

VISIT TO THE GLASS WORKS OF JAMES POWELL & SONS
(WHITEFRIARS), LTD., TUDOR STREET, LONDON, E.C.

PRIOR to its meeting on Wednesday, May 17th, 1922, the Society had the privilege of paying a visit to the famous old works at Whitefriars owned by Messrs. James Powell & Sons.

The glasshouse is the oldest in London, and is built on the site of the old Carmelite monastery founded in the reign of Edward the First.

Although little is known for certain as to exact dates, some of the older part of the structure, in the caves below the furnaces, for example, is evidently of very great antiquity. The earliest printed record of Whitefriars Glassworks is an account that appeared in *The Tailor* for August, 1710, where it is stated that—

“ At the Flint Glass-house in White-Fryars near the Temple, are made and sold by Wholesale or Retale, all sorts of Decanthers, Drinking Glasses, Crewits, &c., or Glasses made to any Pattern, of the best Flint; as also all Sorts of common Drinking Glasses, and other Things made in ordinary Flint Glass, at reasonable Rates.”

The works came into the possession of Mr. James Powell in 1834, and since that time have remained in the family until the formation of the present company in 1919.

The manufactures at present carried on are stained glass windows and mosaics, constructed on the lines followed by mediæval artists, high quality flint glass domestic and table ware, lead and soda glass tube for chemical and scientific purposes, and lens fronted thermometer tube.

The party from the Society was a large one, and it was found necessary to divide it into two portions. Each party was conducted through the departments of the works and the various methods of manufacture were explained and illustrated. The mosaic artists were shown at work, forming mosaic tablets, inscriptions, and designs, by arranging together small blocks of various coloured glasses that are made in the furnaces on the premises. They were taken into the studios, where artists were working on cartoons and designs to be executed in glass, and from there into the glass-

painters and cutters' departments, where the operations of cutting the various shapes of coloured glasses to fit the designs that had been prepared in the studio were witnessed. Then followed a visit to the painters, who were seen painting the delicate tracery and details of the figures in pigment composed of finely ground coloured glass, which is afterwards burnt on in the kilns. The demonstrations of this branch of work were concluded by a visit to the glazing shops, where the previously prepared fragments of coloured and painted glasses were fitted together in the lead framing which forms the complete window.

Some fine examples of memorial windows just completed for Sandhurst College were on view.

The visitors were next taken into the showrooms, where patterns of cut and blown Whitefriars flint glass, in the form of table decoration, etc., were seen. After this the party was taken into the glass-house and there shown the operation of tube-making, wine glass manufacture and the fabrication of heavy hand-made glassware. Finally a visit to the caves below the furnaces was made, and here the teasers were seen at work tending the furnaces. While below the furnaces, an opportunity was given for an examination of some of the ancient masonry already referred to.

This concluded the visit, and the members expressed themselves very pleased with what they had seen.