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Papers relating to
Mr. G. Ephgrave
and employment
at RGPF

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E1 E1A

~~Mr Pryor~~ *gib.*

Would you please reply to this after tracing the actions in Mr Ephgrave's earlier enquiry, ENQ 2877. The PRO Supply S papers should give details of names of employees.

lnh of 9/4

E2 Reply to Mr. Ephgrave, dated 24.4.79. (5)

E3 Letter to Mr. Ephgrave, dated 16.7.79. (5)

E4

E5 E5A

E6

YOUR REF. ENR 2877.

261, HAROLD RD,
HASTINGS,
SUSSEX.
21/8/76.

Dear M^{rs} McLaren.

It was with pleasure I received your letter.

I feel, after all the trouble you have taken to satisfy my interest in my Grandfathers and Fathers connection with the factory, that I should at least reply and thank you.

I now feel I have completed something I have always wanted to do and should have done years ago.

Also I have already received a letter from George Smith and have replied.

If I do get a letter from M^{rs} Alice Regus (no relation to Arthur, I suppose?) I will pass it on to my sister Connie, who, I'm sure, would be very pleased and would of course reply. Both

(2)

she and her husband retire from the Post office this year. She has been connected with the investigation Dept and he is in the testing Dept.

It would also be nice to have a letter from Dr. K. N. Bascombe to verify the writing and publishing of the History of the Abbey by my Grandfather. This was drummed into us as kids and the subject is always brought up if we are together and talking about Waltham Abbey.

By coincidence I switched on the Tele last night and to my surprise the programme was to do with the Explosives and Research of the Abbey. How strange.

Thanking you once again for your kind help.

Yours Sincerely,
Leonard. N. Ephgrave.

EN9 1BP

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Lea Valley 713030

L Ephgrave Esq
261 Harold Road
Hastings
Sussex

ENQ 2877

12 August 1976

Dear Mr Ephgrave

Thank you for your most interesting and detailed letter of 1 August.

Yes, there are people who remember both you and your family in Waltham Abbey. We have been speaking to George Smith, now a youthful 80, and although he had lost touch with you he still remembers that you joined the Army at an early age. George's other Christian names are Reece Sydney which is a further link with your great grandmother. I shall be letting George have a copy of your letter as he would like to write to you.

Also one of my own staff, Mrs Alice Negus, knows your Family from the early days. She lives in Victoria Villas (the name has now changed to Victoria Road) and well remembers your sister, Connie, and went to school with her I believe. She also remembers the other members of your family. I have given her your address and she will be writing to you.

I have shown your letter to Dr K N Bascombe, the Secretary of the Waltham Abbey Historical Society, so it is possible that you may receive further letters as a result of his actions.

If I have any other news I shall write again.

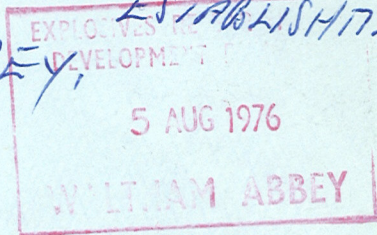
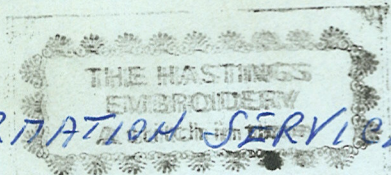
Yours sincerely

M McLAREN
Head of Library Services

HEAD OF INFORMATION SERVICES.

EXPLOSIVES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT,

WALTHAM ABBEY,
ESSEX.



261, HAROLD RD,
HASTINGS,
SUSSEX
1/8/76.

Dear Sir,

I recently had given to me some back copies of "KENT LIFE" and although I now live in Sussex, I was born in Bromley Kent, joined the Royal West Kent Regiment in 1931 and after being discharged in 1947 spent many years in Maidstone before moving here, and so you can guess my thoughts are mainly directed towards Kent!

On reading through the March issue of 1972, on Page 67, under the heading of "CLUBS and SOCIETIES" para 8, was the following:-

THE FAVERSHAM SOCIETY, WALTHAM ABBEY, GUNPOWDER FACTORY, and so on. You will no doubt wonder what this is leading up to. Let me tell you:-

(2) -

For a start it brings back many ~~many~~ happy memories spent with my Grand parents at 22, Victoria Villas, Waltham Abbey, and although I haven't been there since the early 1920's I still remember many places although not by name.

My Grandfather was a foreman at the GUNBOWSER FACTORY and my father also worked there on leaving school. From there he joined the Metropolitan Police about 1908 and was posted to Bromley where he remained until he retired.

My brother and myself used to take it in turns to visit and when I was there my Grandmother's baker, used to take me ~~in~~ with him in his tip cart right through to Epping Forest,

and my day was made if he let me take the dogs.

Of course I was taken to the factory and listened to many strange tales. I swam and fished in the river Lea although I wasn't supposed to.

My Grandfather wrote a history of the Abbey and had it published. I don't know if you have ever come across it. I was of course taken there, and taken up to the top -

I also had an Auntie who kept a sweet shop just near the Abbey. Her name was Smith (Aunt Nellie) and she had a son named George. There was a small bridge opposite the shop. I think a tributary of the Lea ran

(4)

under the road.

I had a Great Grandma in Sydney Road, her name was Reece and she lived to be 96 or more. She was quite a character.

I don't remember many places by name, but one or two have stuck. Sun Street, Greenfield Street and I think it was Smeddston Street, but most of all I remember 22, Victoria Villas where I spent so many happy weeks with my Grandparents.

We used to go at Christmas, and on getting out at the station, we got on the HORSE BUS and it always seemed ages before we arrived at the Abbey and a big welcome.

Besides myself and my brother we

(5)

had 2 younger sisters and when my mother died in 1921, my oldest sister went to live with Grandma and did 4 or 5 years schooling there, so it could be that some one still rem^{em}bers her. Her name is CONNIE (EPHGRAVE) and she is now 60 years.

Before I close I must mention that on Boring day we were always taken to Waltham Cross to see the match between the Sweeps and the Bakers. How we enjoyed that.

I hope I haven't bored you, but I thought perhaps there would still be some one about who remembers ~~the~~^{our} family. "Perhaps you could even have this published in your local paper? I would love to hear from some one.

Yours Sincerely.
Leonard Ephgrave.

156

512/445

Mr L Ephgrave
261 Harold Road
Hastings
Sussex

ENQ 3152/LS/65

14 Nov 1979

Dear Mr Ephgrave

Thank you for your letter dated 16 October with photograph of your grandfather, which I am now returning, having made a copy for our records. I regret the delay in replying.

As you state, 45-50 years service might today prove something of a record, although I can assure you that in the days of the Royal Gunpowder Factory such a period of employ was not so extraordinary.

I trust you have been able to sort out your genealogical investigations.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely

G H S PRYOR
Librarian

ENC

Yours Rex.
ENQ 3152-LS/65

261, Harold Rd,
Hastings, E5
Sussex.
16/10/79

Dear Sir.

I have been looking through the information in your letter as above.

In paragraph (4) I quote:—
This information leads us to hazard the statement that your grandfather joined the factory between 1875 and 1880.

In Para. (3) the information is that grandfather retired about 1920/23.

Taking the dates given, it means that grandfather worked for the Establishment between 45 and 50 years. In these days that would be a record, I would think. It

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also means that the start of his career was over a century ago.

I don't know whether you produce a magazine for your establishment? If you do, I wondered whether it would be of interest ^{to you}, and the readers, to reproduce a photo of my grandfather, which I enclose: plus a write-up.

This I believe was taken about 1920/23 on his retirement and before he went to Canada to visit a brother who had emigrated there some years before.

His visit was for 6 months and was, of course, a great talking point in the family,

(3)

whilst he was away, and more so as all the stories were recounted over and over on his return.

I was about 8 or 9 then and Canada to us was ~~at~~ like a foreign country. I had an older brother and 2 younger sisters. I think grandfather to us was a cross between a mystic and a hero.

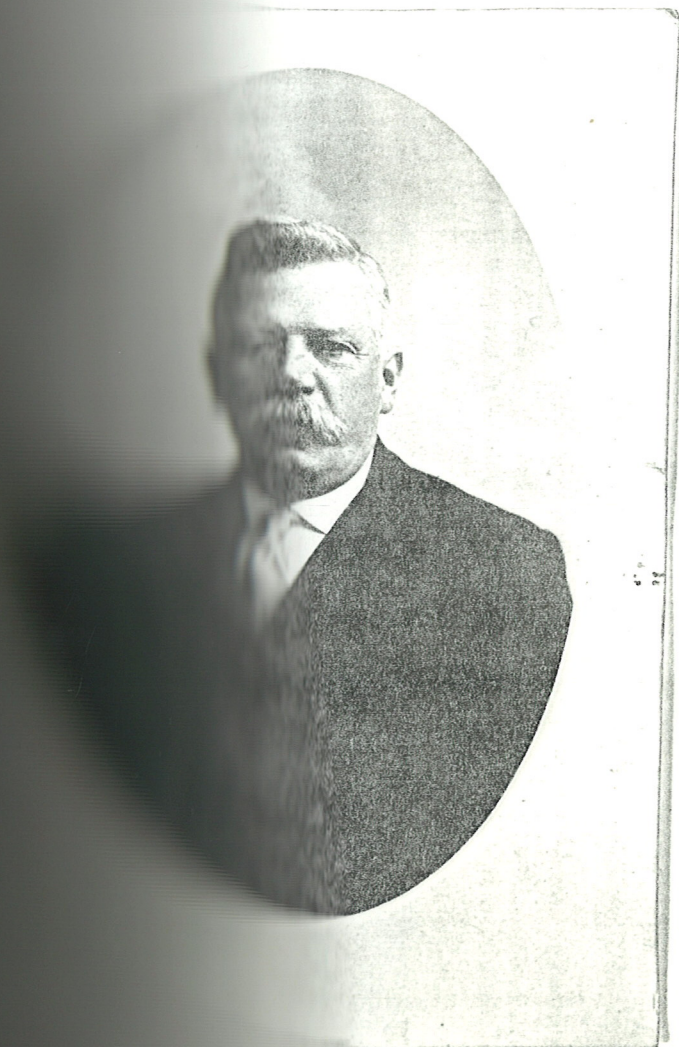
Trusting I haven't made a nonsense of myself.

Yours Sincerely.
L. Ephgrave.

P/S

Could you please return
this photograph.

LE



Your Ref.
ENR 3152/LS-65

261. Harold Rd.
Hastings, E4
Sussex.
20/5/79

Dear Sir.

Thank you very much for
your information of the 24th April
also the 16th of May.

I'm sorry for the time lapse in
answering your first letter, but
I have been kept very busy on
the outside of my house. It's only
an old place and this last winter
has played havoc with cement
and paintwork etc. I'm now getting
a little up to date.

It has been very good of you to
take the bother to find out the
various details and I feel very
much in your debt. Bye the way:-
Do I owe you anything for

(2)

The Photocopy report of the accident of Dec 13th 1893?. It was very interesting to me. Also it seems to bring the family a little closer.

Please let me have the bill if it cost you, or the firm, anything.

I noticed that my Grandfather was earning £2-15-6 per week.

Surely that was quite a good wage back in 1901?

I came out of the Army, after serving 7 years, in 1938 I went to work at Tilling Stevens (night work) and only learned about that amount. That was for 5 nights 12 hours per night. So Granddad didn't do too bad. Did he?

I have heard from George Smith

(3)

since you wrote to me on the 24th April and he confirmed the information you gave me.

I remember Grandad going to Canada, and I think it must have given me a taste for adventure. Within a year or two I made up my mind I was going to Australia. At the time I was 14 or so. (I didn't tell my father) (about 1927)

Anyway I took a day off school and tried to get a job on a ship in the London docks (I lived in Bromley then). I was told I had to have ships papers, and not having any, stood no chance.

There was only one thing to do, ~~Stay~~ Stow away.

(4)

I went down to the docks and noticed a ship belonging to the P & O Line. I will always remember the ~~the~~ name "The Rangitani".

There was a certain amount of going and coming of the crew, and I just walked aboard; went below and into a cabin.

My luck held for 2 or 3 hours, but eventually someone came in, I was caught.

I was left in no doubt that I hadn't got a farber and was kicked off and down the gang plank.

When I got home I had a good hiding for playing the 'Hop' from school.

I never did get to Australia,

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so joined the Army in 1931 until 1938 when I came out on ^{the} reserve.

I was called back a month before war broke out to do reserve training and stayed on until 1947, being discharged unfit.

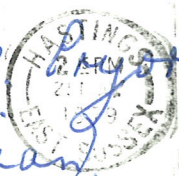
Once again I thank you for your help and look forward to any further help you can give me.

Yours sincerely
Leonard Ephgrave.

P.S. My thanks to Mr McLaren
also.

L.

Mr G. H. S. Poyser.
(Librarian)



Propellants, Explosives and
Rocket Motor Establishment,
Powdermill Lane,
Walham Abbey,
Essex. EN9 7BP.

512/445

MR L EPHGRAVE
261 Harold Road
Hastings
Sussex

ENQ 3152/LS-65

16 May 1979

Dear Mr Ephgrave

Further to my letter of 24 April, I can now offer you a little additional information gleaned from documents received from the Public Records Office.

- 1) In the "Quarterly Labour Statement from June 1901", for the Royal Gunpowder Factory, there is an entry No 45 showing the man G Ephgrave as Danger Building Visitor and receiving the wage of £2/17/6d.
- 2) The First Report of the accident on 13.12.1893 contains statements from workmen familiar with the cam machines; and George Ephgrave, as foreman of a cam house, is included. (A photocopy of the first part of this entry is enclosed.)

These additional points of information are not very great extensions to those already supplied to you. They do, however, give some actual recorded dates from which to work and will, I trust, be useful to you.

Should further information of any import come to light I shall pass it on to you.

Yours sincerely

G H S PRYOR
Librarian

ENC

512

Mr L Ephgrave
261 Harold Road
Hastings
Sussex

ENQ 3152/LS65

24 April 1979

Dear Mr Ephgrave

I have been asked by Mr McLaren to reply to your letter of 28 March.

We are still awaiting the receipt of certain documents which we hope will lead us to some authoritative answers to the questions which you posed.

However, quite fortuitously, we were on 9 April in contact with George Smith, who was able to give us a few clues. According to him, your grandfather left this Establishment at about retirement age, in 1920/23. At this time, a great number of employees, taken on during World War I, were sacked. Only one hundred-and-fifty were kept on, including George Smith. But his father and your grandfather were included in the group dismissed, it being close to their retirement age.

This information leads us to hazard the statement that your grandfather joined the Factory between 1875 and 1880.

George Smith remembers that at the time he began work here, your grandfather was Danger Buildings Visitor (around 1910). We know, however, that he did not hold this position between 1914-1918.

Upon dismissal, he went to Canada, but returned, dying about 1931.

All this is from George Smith. We were also in touch, yesterday, with Alice Negus, who no longer works here. From her we were able to glean the information that your grandfather's christian name was George. She also recalls that he died at home in Waltham Abbey, but could not confirm categorically the date stated by George Smith.

I hope you will find all this to be of interest. Further details will be supplied to you when I have access to them.

Yours sincerely

G H S PRIOR
Librarian

Your Reference
(E.O. 2877)
(12 Aug 1976)

261, Harold Road,
Hastings, ~~TE1~~
Sussex,
28/3/79.

Dear Sir.

As you can see by your reference N° above, it is quite some time since I last wrote to you regarding my family.

I spoke then of my Grandfather being a Foreman at your Factory in Poundernill Lane also that my Father worked there as well until he joined the Met. Police in 1910.

You wrote me a very nice letter in return and put me in touch with George Reece-Smith who was my Father's cousin through my Grandmother, who was also a Reece.

I would like to add that I

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(2)

Have since been in regular touch with George.

You did however mention a Mrs Alice Negus who knew our family and lived in the same Villas (but had since changed to Victoria Rd).

Unfortunately I didn't have any contact with her.

The reason I am writing to you again, is to try and find out any information you may have on my Grandfather? I don't even know his christian name or names.—when he started at your factory? (and finished). If possible where he came from before he lived at Waltham Abbey?

As you can guess I am trying

to build some sort of Family History (It shouldn't be hard with our name), - but is.

Perhaps your Dr K. N. Bascombe, the Secretary of the Waltham Abbey Historical Society could be of some int help to me.

I thought I was on to something in Hastings but after spending a few weeks investigating a couple of Miss's Ephgraves who had lived in the town, found out they had moved and had since died.

Perhaps Dr Bascombe could give me some idea where I could write to get some local information.

Even if it were only my Grandfathers Christian names and

(4)

details of where and what year he was buried? His beliefs were in Methodism as I remember.

His family consisted of my father Frederick, brother Frank and sister Bess. My uncle Frank I only remember seeing once, about 1918 in uniform and Aunt Bess only a few times - she died last year aged 95 years.

I wonder, by the grace of God, and a miracle, whether your records do go back to the turn of the century.

Trusting I haven't taken up too much of your valuable time
Yours Sincerely
Leonard Ephgrave.

EIA



Mr M. McLaren

Explosives Research and
Development Establishment,
Powdermill Lane,
Waltham Abbey,
Essex. EN9 1BP

