

Anticipating the Ascension

**It slowly sinks at Eventide, a silent, fiery
ball,**

**Seeming loath to lose its pride and give way
to nightfall.**

**Silently, yet how majestically it slides
behind earth's shadow;**

**Lingering, not wanting to give up, yet
anxious for the morrow**

**When, with fiery flares, and streaks of
glorious golden light,**

**Across the open sky it tears, speeding night
on its outgoing flight,**

**But now... it lingers still, upon the bridge of
the far-off horizon,**

**Like Friday-Good awaiting *the Son's*
rising.....**

**And then, ...to tell in glorious praise, and
ardent, shining, glorious rays,**

That its Creator, Christ, the Lord, is risen!

Howard Hawes, 1953

The poem above was written, (save for the last few lines), in Newport, Isle of Wight, after I arrived there, from Chailey, to serve my apprenticeship, at J. Arthur Dixon's, Greetings Card Manufacturer. I composed it as I sat learning how to use a linotype machine.

I was at Dixon's as a result of a letter written to Chailey by Dr. Buxton, who had been a doctor, (possibly a surgeon), at Chailey, and who had retired to the Isle of Wight.

He was now a shareholder, a director, or both, in the Company. He had written to the School to ask if anyone, who was about to leave, would like to serve a printing apprenticeship within the firm. --On my mother's advice I responded in the affirmative.

I never knew Dr. Buxton, for, apart from a couple of days, I was never a patient in Chailey's own hospital, which would have been his area of work. Neither did I ever see him to speak to at Dixon's, save for a couple of minutes, about twice a year, when he came up to speak to me in the compositors' section of the factory.

On one such occasion he came alongside me with a cutting from one of the broadsheet newspapers, (in all likelihood 'The Times'), on which was a picture depicting some of the Chailey boys, standing outside St. Martin's chapel. --This was almost seventy years ago now, so I trust that I can be forgiven for not remembering whether the boys were in choir cassocks and surplices, or whether they were dressed in costumes after acting in a Nativity play, or both; I think it may have been the latter.

As mentioned above, a total of five minutes, --two to three minutes, twice a year, --amounted to the sum total of my communication with Dr. Buxton. In later years, my mother informed me that she thought Dr. Buxton would look after me, which is why she advised me to go to work on the Island!

The first few years were difficult as I was living in lodgings, and earning very little money: £2 4/-3d a week, with a 12/-6d aptitude grant, equal to circa £2.22p + 62½p = (£2.84½p a week), with which to pay for everything: 'digs' (lodgings), bus fares to and from work, meals at work, (we worked from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.), clothes, shoe leather, (the concrete floors at work took a heavy toll on the latter), toilet requisites, --and also trying, impossibly, to save to get home for holidays.

Needless to say I could not afford to go home that first Christmas. --J. Arthur Dixon found out about this and very kindly gave me the money to pay my fare home, this was accompanied with the rejoinder, "Don't tell anybody, or they'll all want it!" Bless him!

In those days, I was always hungry at night. I could not afford supper. So when my new friends went to Jolliffe's Pie Shop, in Newport, after youth club, I could not join them. That changed after a couple of years, --but that's another story.