

Harrow. 4. ave.

23. July 1915.

Prof. Reckler

My dear Paul,

It will interest you to know that on Friday, 9. July 1915, I went with the son of one of my good old parishioners of Vienna to Chatham, near Rochester in England.

We had, thank God, a glorious day and met our good guide Dr. C. W. Andrews, F. R. S. at the Victoria, Chatham Dover station in London and went by the 9.15. a.m. train to Chatham and drove with him from Chatham station to Upnor, near Chatham, to the grounds of the Royal School of Military Engineering at Upnor. We had to drive for we had not much time, because the mother of my dear young friend wished us to be home for lunch.

We saw the skull of the "Elephas antiquus", as Dr. Andrews called it, still at the spot, where it had been lying for some three thousand years, about two feet below the surface of the earth, and my good young friend, called Paul, and I were kindly allowed by Dr. Andrews to help in digging out this old English Mammoth. This was grand, think only, we were

privileged to do, what may not happen again for hundreds of years.

Unfortunately we could not stop long, for my young friend had to meet a school friend at lunch, therefore we drove quickly back from Upnor to Chatham station and fortunately just caught the 12, noon train from Chatham to Victoria station, London, and reached 3 Palace Gate, in time for lunch.

Dr. C. W. Andrews was very good to us. We had been introduced to him the day before at the South Kensington Museum, by Mr. Fagan, a friend of mine from Vienna. Paul and I had called on July 8. on Mr. Fagan to ask for permission to see the excavations of the Mammoth at Chatham.

Dr. Andrews is one of the officers of the Geological Department of the British Museum and is now working in the Geological Department of the South Kensington Museum in London.

He is the scientist, who discovered in Egypt, a series of early elephant skeletons,

linking up the modern elephants with the small African elephants; these old skeletons had been found in the Fayoum in Egypt.

In the geological age the *Elephas antiquus* occurs earlier than the usual Mammoth, and although perhaps at one time contemporary, it seems to have died out sooner, and is thought by some to have been a direct ancestor of the usual Mammoth.

Our English Ipswich Mammoth Elephant is to be restored and mounted in the Natural History Museum in South Kensington, and is expected to be about 14 feet high.

We saw the bones at Ipswich covered with Plaster of Paris, and dried carefully to prevent shrinkage and distortion and easy removal without breaking. The bones will have to be finally hardened with a solution of glue and shellac and alcohol.

This process is being carried out by one of the preparators of the Museum, who will have to spend many months of work before the restoration of this English Mammoth is complete.

This Chatham Mammoth is, I believe, the

first complete *Elephas antiquus* found in England. Portions have often been discovered before but complete specimens are extremely rare.

This Chatham Mammoth must have been entombed in the gravel before the ligatures, which held the bones together, had perished. His remains are in the old river-terrace gravel of the Medway River at Ypsor, and it is quite possible that flint implements of contemporary man may also be discovered in or near the excavations.

This almost entire skeleton of this monster elephant was discovered by some soldiers learning to dig trenches in the grounds of the Royal School of Military Engineering at Ypsor, near Chatham, and I and I have had the rare privilege of helping in digging up a monster Mammoth on Friday, 9. July 1915. It was grand! We two owe this privilege to this terrible war of 1914, 1915.

We reached home safely again and no bombs were thrown on Chatham, whilst we were there, thank God for His mercy!

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God bless you, my dear Paul, and
your parents and brothers and make
you some day a great blessing to many.

Keep this, my dear young friend,
to remind you of a day spent with

Your old friend and
pilgrim from the earthly to
the heavenly Jerusalem,

William H. Hechler.

Harrow, 26 Bedford Road,

1915. July 23. 4-5. a.m.