

On Her Majesty's Service

WASC1246

WAI 321

HN 145

The Turnham truly
Photo (5 Brothers
& Father + Barrel)

and correspondence
with Mary Hirst

The Turnham brothers, a family of barrel makers (coopers),
employed for many years at the RGGPF, shown here with
some of the tools of their trade.



WAI-0321-01

WASC 1246-01

~~WASC~~

Neg. CF1212

HN145

The Tunham Family
Cooper at the RGP

Neg. No. HN145

w ai-0321-01-wasc-1246-01

GRIS TURNHAM Mother

PAULINE MILLS



01689 842237

73 Boundary Way

Addington Village

Croydon

CR0 5AU

Grt Cat Grdfr

Gr
Geo. Edward Grdfr

Geo Walter Grdfr

The Turnhams at the Mills

The Turnham family members comprised one of the Mills 'dynasties'.

Refer
WASHS

We can trace the connection from the hiring by the Ordnance in 1787 of James Turnham Senior as a labourer, later Warder at the Refinery House, through no less than twelve members of succeeding generations to Herbert who entered the Gunpowder Factory as a Writer in 1882.

Photograph

Research by Waltham Abbey Historical Society indicates that the photograph was probably taken around the time of the 1881 Census and that the older of the men in the back row was Edward and the rest his sons - the Turnham brothers, Edward, John, James, Joseph and Walter. Edward Senior was a retired master cooper-barrel maker and repairer. Joseph and Walter were the youngest and from appearance were the two wearing the caps, possibly to indicate a more junior position. Both were coopers. This leaves three in the front - John, James and Edward. John was a factory foreman and was possibly the figure in the middle with James on the right and on the left Edward, holding the barrel top, both coopers.

Les Tucker

8) Long walk inside factory. It is believed that this was opened to the public to a limited extent at one time, as people now living locally can remember being taken in there as children.

927/8

9) This view is believed to be of the land on which Waltham Abbey Town Hall now stands. Apparently it is the old Waltham Abbey Volunteer Fire Brigade Station and building beside it. It has the words Reading room on the windows.

927/9

10) The Factory Fire Brigade about 1900.

927/10

11) Five members of the "Turnham" family, who were all employed at some time or other at the R.G.P.F. Their names occur frequently in a book of "Historical Notices" of the Royal Gunpowder works".

John Turnham (front row left) was a Principal Foreman between 1887 and later.

He was my wife's grandfather. The earliest mention of the family name of Turnham in the book mentioned above is in the year 1787. It has always been understood that a man of that name was one of the earliest to receive a licence from Queen Elizabeth I for the manufacture of gunpowder at Waltham Abbey. This cannot be confirmed as the earliest pages of the "Historical notices" book are unfortunately missing in the copy in my possession.

927/11.

Dear Mr Malan

Having seen a newspaper cutting referring to the formation of a Museum at the E.R.P.E., I thought perhaps the enclosed Photographs would be welcome as worthy of inclusion as exhibits. Mr Taylor has kindly agreed to give them to you, together with a few notes of explanation (above). The Photographs were all taken between 1890 & 1905 by Mr F.A. Bell who is described as a writer who commenced working at the factory (OVER)

~~Could~~ in 1872. This is mentioned on Page 134
of the book "Historical Notices of the R.G.P.F."
You may have a copy of this book already
in your possession, but if not I shall be happy
to let you have the book as a loan, to help you in
your investigations.

On Page 135 the name of Herbert H. Turnham is
shown as commencing work at the Factory in 1882. This
gentleman was son of the John Turnham shown in Photograph
No 11. He was of course my wife's uncle. He died at
Plumstead during the last war, having been transferred to Woolwich
some years earlier.

Hope the pictures & notes will be of
assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A. J. Moore

Please see Page 47 for note in supply of
2 Guns, for the Refinery Bridge

These have only just been removed
during the road widening

AJM

~~WASC NOS 928-939 to photographs which are nos 1-11.~~ (all at 927/1 etc.)

Mrs. Mary Hirst,
Kerridge Side Farm,
Rainow,
Macclesfield,
Cheshire
SK10 5UW

ROYAL GUNPOWDER MILLS Waltham Abbey

Powdermill Lane,
Waltham Abbey,
Essex, EN9 1BN, England

Visitor Entrance in Beaulieu Drive

01992 707330

5th October 2003

Dear Mary,

Thank you for your e mail.

I have now traced a second Turnham photograph and the two are enclosed. It is particularly fortunate as they provide a contrast between the formality of the first (No.1 on reverse) and the work situation (including bowler hats!) of the second (No.2). In this one I am not sure whether the sixth figure, the one in the uniform at the back, is another Turnham or an interloper who having got in on the photograph has chosen to direct his thoughts to faraway places.

One or two snippets of further information:

It appears that the first photograph was one of a series of Waltham Abbey photographs taken around 1900, in the hands of a Mr.Taylor who passed them to a Mr.H.J.Moore for forwarding to the Mills collection. Mr.Taylor's wife's grandfather was John Turnham, photo No.1 front row left. Herbert H.Turnham, who commenced work at the factory in 1882, was a son of John Turnham and was the uncle of Mr.Moore's wife.

I'm not sure whether any of this ties in with information you have but we would be very grateful for any information which you can provide on the Turnhams at the Mills - photograph identification, family ties etc.

Thank for your kind offer of a donation, which will be much appreciated. There will be no charge for the copies.

We are glad to have been able to add to your family history.

Best Wishes

Les Tucker
Les Tucker



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www.royalgunpowdermills.com

Leslie Tucker

From: "Mary Hirst" <mary@hirstc.freemove.co.uk>
To: <lestucker@btinternet.com>
Sent: 12 October 2003 10:15
Subject: turnham photos
Dear Leslie,

Many thanks for the photographs - the quality is amazing. A donation will follow. We are guessing at home here that they may be John Turnham with his brothers who worked at RGPF. It is possible that the 'interloper' is the Herbert Turnham you mention and who was my grandfather. We are fascinated to see that the face of John Turnham, my great grandfather, has distinct resemblance to my father except for the beard!

Do you have any contact addresses for the Moore or Taylor families that provided the photographs? It would seem that the two wives mentioned in your letter would be my father's cousins, daughters of one or both of his aunts, and I would be very interested to make some contact with the families!

I will be contacting you by post with what I know about the Turnhams. However, at the moment my genealogy program and everything on my computer is unreliable or missing after a major hardware problem so I cannot actually access the data to see or print it. Only my internet connection works! I hope it will not be too long before things are back to normal.

Best wishes and success at RG Mills, Mary Hirst (nee Turnham)

Mrs.M.Hirst

73 P

Kerridge Side Farm
Rainow
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK10 5UW

01992 707330

30th October 2003

Dear Mary,

Further to my e mail, I have been speaking to the Waltham Abbey Historical Society in the hope that someone will be able to provide information on the Moores and Taylors. So far nothing specific has emerged, but they have taken a copy of the note forwarding the photographs and are investigating further.

They are very strong on the social history side and for Waltham Abbey much of this of course covers employees of the Mills. They have recently completed a summary of their findings on the history of some of the Mills 'dynasties', including the Turnhams, and I enclose a copy of the Turnham section. It could be that most of this is known to you but perhaps part is new.

One thing which has cropped up is a note which gives the original enquirer on the photograph as a Pauline Mills. It is possible that this has got misplaced, but just in case does this ring any bells with you ?

I hope your computer has returned to health and anything you can add would be most welcome to the Society and ourselves.

Best Wishes

73 Boundary Way
Addington Village
Croydon
CR0 5AU

Leslie Tucker

From: "HirstM" <HirstM@stockportgrammar.co.uk>
To: <lestucker@btinternet.com>
Sent: 12 November 2003 14:52
Subject: Turnhams again
Dear Les

I was so excited to receive the packet of things that you sent me. It was so unexpected and I do thank you and the Waltham Abbey Historical Society very sincerely.

I did not know a lot of what is on the WAHS sheets and it extends my knowledge considerably. I do have some facts to add but I did not know any details except for dates on the whole. I also have noticed a bit of inaccuracy which needs correcting. I will write to them. (For example, the mother of John Turnham, the foreman, was not Charlotte - Edward, John's father, was married twice so that John, Edward and Mary are children with his first wife, Mary Harknett, and the rest are his children with Charlotte Mansfield.)

I look forward to the Christmas card and to anything else you discover in the course of your research.

Unfortunately my computer problems have got worse rather than better. After complete hardware failure I have bought a new computer. However, this will not accept my genealogy program which is old and I cannot retrieve my data! I hope to get it sorted soon though I fear a lot of typing will be needed! Meanwhile I am using my work computer as you can see from the address. It sent my half completed message because I was called away before I had time to finish so you have probably received 2 e-mails - sorry.

I will send the things I have about the family tree to you to forward to the WAHS if that is OK with you or directly if you give me their address. It may be a week or two before I can send a sensible accurate version however.

Once again, many thanks,
Mary Hirst

Kerridgeside Farm, Rainow, Macclesfield, Cheshire. SK10 5UW
01625 572965

mary@hirstc.freemove.co.uk

16 December 2003

Dear Les

At last I seem to have my computer system set up and have found time to study the many things you sent me. I am very grateful for all the care you have taken and conscious of the time involved. My conclusions, additions and speculations are enclosed under the title 'The Turnham Family' together with some family trees and source material. I hope you or the WAHS will be able to make some sense of it and, maybe find it useful. I would be grateful to know the whereabouts of the diaries mentioned.

— passed
to
WAHS

Thank you also for the cards — I will think about sending some to the few living Turnham relatives that I have. I hope the cheque enclosed will cover some of the expenses you or WAHS have incurred since my last one. If I discover anything else I will be in touch.

Meanwhile I hope you have a splendid Christmas and that 2004 is a happy year for you.

Yours sincerely,



(Mary Hirst)

**8 The Heights
Loughton
Essex
IG10 1RN**

14th December 2004

Dear Mary,

I hope you have had a good year and have added to your knowledge of the Turnham family.

I was recently speaking to a Mrs. Maisie Dupuy of Cheshunt about her family connection with the Mills and she sent me a letter summarising it. Lo and behold what should leap up at me on the first page but the name Turnham, which she hadn't previously mentioned.

I have spoken to her. She couldn't tell me much more but she was aware that Uncle Bern had lived on the Isle of Wight and that he had a family diary. She thinks that the diary ended up with his son cousin Roy in Birmingham.

She is in the U3A and has done family and area research. She was most interested in your work and would be glad to hear from you and said it is possible she can put you in touch with people who could tell you more about the Turnham side.

I enclose a copy of her letter. I have also given a copy to Peter who was most interested.

Have a Happy Christmas and Very Good New Year.

P.S. Did you hear from Pauline Mills of Croydon

(Les Tucker)

Kerridgeside Farm, Rainow, Macclesfield, Cheshire. SK10 5UW
01625 572965 mary@hirstc.freereserve.co.uk

21 December 2004

Dear Les

Thanks for your interesting letter. I was about to write to you – I know that sounds as if I am just prompted by your letter! Yes, I have added to my knowledge of the Turnhams quite a lot in the past twelve months, although the extra data involves the Turnhams after they left the Waltham Abbey/Cheshunt area. I have been in touch with Pauline Mills and we ~~to~~ have pooled our lines of the family tree. We are both directly related to Edward Turnham senior, Pauline through his son Edward and myself through son John. We have met a couple of times now and have much in common.

Research on the diaries is frustrating to say the least. I discovered that Rosina, the widow of Bernard Turnham (who was the son of the writer Walter Turnham), died in 1993 and after obtaining her death certificate I found that Roy Walter Turnham, Bernard's son, was the informant and I wrote to the address in Steyning, Sussex that he gave. The current occupants moved in during 1994 but unfortunately they did not recognise the name Turnham so the lead went dead.

Since then, I have had interesting correspondence with an Arthur Turnham and his son John who contacted me via a family history web-site, Genesreunited. They too had been in contact with Peter Huggins after a visit to Waltham Abbey and we have pooled our knowledge of the Turnhams. Arthur is a descendant of James Turnham, fishmonger of Highbridge Street and brother of Edward Turnham senior. Arthur (who is very active at 92) had made enquiries 3 or 4 years ago about the diaries and had correspondence as recently as Christmas 2002 with Roy Walter Turnham, who at that time did have possession of the diaries, and told Arthur that he would write again. However, contact has been lost, he is not in the phone book now Arthur tells me. I may need to write to Arthur to find out what the last known address was. Roy had sent Arthur a picture of the diaries, a copy of which I enclose. So close but yet nowhere near them!

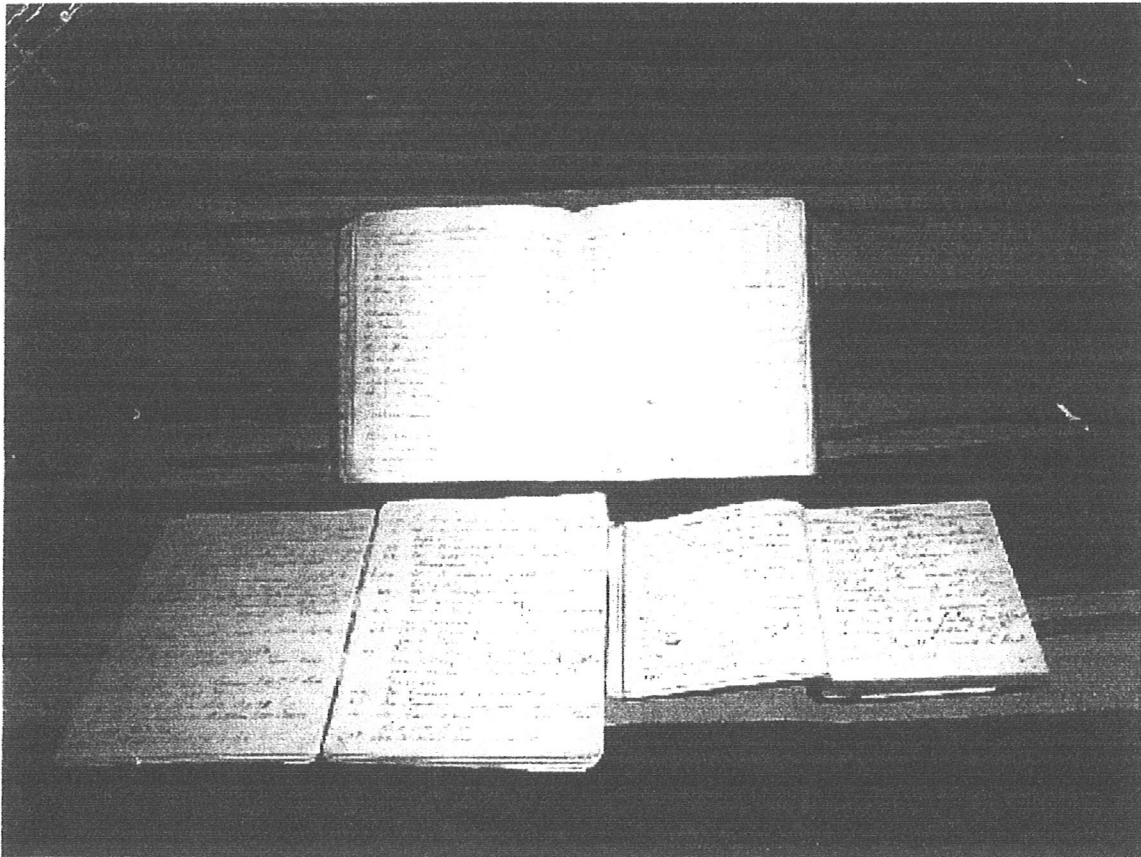
Thank you for telling me about Maisie Dupuy. I will contact her as you suggest and hopefully both find out more of my family tree and maybe I can pass on some of the information I have received from you and other people. I see in the photocopies from Maisie that her father was James Slade. Bernard's wife's maiden name was Rosina Slade and she seems to have been the aunt of Maisie. Roy Love is also mentioned in the photocopies and I am sure you will remember that he was the person who lent the diaries to Essex Record office to be filmed. It looks as if he is/was married to another sister of James Slade (and hence is Bernard's brother in law as we know). I'll ask if she knows Roy's address or that of any children he might have had. Maybe there is scope here to find the diaries – third time lucky perhaps!

I hope you have a good Christmas and that 2005 is kind to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(Mary Hirst)

From Mr A Tusham
(letter 3/11/04)



THE 3 NOTEBOOKS

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01625 572965 mary@hirstc.freemove.co.uk

18 January 2005

Dear Les

Success at last! I contacted Maisie Dupuy whose notes you had forwarded to me and she put me in touch with her cousin Elva who knew her cousin Roy Turnham's current address. I phoned him and spoke to his wife Pat to discover that they have the Turnham diaries. They are happy to be contacted by you or the Waltham Abbey Historical Society - whichever is appropriate - with a view to doing something with the diaries. Roy and his family are not particularly interested in family history and he does not know what will happen to the diaries after his death, he is in his 70s at present so hopefully that will not be soon. I am sending them a copy of my latest version of the Turnham family tree.

So I leave it to you to proceed further with the diaries if you still want to. Their address is: 15 Dawes Close, Armitage, Rugeley, Staffs WS15 4BE and their phone no is 01543 493963.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mary'.

Mary Hirst

KERRIDGESIDE FARM, RAINOW, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE. SK10 5UW
01625 572965 mary@hirstc.freemove.co.uk

30 March 2005

Royal Gunpowder Mills
Powdermill Lane
Waltham Abbey
Essex
EN9 1BN

Dear Les

Thank you again for all the help you have given me in researching my family history. I hope I may have been of some help to you too.

I am about to produce a small web site about my family - it is my first attempt at a web site and not very sophisticated! I intend to acknowledge the assistance of R&PM on the site but I would like to give you the opportunity to remain anonymous if you wish to. Unless I hear from you to the contrary, I will assume that you do not object to my using facts or photos you have given me. There will be nothing about any living persons. It is difficult to say who introduced me to much of the data since much has been verified from several sources but I will credit any photos individually. Of course, any errors on the site are my fault and responsibility not yours.

The site address will be <http://mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/turnham> but I am not sure when it will be active.

Regards,



Mary Hirst

Handwritten note:
I was delighted to hear that you have suff.
info to contribute a web site & it has
certainly been of help to us also. I will be
ack. it for it appearing in due time.
Reg. the T. series Peter spoke to the cutlet. He
had the idea of gg up the & copy them w/
a portable copier but considered it was too much.
So there they stay. At least we found them.
If you have further ideas pl. let me know.

On the website

→

It feel free to cite us as often as you like
(with ^{if app} or website add. - www.royalgp.m.com,)
the more the merrier! , see below

On the website, what would you think about
or inserting a link to it on our site and v.v.
Can you let me know sometime pl.

Dw.

Mrs. Mary Hirst
Kerridge Farm
Rainow
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK10 5UW

8 The Heights
Loughton
Essex
IG10 1RN

19th. April 2005

Dear Mary,

I was delighted to hear that you have managed to accumulate sufficient information to be able to contemplate a website and it certainly has been of help to us also. Please feel free to cite us as often as you like. The more the merrier ! (including also if appropriate our website address - www.royalgunpowdermills.com). - see below.

Regarding the Turnham diaries, Peter spoke to the contact. He had the idea of going up with a portable copier but there would have been too much. It's slightly frustrating having been able to track them down then not really being able to do anything with them. At the same time what happens to them eventually is entirely out of our hands. If you can think of anything please let me know.

On the website, what would you think about our inserting it as a link on our website when it is available and vice versa. Could you let me know sometime please.

Best Wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Les', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that extends to the right.