

Autumn 2017

TOUCHPAPER

The Newsletter of the Royal Gunpowder Mills Friends Association

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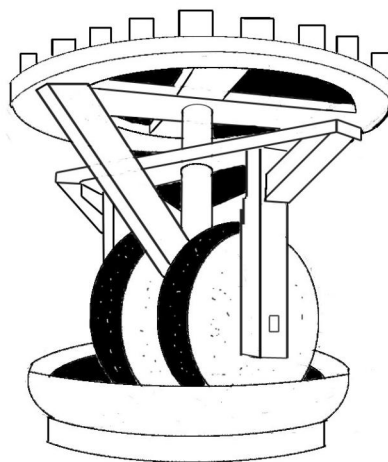
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Autumn 2017

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Deadline for the next issue is 24th November 2017

Chairman's Chat

This summer's visitor numbers were about the same as last year in spite of rather variable weather conditions. However we do need to update some of our exhibitions so that regular visitors have something new to see. Ideas and suggestions from our readers are very welcome.

We have been having visits from several groups of people, mostly retired, which they have enjoyed, particularly those with direct interests in armaments. It seems that there must be a season for this.

Chris has now left the company and we have a temporary replacement. Ben is about to leave to do a teaching course and we are awaiting a replacement for him.

We are always looking out for new Friends particularly younger ones, but also older ones, in fact any age, to do things on site, so please encourage your friends to join the Friends of the Royal Gunpowder Mills.

Best wishes for the Autumn.

John Wright

Editorial

Once more this issue is a little late. I must confess to less enthusiasm for the task, I have produced Touchpaper since the Spring 2012 issue and feel it is time for a change of Editor.

If anyone would like/be willing to take on the job please contact me, my email address as inside the front cover is
WARGMFA@btinternet.com

I will produce the last issue for this year but hope that we can start the New Year with a new Editor, naturally I am willing to help with advice and to distribute email copies and arrange printing and posting of mailed copies if required. The program I use for desktop publishing is Scribus, which is free software available for PCs, Mac and Linux systems and can be downloaded from
<https://www.scribus.net/downloads/stable-branch/>

Once more my thanks to my regular contributors and Dave Sims for the 'funnies' I have used to fill some of the space.

As I have mentioned before it is worth having the email version as one can zoom in on photos to see more detail and appreciate the colour (excepting the historic monochrome images of course). Anyone who pays for the paper copy is welcome to have an emailed version as well.

On the back page is a photo of the 2' 6" railway train at the station opposite the Main Lab taken on the 23rd of August when it carried passengers for the first time. It is hoped to run a regular service next year.

Brian Clements

Industrial Heritage - Adaptive (Beneficial) Re-Use

Commencing with the Spring 2016 issue, a series of articles on Industrial Heritage was submitted to Touchpaper. A particular theme was adaptive, sometimes termed beneficial, re-use of buildings and structures etc. of industrial heritage value and examples were cited. Further news has been received on two of these:

1. Millennium Mills

The Summer 2016 issue of Touchpaper contained a report on the grant from the Capital Grant fund for preliminary work on the restoration of the giant Millennium Mills - centre piece of the £3.5 bn. regeneration of the derelict 62 acre Silvertown site in the Royal Docks. This work included the removal of around 500 tons of asbestos. The Mills were originally built in 1905 and were damaged in the 1917 Silvertown explosion in the Brunner Mond munitions works. In 1933 the mill was rebuilt in art deco influenced style.

Following outline planning consent, the developer has agreed to include 1000 affordable homes in the 3000 homes being built under the regeneration scheme and Newham Council have now approved the detailed plans for the homes development.



Millennium Mills awaiting restoration

2. St. Pancras triple gas holder apartments

The imaginative scheme under which apartments were to be built inside the guide frames of the St. Pancras triple gas holders – described in the Spring 2016 issue of Touchpaper, have now been completed. The architects – Wilkinson Eyre, have been widely praised for their work and one writer has even described the scheme as an ‘industrial aesthetic’.

Beneficial Re-use at the Royal Gunpowder Mills

Following withdrawal of the PGL appeal, proposed beneficial re-use of the buildings which were threatened with demolition under the PGL proposal and the preservation of the Cordite Factory has become a live issue.

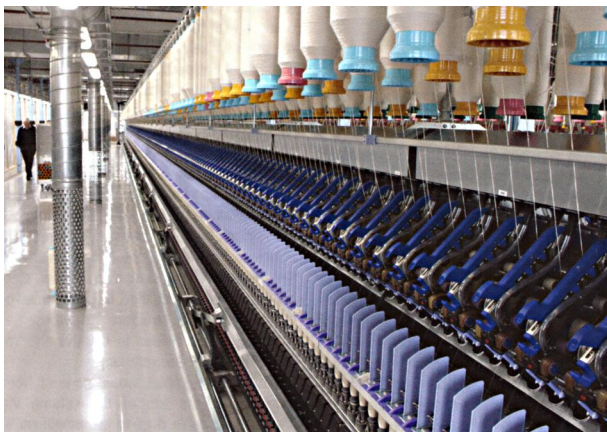
E – FAITH – European Federation of Associations for Industrial Heritage

As part of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage E-Faith is to co-ordinate a series of monthly seminars during the year around different industrial heritage themes. Among the nine put forward adaptive re-use was the first listed.

Tower Mill – Rise from the Dead

The explosive growth in the cotton spinning industry was one of the key elements in the Industrial Revolution – particularly in Manchester and surrounding areas. Later we paid the price for being first in the Revolution and the once mighty industry went into terminal decline, ultimately disappearing entirely from Manchester.

Some mills were listed by English Heritage. Amongst these was the Tower Mill, which closed for spinning in 1955 and survived in a different use. Last year a company - English Fine Cotton took the bold decision to re-start cotton spinning in Manchester by buying Tower Mill, refurbishing it and equipping it with state of the art machinery. It produces cotton for high grade products and is the only cotton mill in production in the United Kingdom.





Tower Mill – what the inside of a modern dark satanic mill looks like

The company's investment was supplemented by a grant from the organisation - Textile Growth Programme. Who said the Industrial Revolution was dead?

Les Tucker

Sport and Pastime Quiz

1. What is better than “having it in spades”?
2. Which outdoor game ends by “pegging out”?
3. Which indoor game ends by “pegging out”?
4. Which sport depends on striking your opponents ground?
5. Which game can be played with 28 or 55 pieces?
6. Which sport involves a painter and sheets?
7. Which sports are concerned with magpies?
8. Identify an inedible “Eskimo roll”.
9. Pieces of music by Beethoven associated with games.
10. Identify a Canadian game played by two sets of twelve.
11. Which game owes its name to a “Devil on two sticks”?
12. Which game requires four participants, but only three players?
13. What is a “Patzner”?
14. Which game includes the terms Pung, Kong and Chow?
15. What was the now obsolete name for a number 7 iron in golf?
16. What sort of verbal blunder could be found in fishing and sailing?
17. Which game has the name of a non-alcoholic drink?
18. What is the name of an Australian game combining the elements of cricket and baseball?
19. Which hobby dates back to 1840?
20. Which sport had its rules drawn up by William Mitchell, a Glasgow solicitor?

B C Howard

Aluminium in Propellants

In the rocket vault display there is a jar of (dummy) ammonium perchlorate, a jar of PIB (polyisobutene) and a third jar of aluminium powder. These are the only ingredients displayed; no surfactants or catalysts. This is rather a biased display compounded by the total lack of any reference to nitrocellulose-based propellant ingredients.

Apart from my criticism of the items on display I wonder what my fellow volunteers have to say about the aluminium and its function in propellants. It's worth noting that it is never added to double base-propellants as this would produce a smoky exhaust (giving away launch position and target obscuration).

For maximum impulse from a rocket what is desired is a high exhaust temperature coupled with minimum molecular weight of the gases. Aluminium should emerge in the exhaust as the oxide and nitride, rather large molecules. Another disadvantage is that slow burning rates allow for the Al_2O_3 to agglomerate and thus reducing the gas velocity of the exhaust. On the positive side the reaction of aluminium with the other ingredients will increase the flame temperature to offset the disadvantages.

A more subtle advantage has occurred to me that it may be that the particles of aluminium compounds could suppress resonant burning.

The subject of resonant burning raised its ugly head when one lady visitor said she was interested in arts but not science. I asked her how an organ pipe is tuned pointing out that a rocket motor can resonate like an organ pipe and could lead to failure.

Question 1 How is an organ pipe tuned? (As supplied it is over length).

Question 2 How can pressure waves in a rocket be suppressed?

B C Howard

Change of mailing address

Following the appointment of Richard Morrell as Treasurer the membership duties have been separated from the Treasurer's duties.

Please note any postal communication regarding membership of the Friends Association should now be sent to:

Len Stuart
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Beaulieu Drive
Waltham Abbey
Essex EN9 1JY

email enquiries can be made at WARGMFA@btinternet.com

In Memory

Denis Ashby.

The plaque is located on the telegraph pole close to the Green Hut. Denis worked for BT for a number of years and set up this pole in L168 where the fire alarm was first demonstrated. Although canals were of great interest to Denis it was felt that we did not have a suitable site to place his memorial by a canal.



Peter Hart.

Peter laid the block paving for the foundation for the waterwheel built by the “Friends” and donated and erected the solar power system so it was felt that his plaque should be placed on the wall of the pool.



Food Anagrams

1. Rustled
2. Oblater
3. Leanpot
4. Cheap amble
5. Tourag
6. Enmetacam
7. Bullbays
8. Rawfold Adals
9. Beingume
10. Aratter cause
11. Littons
12. Cadrust macer
13. Teletom
14. Bolster Ordermith
15. Gazealbion
16. Blame cause
17. Cothists throb
18. Pastation
19. Promroll
20. Cameodine

B C Howard

At the end of his sermon, a Methodist preacher said, "Anyone with 'special needs' who wants to be prayed over, please come forward to the front by the altar."

With that, Tyrone got in line. When it was his turn, the Preacher asked,

"Tyrone, what do you want me to pray about for you?" Tyrone replied,

"Preacher, I needs you to pray for help wiff my hearing." The preacher put one finger of one hand in Tyrone's ear, placed his other hand on top of Tyrone's head, and then prayed and prayed and prayed. He prayed a "blue streak" for Tyrone, and the whole congregation joined in with great enthusiasm.

After a few minutes, the preacher removed his hands, stood back and asked, "Tyrone how is your hearing now?"

Tyrone answered, "I don't know, Man. It ain't 'til next week."

Getting older...

A couple in their nineties are both having problems remembering things. During a check-up, the doctor tells them that they're physically okay, but they might want to start writing things down to help them remember ..

Later that night, while watching TV, the old man gets up from his chair. "Want anything while I'm in the kitchen?" he asks.

"Will you get me a bowl of ice cream?"

"Sure."

"Don't you think you should write it down so you can remember it?" she asks.

"No, I can remember it."

“Well, I'd like some strawberries on top, too. Maybe you should write it down, so as not to forget it?”

He says, “I can remember that. You want a bowl of ice cream with strawberries.”

“I'd also like whipped cream. I'm certain you'll forget that, write it down?” she asks.

Irritated, he says, “I don't need to write it down, I can remember it! Ice cream with strawberries and whipped cream - I got it, for goodness sake!”

Then he toddles into the kitchen. After about 20 minutes, the old man returns from the kitchen and hands his wife a plate of bacon and eggs.

She stares at the plate for a moment.

“Where's my toast?”

=====

An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house, and after eating, the wives left the table and went into the kitchen.

The two gentlemen were talking, and one said, 'Last night we went out to a new restaurant and it was really great. I would recommend it very highly.

The other man said, “What is the name of the restaurant?”

The first man thought and thought and finally said, “What's the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know, the one that's red and has thorns.”

“Do you mean a rose?”

“Yes, that's the one,” replied the man. He then turned towards the kitchen and yelled, “Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?”

=====

A man was telling his neighbour, "I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me four thousand dollars, but it's state of the art. It's perfect."

"Really," answered the neighbour. "What kind is it?"

"Twelve thirty."

=====

This is my favourite

Morris, an 82 year-old man, went to the doctor to get a physical.

A few days later, the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm.

A couple of days later, the doctor spoke to Morris and said, "You're really doing great, aren't you?" Morris replied, "Just doing what you said, Doc: 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful.'"

The doctor said, "I didn't say that.. I said, 'You've got a heart murmur; be careful.'"

Imperial Service Medals





By the end of 1991 the North Site had closed but the Social Club was still open when these photographs were taken by a RARDE photographer on 6th December that year. The event was the presentation of Imperial Service Medals to long-serving members of ERDE/PERME/RARDE staff. Amongst the recipients were, if my memory serves me right, Ray Adams, Norman Foster, Harry Wilson, Jean Paddick, Jimmy James and Dai Matthias, well supported by over fifty friends and family members. It was obviously a “refreshing” do; note the two drinks glasses at the feet of Jimmy James. The solemnity of the occasion was somewhat broken when a nameless voice from the back of the room said “Oh bless my soul” (actually something a bit stronger than that) “that’s the first bit of metal you’ll take out of this factory legally”. Fear of legal action prevents me saying who the remark was addressed to, but I am sure many of you can guess! I fear that the passage of time over these twenty six years means that I cannot name all the faces; but those that I can include Dave Lee (scowling), Diane Howse (chatting to Peter (Ike) Eickhoff, Eamonn

Colclough, Tom Lewis, Jill Kemp, Mary Tingle, Lynn Lennard, Jim Burgess, Hilary Brown, Peter Honey. Ross Miller, Ken Bascombe, Eric Kendrew, Geoff and Pam Colley, Ray Vaughan, Frances Burgess, Malcolm Stewart, Bernie Downs, Tony Whittaker

Geoff Hooper

Letters

Re Peter Hart and the Silent War

In his article Geoff Hooper asked for any other anecdotes.

I remember Peter and possibly Doug Tasker putting wooden blocks under the rear axle of Charlie Cleve's car (a Ford Corsair 2000E) such that the driving wheels were not touching the ground. Then when Charlie came rushing out after Peter had carried out the clock trick, jumped into his car and attempted to speed off, the car remained stationary. It then took Charlie a while to work out what had happened because the driving wheels, when stationary, looked as if they were in contact with the ground.

Ray East

The following message was dictated to Dave Debenham.

Dear Friends,

Greetings from home in Bishops Stortford. In my 87th year I am now bedbound but otherwise well. I enjoy regular visits from David Debenham, ex WA and now in Sevenoaks. If a contemplative life alone and in bed sounds hard, it is not.

Carers and nearby family make my life quite relaxing and radio keeps me in touch with the world beyond my window.

If anyone one would like to visit me they are welcome. Just give me a ring first in order that I can advise about the door entry routine. My number is 01 279 504552.

Kindest regards

Tom Lewis

Sports quiz answers

1. No Trumps (Bridge)
2. Croquet
3. Cribbage
4. Badminton or beach volleyball
5. Dominoes (sets to double six or double nine)
6. Sailing
7. Archery and shooting
8. Canoe roll/ inversion
9. Bagatelles
10. Lacrosse
11. Diabolo
12. Contract bridge (in play 'dummy' drops out)
13. Chess beginner
14. Mah Jongg
15. Mashie-Niblick
16. A gaff
17. Squash
18. Vigoro
19. Stamp collecting (Roland Hill & penny post)
20. Flat green bowls

Aluminium in Propellant Answers

1 An organ pipe is tuned by cutting two parallel slots in the end of the pipe and the piece of metal between the slots is peeled back like a sardine tin.

2 a) Change the geometry/length of the igniter at the head end.

b) Coat the external surface of the igniter with a sacrificial material.

Food answers

1. Strudel
2. Bloater
3. Polenta
4. Peach Melba
5. Ragout
6. Mincemeat
7. Syllabub
8. Waldorf salad
9. Meringue
10. Tartare sauce
11. Stilton
12. Custard cream
13. Omlette
14. Lobster thermidore
15. Zabaglione
16. Melba sauce
17. Scottish broth
18. Antipasto
19. Rollmop
20. Macedoine (mixed veg)

Julie's Nature Column

This summer at the Mills I noticed that there were many butterflies which was quite surprising considering the amount of rainy days we have had.

I always think that too much wet weather could be a poor year for nesting birds as the insects like to lie low, but this year our nesting Robins produced 3 broods. They like to nest in one of our busy areas where we keep some equipment and people are in and out of the area daily, but this doesn't seem to deter them. I often soak dried insect feed for them and the parents happily come down and take it for their chicks.



Other birds that I have seen include Kestrels, Buzzards, Hobby and the Green Woodpecker. Green Woodpeckers seemed to dip in numbers at the Mills, but this year I have seen more than usual which is good news. I've seen them regularly at the southern end of the site and recently near Walton House a lot.

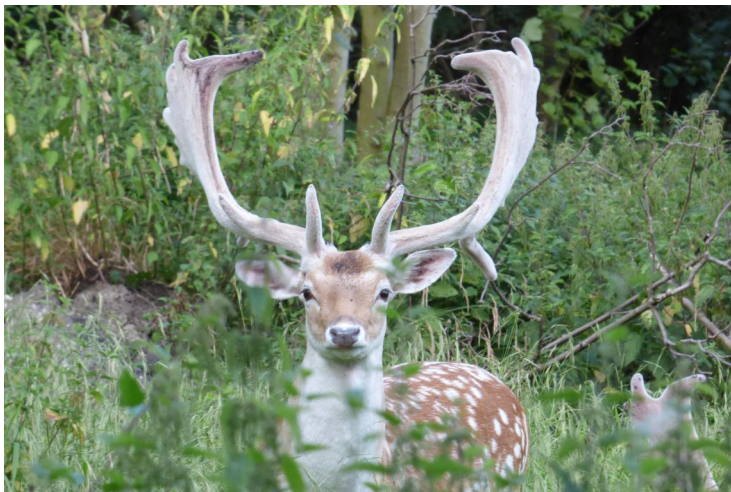
A few months ago we had our Barn Owl box checked to see if owls were nesting. This was done by someone registered to do so. It was good news and we booked for him to come back and ring the owlets at a later date. The rings are registered to the BTO – British Trust for Ornithology and this helps them keep records and also track if they go abroad.



We had 3 healthy Barn owl chicks and in the next photo you will see they differ in size. From the smallest to the largest can be about 10 days apart in hatching.



The deer have just shed the velvet on their antlers which means some order will be restored and the youngsters won't get away with being cheeky any more as the big males won't give way to them. When they are in velvet the deer have to be very careful not to damage it as it will affect antler growth. The rut season isn't far away and I can already see that the males are becoming muscular, especially around the neck area. They go through an amazing transformation due to hormone levels changing in the body. Here's a picture of a deer in velvet.



I have done a few evening wildlife watches and it's such a lovely sight to see so many different animals coming together and sharing the same space. There doesn't seem to be any conflict, they just go about their business, mostly looking for food. The badgers steer clear if there are too many deer, mainly to avoid injury, but they hang about until the deer move on and enjoy eating what food the deer have left.



I have seen so much wildlife that it would be impossible to tell you everything, my sightings include Herons, Kingfishers, Muntjac, Foxes and near the beginning of the year a Red Kite. One thing I can say is that it's never boring and never lacking wildlife at the Mills, no matter what time of year it is.

Julie Matthews
Mills Nature Conservationist

