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Gunpowder & Explosives History Group

**GEHG SPRING MEETING : Saturday 21 MAY 2005 : TO BE HELD IN THE
SALTPETRE HOUSE, WALTHAM ABBEY ROYAL GUNPOWDER MILLS**

THE WARGM ARCHIVE : FAMILY PAPERS OF SIR FREDERICK ABEL

The main theme of the day will be the archives at the Royal Gunpowder Mill. We shall have introductory papers by Malcolm McLaren who was the librarian and archivist at the works whilst it was still part of the MoD network, and by Les Tucker who is now trying to establish the scope of the surviving papers, following their distribution to different archives, and their use by a series of professional architects and designers.

We are privileged to have with us on this occasion, Professor Seymour Mauskopf of Duke University, North Carolina, the distinguished historian of science and technology. He will present his initial thoughts on the family papers of Sir Frederick Abel, recently made available through the generosity of his descendants in placing them on loan at the WARGM. Sir Frederick was a War Department chemist of the later C19th, closely involved with the manufacture of guncotton and cordite. We hope to welcome members of the Abel family on this occasion. Their surname, Wallis, indicates a further interesting link, with the famous scientist and inventor, Barnes Wallis.

PROGRAMME

- 10.15 Meet in the Saltpetre House where coffee, tea, and biscuits will be served
10.45 **Morning Session** Chairman's Introduction
Malcolm McLaren, 'The Old Archive at Waltham Abbey'
Les Tucker, 'The Challenge of Sorting and Listing Surviving Material'
11.30 Seymour Mauskopf, 'New Light on the Career of Sir Frederick Abel'
12.30 Discussion
13.0 **Lunch.** Tea and coffee will be served, but bring sandwiches with you to give time for looking at the site. Light refreshments will be available in the café
14.0 **Afternoon Session** Jenny Webb & Anne Donaldson, 'News from Ballincollig, the Royal Gunpowder Works in County Cork, Ireland'
14.30 Wayne Cocroft, 'Some Surviving Physical Structures at Waltham Abbey associated with Sir Frederick Abel'
15.0 Wayne will lead a tour of the features on the site associated with Abel
16.0 Return to Saltpetre House for tea and discussion, after which Meeting concludes
Cost will be £10, to include all refreshments but not lunch. We must know if you are hoping to attend so that entry to the site and seating can be arranged. Please contact Brenda ssxbjb@bath.ac.uk; Wayne wayne.cocroft@english-heritage.org.uk

Brenda Buchanan

21 April 2005