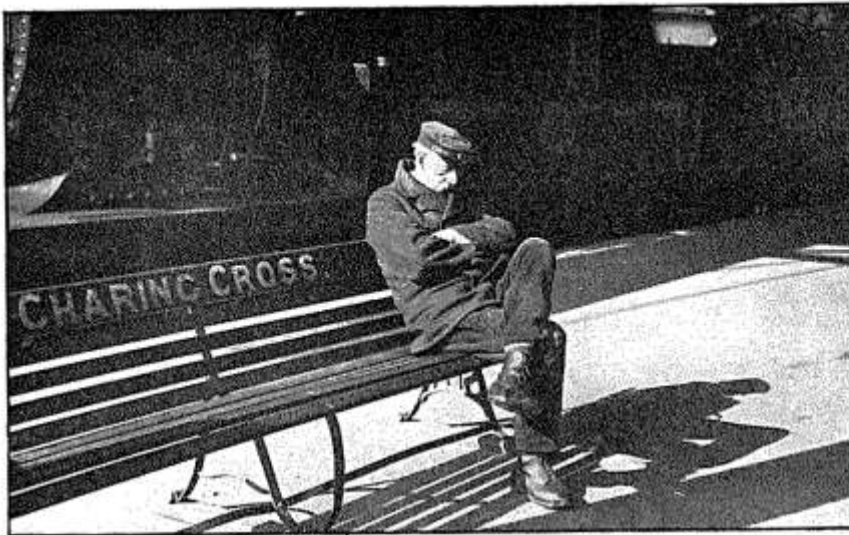
Top left – miners voting on strike action

Top right – miners with their whippets waiting for news of the results of strike negotiations

Above – strikers parade in London

Above right – a deserted colliery

Right – men of the Royal Navy in a cage ready to descend



**RAILWAY
STRIKE, 1919.**

Railway transport was paralysed for nine days in September and October by a strike. Eventually the Government intervened, and secured a settlement.

Above: A non-striking porter has a few moments' rest.

Below: The public volunteered for work during the strike. Even women helped to unload trucks.



Fully equipped troops guarded parts of the line where trouble was feared. This sentry was posted on the G.W.R. main line at Slough.



*Images of the 1919 rail strike from news cuttings
Above – full page article featuring images of the strike
Right – some people used different forms of transport instead of the train*

On 30 April 1930, grandad noted that *“four railway trucks were derailed”*. I have not been able to find details of this accident. However, there is a record and a photograph in the book *“Kirkby & District from Old Photographs”* (p56) of a derailed LNER locomotive that hit a train of empty wagons and was derailed. However, the date recorded there was May 1929. It seems most likely that these were different incidents but it is possible that they were the same and the month and year are wrongly recorded in one place.⁵ On the same day in April, grandad noted that the telephone box in Diamond Avenue had been fixed. On 1 May 1936, he noted that the Post Office had moved to Pond Street. In May 1932, he noted going to see an *“airplane display”* in Mansfield.

On 11 February 1931, grandad noted that *“Toc H fed children (450)”*. I am not sure of the significance of this particular entry. [Toc H](#) is an international charity and membership organisation that was established in 1915 when an army chaplain, Rev Clayton, opened a rest house for troops in Belgium. After the war, he opened in London the first of many Toc H hostels. Toc H became a membership organisation and was involved in various forms of social and community activities.⁶



Toc H badge

In February 1924, grandad noted feeling two earthquakes. The first he noted was on the 25th at 12.55pm and the second on the 28th at 10.50pm. However, it is possible he got the dates wrong as it appears that the [second earthquake](#) was a week later on 6 March. In May 1932, there were [severe floods](#) in Nottinghamshire and grandad noted that he *“saw floods”*. On 4 June 1933, he noted that it had been the *“hottest day this century”*.

⁵ I have checked the [railway accident archive](#) and can find no record of either incident.

⁶ According to the 1969 Kirkby Directory (p25), there was a branch in Kirkby.