



World War One and the Lickey Hills

3. The Local area – Teacher's Notes

Walk to viewpoint 1 on Bilberry Hill to look at the view over Birmingham (see map on page three). This is a short walk from the Visitor Centre (**V** on the map) located on the path overlooking the city. For further directions please ask at the information desk in the Visitor centre.

Look at the view of the city and identify where the Austin Motor Company once stood. It was located on the Lickey side of Bournville college, in the near distance. It is marked on the map printed on page three.

1. What do you think the Austin Motor Company made before 1917?

Vehicles: cars, lorries and commercial vehicles, including ambulances

2. What do you think the Company started to do to help the war continue in 1917 and 1918?

They continued with the war work they had been doing previously e.g. making shells (ammunition for field guns), aircraft, heavy guns and trucks plus large quantities of spare parts for lorries, aeroplanes etc. In 1917 they were also asked to undertake repairs on 4.5 inch Howitzer field guns and carriages.

3. Why was the Company required to do this?

There were many factories doing this in Britain but nowhere near enough to keep up with the demands of the battlefield.

4. Who asked for this to be done?

They were directed to undertake this work by the Ministry of Munitions (a Government Department), this meant they had no choice. The government told many companies what they **MUST** do, often taking over and running the factory. Herbert Austin was one of many industrialists who actively sought government contracts to help the war effort. He was rewarded for his service with a Knighthood.

5. Who were the workers?

Before the war most factory work was done by men, very few women were involved. During the war many women began working in the factories as so many of the men had volunteered for, or been conscripted into, the armed forces.

6. How did they make sure that what they made or repaired was safe and ready to be used on the battlefield?

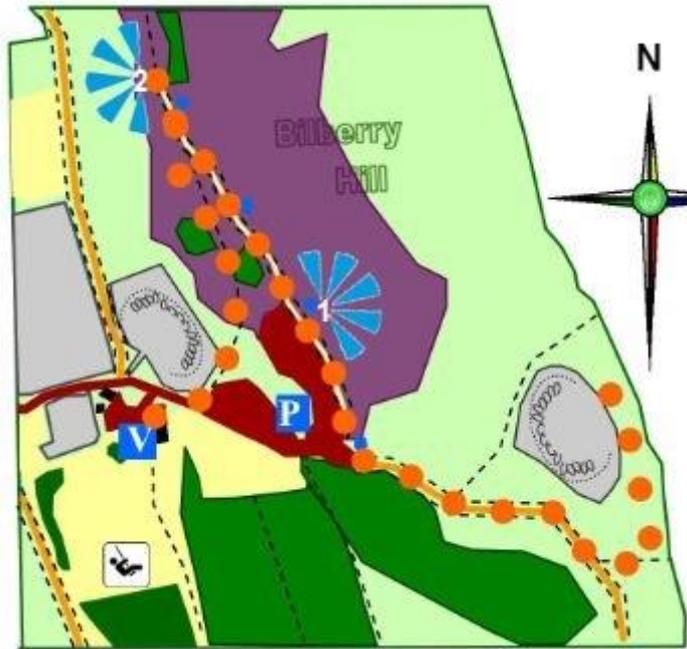
By testing the guns and carriages. They fired the guns using a slightly greater explosive charge than normal.

7. Describe the type of place you think would be needed to test (proof) field guns and carriages.

- a place that could be made secure
- away from the general population
- near to the repair/production
- a place where stray shells could be contained

8. Who would have the skills to test the guns and carriages?

Skilled people from the gun making industry plus soldiers/ex-soldiers who knew how to fire and examine the field guns and carriages. The soldiers were from the technical branch of the Royal Artillery – the Royal Garrison Artillery.



V Visitor Centre **P** Car Park

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