

Spring 2014

TOUCHPAPER

The Newsletter of the Royal Gunpowder Mills Friends Association

Time Pencils

Quiz

N₂O₅

An Interesting Find

The Liquid Propellant Gun

Mick Crossley's War

Book Review: A Battle Too Far

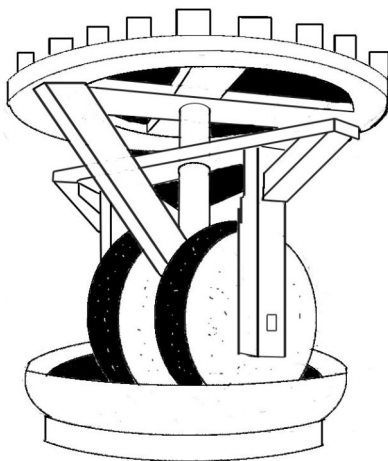
Mills Publications

Obituaries:

Les Dingle

Sally Macpherson

Freda Titford



Spring 2014

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Deadline for the next issue is 16th May 2014

Chairman's Chat

The gunpowder boat which we have been restoring has for several years been kept in a PVC covered metal framed tent. Over the last 2 - 3 years the PVC has deteriorated so much that, in spite of repairs, it became obvious that a new home for the boat would have to be found. The new resting place will be in L185, otherwise known as 'The Green Hut', on the Long Walk near the Main Lab. This required considerable refurbishment which several of us are currently working hard to complete. For those of you who do not remember the building it is considerably bigger than the name implies at 14.6m x 5.8m (48ft x 19ft) with a pitched roof. We have had to take down interior walls, remove the old steam heating pipes and scrape down the paint on the walls and the pitched ceiling. The first coat of paint is nearly finished although the walls will need another coat. Still to be done is making a large enough hole in one end for the boat to go through and then closing it up again afterwards. The exterior requires removal of some rotten wood and the old peeling paint before repainting, in green of course. All this plus a lot of smaller jobs.

The weather, although very wet, has not yet gone below freezing but it still seems very cold inside the building with no heating. Needless to say more volunteers would be welcome particularly when it gets warmer to assist in dealing with the outside.

If you visit the Mills during the summer I hope you will enjoy the changes and new exhibits being introduced over the winter.

With best wishes,

John Wright

Editorial

We will be celebrating a number of anniversaries this year.

The first part of Les Tucker's D-Day article is in this issue, the second part will be in the Summer issue.

This is followed by details of the available books and reprints, including Les Tucker's ***"The Listed Buildings and Other Principal Structures"*** which is not just a description of buildings but includes much of the history of the North Site. The 484 page "The Workforce of The Royal Gunpowder Mills 1787-1841" should also be of interest to social and economic historians – the Authorities reactions to pension requests, wage levels etc.

Following Peter Stone's letter in the last issue he has now sent me three A4 pages of his memories' of South Site buildings and their uses. It would be useful if some of you could also send what you can remember, it does not have to be a complete list, perhaps just those you worked in. Again if you have access to email it will not cost you postage.

For those receiving Touchpaper by email please remember to let us know when you change your email address. Also for those with tablets Touchpaper PDF email files are very readable using Adobe Reader application.

Brian
Clements

Colin Meek and the Time Pencils

Colin Meek worked at Waltham Abbey from 1946 to 1971. Before that he worked for M16 and SOE.

In 1938 war was coming, and M16, who had run a very successful spy operation in occupied Belgium in World War I, began to prepare for a war in which Belgium (or somewhere) might be occupied again. But some said “why not try clandestine sabotage as well?” Plastic explosive was being invented, so why not use it to delay vital troop trains, or interfere with war production? Sabotage needed a delay system, so the agent could be home in bed when the bang happened. For the explosive devices, M16 decided on a mechanical system in which a spring loaded plunger would hit a cap which in turn would activate the detonator. The plunger would be held back by a delay device.

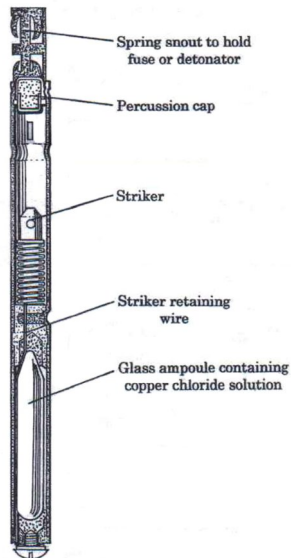
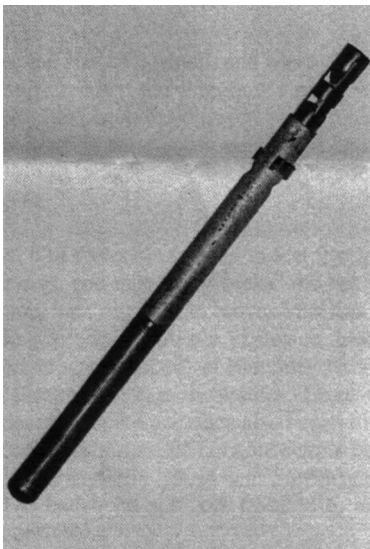
So the first task was to invent a delay system. The IRA used alarm clocks, but M16 wanted something small, silent, cheap, reliable and easy to use, and with no need for a battery. The job went to Woolwich Arsenal, where Colin Meek was getting bored with ballistic calculations, and was pleased to join the team. They decided on a chemical delay (Colin had worked for ICI). The plunger would be held back by a steel wire. The wire would be corroded until it broke and released the plunger. To see if corrosion rates were predictable the Scientific Industries Research Association were asked to hang weights from steel wires, immerse them in sulphuric acid and see how long they took to break. (For six years BSIA wondered what the tests were for). They then realised that iron wire in a solution of a copper salt would cause an electrochemical reaction, eating away at the wire. This would be more effective than using acid. Copper chloride turned out to be the best salt to choose, and gave consistent breaking times.

So that led to the Time Pencil. It was the size of a pencil, and was a copper tube with a snout at one end to take the detonator. Inside it the wire, now a piano wire (they are consistent, so as to give the right note) held back the plunger. Next to the wire was a glass ampoule containing the copper chloride solution. In action you had to insert the pencil into the explosive, squeeze the soft copper tube, break the ampoule to release the corrosion, and hastily head for home.



Inside the Thermostat Laboratory where Time Pencils were tested

But was Woolwich the place for this? The Colonels seemed to feel that troops should wear red coats and march to brass bands, and that “dirty tricks” did not belong there and should be left to the secret service. So Colin had to move. M16 was run from an office near St James’ Park - not the place to try plastic explosive. M16 also had a country home (in case its London home was bombed) at Bletchley Park. So in June 1939 Colin and a colleague moved there to work in the stables. There was room to make bangs in the woods. But soon learned mathematicians also began to appear. The code breakers had arrived. And the code breakers could not concentrate because of the loud bangs. So Colin had to move again, to Aston House near Stevenage and later to Welwyn Garden City. By now SOE had been split off from MI6, and was in a different ministry, so Colin was part of SOE.



Time Pencil used by SOE and Section

The original Time Pencils had a short delay of 20 minutes. But some operators wanted longer delays and Colin found that the salt dissolved in a water/glycerol mixture, and the glycerol slowed the reaction (by slowing the rate the Cu ions reached the iron by diffusion). Different glycol mixtures gave medium (90 minutes) and long (18 hours) delays. Colin labelled the three pencils red, white and blue so people could remember which was which. The ampoules were made by Boots the chemists, filled with 0.65 ml of solution. Once Boots “improved” their quality control and made the glass so strong you could not crush it by hand. Stevens Pens, who made the old pens where you pushed a new nib in the snout, made the snouts. The piano wires came at first from Sweden, and the whole thing was assembled by Joseph Lucas, who made car headlights.

In August 1939 a few early models were given to the Poles. But soon Poland was invaded and nothing was heard. Then when Russia came into the war in 1941 a delegation went to Moscow and was shown a “Russian” invention, which was a copy of Colin’s early version. Colin kept a Russian one as a souvenir.

Once the Time Pencil was designed, Colin went on to develop a number of famous devices for SOE, and instructions to use them on particular targets, such as the attack on the Norwegian Heavy Water plant.

The Time Pencil cost 2s 6d (12 new pence). 13 million were made by the end of the war. Many of them were used in SOE operations in occupied countries. And the war was won. So at 10am on a January morning in 1946 SOE formally ceased to exist. And Colin Meek, ready for new adventures, came to Waltham Abbey.

John Vernon

The Times printed the first newspaper printed by steam power in 1814, and the last frost fair was held on the Thames in February 1814.



The Frost Fair of 1814, by Luke Celenell

Sweet & Chocolate Quiz

- 1 Sly Giggles _____
- 2 High Class Thoroughfare _____
- 3 Money making Royalty _____
- 4 Dark Occult _____
- 5 Clever Folk _____
- 6 Good Children Get These _____
- 7 Feline Equipment _____
- 8 Big Bus _____
- 9 Istanbul Harem _____
- 10 Big Cats Pub _____
- 11 Assorted Girls _____
- 12 Locals from Malta _____
- 13 Toothless Drink _____
- 14 Reward _____
- 15 Outside Meal _____
- 16 Sweet Tooth _____
- 17 Noisy Insects _____
- 18 Capital Granite _____
- 19 Dairy Holder _____
- 20 Sport for Princes _____

Minnie Fenton

Graffiti

OOAQICI82QB4IP

Bryan Howard

Post-war Work at Waltham Abbey

Some time ago whilst taking regular lunchtime refreshment in the Crown pub in Waltham Abbey, Brian Howard told me that he was interested in gathering together information on the work of Waltham Abbey during its post-war era. During my second spell there between 1988 and 1991, one of the pioneering pieces of work being undertaken was on the exploitation of the properties of dinitrogen pentoxide as a nitrating agent. This prompted me to ask Greville Bagg, the leader of the team carrying out the work, whether he had retained any of the several articles written on the subject. The piece below is one such example written in 1990 and published in the ICI house magazine “Nobel Times” on August 7th 1991. It illustrates the ground-breaking work undertaken right up until site closure at Waltham Abbey and in this case successfully transferred to Fort Halstead.

Geoff Hooper

What is Dinitrogen Pentoxide, and Why?

Some ten years ago, a brilliant polymer chemist by the name of Dr Rick Richards, conceived a plan for getting his beloved macromolecules recognised by his explosive orientated colleagues at Waltham Abbey. He would try and build energetic groups into the molecular chain to produce a thermoset rubbery form of explosive. To do this he would need to find a source of dinitrogen pentoxide which should, because of its nitronium ion, be able to nitrate selective groups on chosen organic compounds without damaging their structure. In 1981, an item of intelligence on possible N_2O_5 synthesis was obtained and forwarded to Dr Richards by our man in the US Embassy, a certain Dr Geoff Hooper at that time. This proved to be the tool by which his dream became reality, but unfortunately too late for Dr

Richards died in 1986 before the work was completed. We dedicate this work to his enthusiasm and in memory of the many happy hours spent exchanging N_2O_5 chemistry on the back of many beer mats.

Dinitrogen pentoxide, or N_2O_5 to give its molecular formula, is a white crystalline solid that will decompose, given half a chance, into lots of brown nitrogen dioxide fumes or pick up moisture to form very concentrated nitric acid. It is also extremely reactive in solution and will rapidly eat its way through gloves, skin, plastics or any other organic material it contacts to give a whole variety of unexpected nitrates. To the chemist, this novel feature provides an exciting mechanism for creating a brand new range of more useful chemicals, especially in the defence field of energetic materials. To the chemical engineer however, this aggressive property is a bit of a nuisance to say the least, since it makes it rather difficult both to manufacture and keep it uncontaminated in the right place long enough for it to be of any commercial use.

And therein lies the nub of the problem, a chemist's dream and a chemical engineer's nightmare. Here we have a brand new chemical reagent tool to help put theoretical synthesis into practice, but only if it can be demonstrated that the N_2O_5 can be made and handled in bulk at an economic cost with respect to the predicted end products. Well it has taken us over seven years to do just that and we are now at the point of being the first establishment in the world to drive N_2O_5 into commercial production for the manufacture of the next generation of energetic defence materials, the first new range of energetic polymer and crystalline explosives for 50 years.

Given a quantity of N_2O_5 , it is possible to do everything that you can do with nitric acid and a considerable amount more. Not that it would be necessarily desirable to do so because it will always cost more than the nitric acid from which it can be made.

It is an easy step to deduce that, although its potential as a nitrating agent is as yet largely unexplored, it could also be used to improve upon known reactions involving concentrated nitric acid or mixed acid systems - provided the price is right.

It will perhaps need the initial and urgent drive of high value defence orientated end products to kick it off before lower value civil products can gain a share as the production costs are brought down with increasing scale.

An interesting analogy can be found with the introduction of the ammonia oxidation process for nitric acid circa 1930, for the driving force in this case stemmed from a need to improve explosives production. It was not until the late 1950's and the petroleum boom, did civil industry take over and start exploiting its real value. The potential usage of N_2O_5 could account for a significant (albeit small) proportion of the apparent 3,000 million tonnes production capability of nitric acid manufacturing plant in the UK alone. A bit of optimism easily converts this possibility into probable profitable patent royalties sometime during the next decade.

Our researches at Waltham Abbey began in earnest in 1982 and by 1985 we had obtained an estimate of the exciting potential, but as yet unproven, value of end nitrated products as well as determining two possible synthesis routes for the raw reagent. It took a further two years before the production capability for N_2O_5 was able to be demonstrated and assessed, and to draw up a short list of the technical problems impeding growth of the overall research and development programme. The key problem turned out to be the perennial one of availability of suitable equipment and materials compatible with this very reactive new reagent. We could certainly make N_2O_5 in quantity at a competitive cost but it still leaked through seals on pumps and valves etc to corrode the exterior of plant equipment every few weeks, (most "acid-proof" pumps and valves appear to be held together with corrodible springs and brass nuts!).

At this stage we turned to industry for help in developing and exploiting the processes. We found that the only companies willing to engage in expensive development were those whose businesses centred on marketing plant and processes, and who were therefore in a position to exploit any new technology at the earliest opportunity. Companies who were potential end users of the N_2O_5 , both in the defence and civil sectors, considered the project too speculative and

could not support the long lead times before profitability, i.e. they needed a higher level of demonstration before committing themselves financially.

It took a further three years negotiating with various companies before the overall programme took shape, first signing Confidentiality Agreements which allowed us to control the flow and use of valuable information as well as giving us access to their marketing databases. Finally drawing up License Agreements to cover exploitation. This broadening of our outlook triggered further work and we have since been able to complete most of our patent jigsaw on all the various stages wherein the N_2O_5 could be produced, refined and used according to a variety of different techniques.

One process patent on its own is usually fairly weak since the licensee will almost certainly add improvements during the course of development. But a collection can be stronger than the sum of components since each extends the power of negotiation as the licensee is drawn along the path of commitment.

Now, some seven years into the project and three years into commercial liaison, the companies concerned have verified our original research and demonstration work to their satisfaction and have consequentially gone public with their marketing of the technology.

ICI Explosives Ltd, (newly formed to include Nobel's at Ardeer), have announced their intention to complete a new HMX pilot plant by the end of the year which will use N_2O_5 in nitric acid as the nitrating agent and incorporate the ICI C&P pilot plant. This will be the world's first demonstrator process and should trigger off wider exploitation. ICI Explosives have also announced their commitment to the RARDE energetic binders programme and they will be open to commercial orders on the first product; polynimmo towards the end of 1990.

It will probably take the full ten years before the project shows the beginning of any financial returns on its investment by 1992, and another five years before this reagent begins to find wider commercial

usage in the civil sector. Perhaps one of the arts of financing research lies in predicting what the customer will be needing in the future whilst exploiting past successes to support the present. Another maybe could be in insuring that there is sufficient development lag before actual profit, thereby avoiding the criticism of undertaking 'near market research' with its all too close a connection with privatisation?

Meanwhile our research work has only just begun, there are more associated processes to demonstrate before commercial license and development, and even more defence products to make in quantities sufficient for primary evaluation. And if we don't get there first, someone else will!

Greville Bagg

Chemical Process Research, NP4

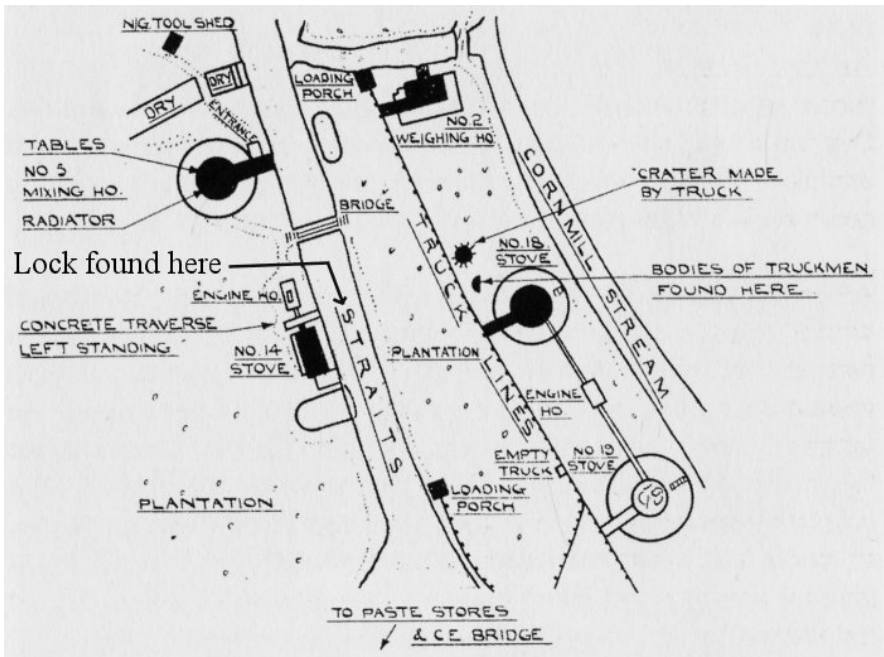
7th February 1990



Touring the Fort Halstead laboratories after the signing of the agreement were Richard Lutchford (DRA), Stephen Morris, Gerald Byrne, John Lynch (vice-president and A&A general manager, ICI Explosives), Roger Warren (managing director, military division DRA), Geoff Hooper (DRA), Ian Kirby and Greville Bagg (DRA).

An Interesting Find

Some years ago, in the early 1950s, a tumbler rim lock was found attached to a lump of wood almost buried in the mud at the bottom of a nearly dry canal. What follows is a possible interpretation of the sequence of events which led to the lock being in this position. The canal was the channel known as the “Straits” which ran between the buildings which blew up at 10.42 on the morning of the 18th January 1940. It is quite possible that the lock came from one of the three buildings which exploded that morning. From the position where it was found, the most likely structure was the old design No 14 Guncotton Stove on the west bank of the canal.



The possible train of explosions on that frosty morning started with 6000 lbs of Nitroglycerine and Guncotton in No 5 Mixing House exploding, killing the three men working there. Most of the force was deflected upwards by the circular traverse but part of the blast came through the entrance and across the canal to hit and be deflected by the traverse on the opposite bank. Sufficient force “escaped” in a south-easterly direction to hit and overturn a truck carrying 640 lbs of guncotton which detonated and killed the two men pushing it.

With no protection of a traverse the shockwave hit the side of No 14 Guncotton Stove across the canal (where I think the lock was fitted), setting off the 5200 lbs of guncotton within. The blast from this travelled back across the canal to enter No 18 Guncotton Stove through the railway loading entrance (the only unprotected route). This detonated the 5200 lbs of guncotton within.

The lock was retrieved, decontaminated and then forgotten in a cupboard. Recently it was re-discovered and passed on to me. I have had a passing interest in locks for some years. Here is a photograph of the lock, mounted on a piece of 6" x 1.5" timber to replicate the door.

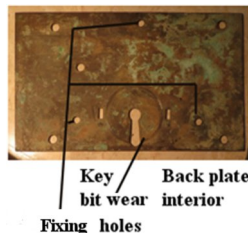
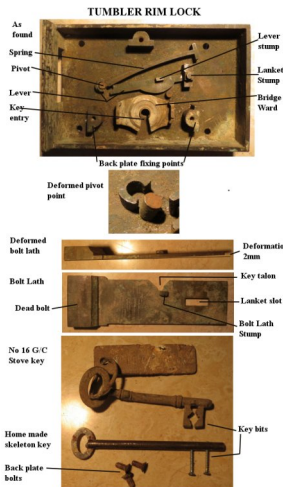


As you will see from the photograph, the keyhole on the face of the lock has been blanked off. In fact, the lock had been made without a keyhole on this face. The only key entry is in the back plate and therefore through the door. So the lock was fitted on the inside of the door and could only be used to secure the door from the outside.

Wear from the key bits is evident both on the inside of the back plate and on the brass bridge ward, which is almost worn away at the upper edge. This indicates that it had been in use for a long time. The lock case, bolt lath and lever are made in a non ferrous metal but I don't know if it is bronze or a bronze alloy. It appears to be quite a hard metal. The measurements are 204mm x 128mm x 26mm.

There is no evidence of surface damage. Internally, however, the bolt lath is bent 2 mm over its length and the single lever is fractured where it fits over the pivot point which is bent nearly 2.5mm out of true. This damage would indicate that the bolt lath has been subjected to a considerable shock. The door could have been blown open fractions of a second before the door, door frame and surrounding wall hit the traverse. The impact, directly on the wall, would have been sufficient to drive the end of the bolt lath in, bending the lath. The bolt lath would also have taken the lever with it, the two stumps being in contact with each other and the stump on the lever has bent about 1mm. This movement has bent the pivot and finally fractured the lever at its weakest point. The piece of the door with the lock ended up in the mud at the bottom of the adjacent canal.

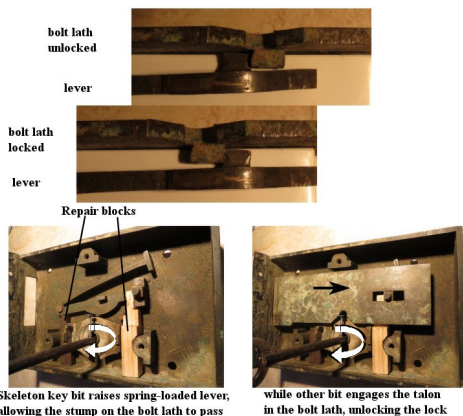
The fact that the lock only had a single lever indicates that it was of the lowest security rating and there is only a minimal difference between each of the Guncotton Stove keys. It is difficult to date the lock as this type was typically made over a long period up to quite recently. However, considering its purpose and the fact that it is non-ferrous and possibly made to a government specification could narrow the date to between 1893 and 1915.



I have repaired the lock and made a skeleton key for it to demonstrate the movement of the lever and the bolt lath. For those who would like a refresher course on how the lock worked, read on.

The key, when turned clockwise will, with the end bit, lift the lever sufficiently to allow the stump on the bolt lath to pass the stump on the lever. Simultaneously, the other key bit will engage with the talon in the bolt lath and move it. When the key has completed its turn, it will allow the lever to return to rest, with the bolt lath, in this case, in the unlocked position.

Repaired lock



That's in a new lock – in this one the damage prevents the lever from returning to the rest position by 3.5mm.

So, does anyone know of an easy method of identifying the alloy this lock is made from? And... would anyone like to suggest what should now be done with the lock?

My thanks are due to Richard Hopkins for the correct lock part names.

Richard Thomas

Essex Girls

Five blokes in an Audi Quattro arrived at the ferry checkpoint in Harwich, Essex.

Tracey, in her brand new uniform, stops them and tells them: "I can't let you on the ferry. It is illegal to have 5 people in a Quattro. Quattro means four. One of you will have to get out and stay behind."

"Quattro is just the name of the car," the driver replies disbelievingly. "Look at the papers: this car is designed to carry five persons."

"You cannot pull that one on me. This is Tracey you're talking to here," she replies with a smile. "Quattro means four. You have five people in your car and you are therefore breaking the law. So I can't let you onto the ferry. It's more than my job's worth to let you all on."

The driver is now very cross and replies angrily, "I've had enough of you. Call your supervisor over. I want to speak to someone with more authority!"

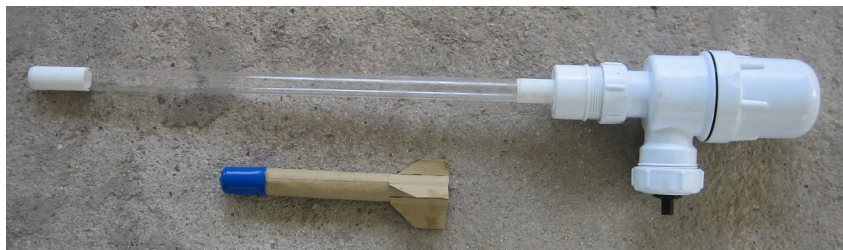
"Sorry," responds Tracey, "but Sharon is busy with those two blokes in the Fiat Uno."

The Liquid Propellant Gun

Modern developments of liquid gun propellants in America have been focussed on the injection of HAN (Hydroxy Ammonium Nitrate) as the main ingredient which has many attractive properties including low vulnerability to fragment attack.

Our version at the Mills is a humble one, consisting of some domestic plumbing and using as a propellant, hairspray!

The gun consists of a barrel of 44mm PVC pipe about 0.5m long fitted to a standard bottle trap which has a side arm to take a piezoelectric igniter (normally used in central heating boilers).



Originally the projectile was a slug of potato but this was found to be rather messy and the deer soon got fed up with eating potato so we switched to fitting a 'rocket' on the outside of the barrel.

Further modifications have followed such as using a 22mm barrel to propel a 'standard' paper rocket with impressive results. The latest changes have been to replace the PVC barrels with clear 'Perspex' tubes so the flame can be seen along the barrel.

Some ignition problems have been tracked down to low winter temperatures; the answer is to stand the bottle trap in warm water prior to firing. To date we have only tried a Co-Op hairspray and one from Lidl; at least the combustion products from both smell nice!

Bryan Howard

Mick Crossley's War – 1944 Part 1

Very little seems to have been recorded, unit titles etc., on the various Army units who were stationed or passed through Waltham Abbey. during WW2.

It is very fortunate therefore that quite by chance the Archive acquired the recollections of a member of one – Gunner Mick Crossley , 416 Battery 127 LAA Regiment.

Mick wrote as follows (One or two parts give rise to some doubt as to the veracity of the detail, perhaps not surprising at this distance in time and bearing in mind that a Light Anti Aircraft Regiment was moving around the country frequently and memories of locations could fade.):

“Our detachment had a break from Bofors for about six months when we were sent to man a sophisticated type of four barrelled two pounder pom pom anti aircraft gun at an explosives factory in Waltham Abbey.

The factory was surrounded by a high security fence with the main gate being manned by some infantry unit. The site was at the end of a road bordered by smart semi-detached private houses. The concrete gun emplacement was alongside the main gate but built roof high to overlook the factory and surrounding countryside.

I remember how we watched the workers in the factory yard - their faces and clothing all yellow through the material they handled - and the alarm sirens that sounded a few times a day when they were due to do a ‘mix’.

It was the only site I was on where we never fired the gun for some reason, which was perhaps a blessing.

From the gun we could see the river and on the far bank was a field used by nudists on week ends. I remember on that hot summer that

nobody objected to week end guard duty on the gun - the duty guard was equipped with two pairs of powerful binoculars."

So 416 Battery had a relatively comfortable time.

As 1944 progressed everyone began to wonder whether or when an attempt was going to be made to land in Europe and in due course they received the news that they were going to function as a port defence unit. Again a reasonable prospect with the RAF having virtual command of the air, associated with D Day but not landing on the actual day.

But what they didn't know was the nature of the port they were going to defend and none would have had the faintest inkling of the dark fate which in fact awaited 416 Battery...

Les Tucker

Ian MacFarlane has now set up the system to enable purchase of the Mills Booklet and Reprint series online, with Amazon printing and despatching.

On the Mills website royalgunpowdermills.com – Click on Online Shop, RGM Book Series

Reprints

A new series has been initiated – Mills reprints of historical key explosives texts. On the Mills website Click on RGM Historic Reprints.

Books

Three new booklet titles have been added to the existing three and the series now comprises :

Books

	Author	Ps.	Illus.	Price
The Waterways of the Royal Gunpowder Mills	Richard Thomas	52	28	£4.99
The Explosions at the Royal Gunpowder Mills	Richard Thomas	82	33	£ 4.99
Military Superintendents of the Royal Gunpowder Mills	Peter Blake	72	27	£ 4.99
The Workforce of the Royal Gunpowder Mills 1787 -1841	Derek Armes Sandra Taylor	484	2	£12.50
Workforce Worthies of the Royal Gunpowder Mills	Derek Armes Sandra Taylor	106	15	£ 5.99
The Listed Buildings and Other Principal Structures at the Royal Gunpowder Mills Waltham Abbey	Les Tucker	206	166	£ 7.99

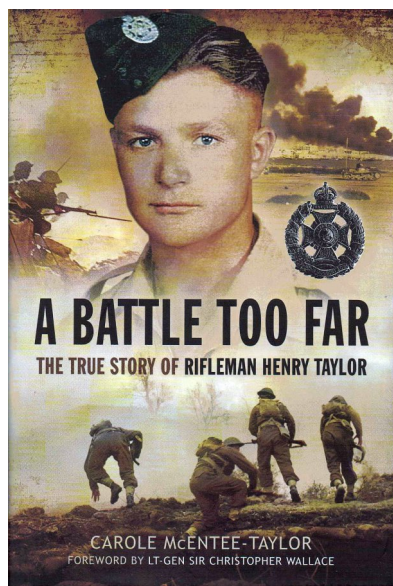
Reprints

A Treatise on Gunpowder	1830	Frederick Drayson	122	37	£ 7.99
Pamphlet on the Manufacture of Gunpowder 1857 as carried on at the Government Factory Waltham Abbey		Maj. Fraser Baddeley	48	0	£5.99
Handbook of Gunpowder and Guncotton	1888	Maj.Gen. W.H.Wardell	160	14	£ 9.99
A Handbook of the Manufacture and Proof 1870 of Gunpowder as carried on at the Royal Gunpowder Factory Waltham Abbey		Capt.F.M.Smith	154	26	£ 9.99
A Memoir on Gunpowder, in which are discussed the Principles both of its Manufacture and Proof	1832	John Braddock	144		£ 9.99
Gunpowder and Ammunition –1904 Their Origin and Progress		Lt.Col. H.W.L.Hime	258		£13.99

Prices Includes Amazon Super Saver Free Delivery - 3-5 days

Amazon have also introduced a pick up service at a range of locations, including Waltham Abbey

Book Review **A Battle Too Far**



Following the defeat of Rommel's army in North Africa, the Rifle Brigade was expecting to return to Britain to prepare for the invasion of France. However, they were dispatched to Italy where they fought their way up from bottom to top.

The British public did not realise the heavy fighting that ensued and thought they were having a 'holiday'. They became known as the D-Day Dodgers.

A Battle Too Far tells the true story of Rifleman Henry Taylor from Africa to Italy and back again.

Henry Taylor's son, Lawrence, exhibited his collection of WWI memorabilia at the Mills for several years. Henry often accompanied him and was always happy to discuss his interest in weaponry.

Daphne Clements

A Battle Too Far

by Carole McEntee -Taylor ISBN: 9781783376032

Available from Pen & Sword Books or Amazon and Bookshops

THE D-DAY DODGERS

To be sung to the tune of “Lili Marlene”
Dedicated to our gallant comrades of the BLA by the unknown
warriors of the 8th Army.

We are the D-Day Dodgers way out in Italy
Always drinking vino, always on the spree.
Eighth army skivers and the ranks,
Sixth armoured Div with the tanks,
For we are the D-Day Dodgers, The Lads that D-Day Dodged.

We landed at Salerno - a holiday with pay,
Jerry brought the band down to cheer us on our way,
We all sang songs, and beer was free,
We kissed all the girls in Napoli,
For we are the D-Day Dodgers, The Lads that D-Day Dodged.

The Volturno and Cassino were taken in our stride,
We didn't go to fight there, we just went for the ride!
Anzio and Sangro were all forlorn,
We didn't do a thing there from dusk till dawn,
For we are the D-Day Dodgers, The Lads That D-Day Dodged,

On our way to Florence we had a lovely time!
We ran a bus to Rimini through the Gothic Line,
Winter Sports amid the snow,
Then we went bathing in the Po,
For we are the D-Day Dodgers, The Lads That D-Day Dodged.

We hope the boys in France will soon get home on leave,
After six month's service, it's a shame they're NOT relieved,
But we'll carry on for several years,
Because our wives don't shed many tears,
For we are The D-Day Dodgers, The Lads That D-Day Dodged.

Once we had a blue light, we were going home,
Back to dear old Blighty, never more to roam,
Then someone whispered, "In France you'll fight",
For we are the D-Day Dodgers, The Lads That D-Day Dodged,

Oh Lady Astor listen please to us,
Don't stand on a platform and make a lot of fuss,
You're the nations sweetheart, the nations pride,
But your lovely mouth is far too wide,
That's from the D-Day Dodgers, The Lads That D-Day Dodged.

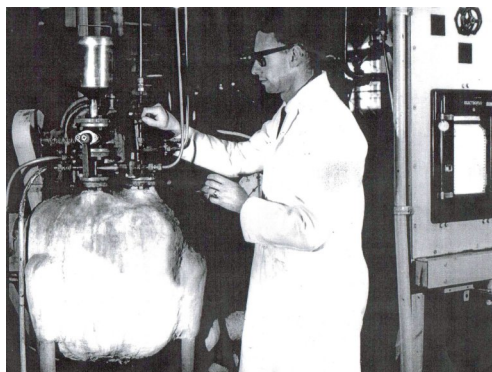
The last verse to be sung with tears in your eyes and Vino at the lips.

If you look around the mountains, through the mud and rain,
You'll find battered crosses, some which bear No Name,
Heartbreak toil and suffering gone,
The boys beneath, they slumber on,
They were The D-Day Dodgers, The Lads That D-Day Dodged.

Chocolate Quiz Answers

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|----------------|
| 1 | Snickers | 11 | Dolly Mixture |
| 2 | Quality Street | 12 | Maltesers |
| 3 | Mint Imperial | 13 | Wine Gums |
| 4 | Black Magic | 14 | Bounty Bar |
| 5 | Smarties | 15 | Picnic |
| 6 | Treats | 16 | Candy Floss |
| 7 | Kit Kat | 17 | Humbug |
| 8 | Double Decker | 18 | Edinburgh Rock |
| 9 | Turkish Delight | 19 | Milk Tray |
| 10 | Lion Bar | 20 | Polo |

Obituaries



Les Dingle,
Chemical Engineer

We have heard of Les Dingle's death, we are waiting for an obituary.

Sally Macpherson (Née Westlake) 1954 - 2013



Sally will have been known to many people at Waltham Abbey by her maiden name of Sally Westlake.

Sally obtained her PhD from Leicester University and joined the MOD at Waltham Abbey in 1979. We married after meeting at Leicester, the following year.

She enjoyed going to Otterburn for field trials, and she was given an award for services to NATO.

In 1990, we had a son, Jamie. By this time, the Abbey had closed. Sally commuted to Fort Halstead for a few years, but in

the mid-1990s she decided to change directions. She didn't take up paid employment immediately, but spent her time doing voluntary work for the Church and various charities as well as pursuing her first love, Art.

Sally joined the Board of Governors at Theydon Bois Primary School just as it was going into "special measures". She was rapidly made chairman, and oversaw the appointment of a new head teacher, with whom she worked closely. According to the Secretary of State's annual report, the school was the fastest turned around school in the country.

Sally became a member of Epping Arts Society where, as editor, she revitalized the monthly newsletter, then went on to become chairman of the society, leading it to great success and the vibrant society it is today.

Sally also joined Anglian Potters and, typically, was soon a committee member. Latterly, she was their publicity officer, where she was very active in organizing their highly successful annual potters' camps.

For some years now, Sally has been working at Davenant School, supporting teachers in two Departments, but most particularly the Art Department, where she was at her happiest coaching students in art and pottery.

Sally seemed to have limitless energy and, amongst other things, gave half a day every week to a local gardening project. Many people in Epping will also remember the highly successful "Lantern Walks" at Swains Green, for which Sally was one of the main organizers.

In October of 2013, Sally was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She fought with unbelievable bravery, but sadly passed away on 11 December. To the end, she was more concerned about others than herself. She was much loved, and is much missed.

Andy Macpherson

Freda Titford



Freda, who was Ron Treadgold's partner for many years, died on Boxing Day. The funeral took place on 14th January 2014. News of this sad event was announced at the January LOSW meeting.

Freda was a well-known local calligrapher and artist whose talents were recognised by the Society of Illustrators and Calligraphists.

She made a number of water colours of North Site buildings during the decontamination period following the closure of North Site.

Freda has left a wonderful legacy of paintings for us to enjoy and she will be sorely missed.

B C Howard February 2014.

Events at the Royal Gunpowder Mills

For information visit the Web Site:

<http://www.royalgunpowdermills.com/whats-on-and-events/>



LOSW Christmas Lunch in the Crown.

Photos by Dave Manners

