

On Her Majesty's Service

WASC 10

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CRDD - SUCCESSION OF OFFICERS
1/2 OF RGPF (TABLE WITH NAMES
AND TITLES OF OFFICE HOLDERS
1779 - 28.7.1945

SEE UPDATED LIST IN

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SUCCESSION OF OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF THE ROYAL GUNPOWDER FACTORY, 1779-1945.

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IN THE YEAR 1779 GENERAL SIR WILLIAM (THEN CAPTAIN) CONGREVE WAS SENT TO PLYMOUTH TO EXAMINE THE FLEETS GUNPOWDER, ON WHICH HE REPORTED THAT ONLY FOUR BARRELS WERE SERVICEABLE IN THE WHOLE OF HIS MAJESTY'S SHIPS. THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS WAS UNDOUBTEDLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT ALL POWDER WAS PRIVATELY MANUFACTURED & THAT THE PROOF TO WHICH IT WAS SUBJECTED WAS NOT SUCH AS TO ENSURE ITS BEING OF GOOD QUALITY. THE DISCOVERY OF THE GROSS FRAUDS LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT GUNPOWDER FACTORY AT WALTHAM ABBEY WHICH ABLY SUPERINTENDED BY SIR WILLIAM CONGREVE SUPPLIED THE ARMY & NAVY WITH POWDER OF GREATLY IMPROVED QUALITY.

SUCCESSION OF OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF THE ROYAL GUNPOWDER FACTORY, WALTHAM ABBEY.

PERIOD		NAME
FROM	TO	
1779		SIR W. CONGREVE. <u>STOREKEEPER</u>
1787	1805	MR. JAS. WRIGHT. (1)
6. 4. 1805	1818	MR. H.S. MATTHEWS.
20. 1. 1818	17. 6. 1825	MR. E. MIDDLETON. (DIED 17. 6. 1825)
29. 6. 1825	14. 10. 1831	MR. C. WILKS. <u>DEPUTY STOREKEEPER.</u>
15. 10. 1831	1832	MR. JAS. WRIGHT. (2)
		<u>IN CHARGE OF THE ROYAL GUNPOWDER MANUFACTORY.</u>
13. 10. 1832	1. 7. 1840	LT. COL. C.T. MOODY C.R.E.
		<u>INSPECTOR OF GUNPOWDER.</u>
2. 7. 1840	1845	LT. COL. C.T. MOODY. C.R.E.
27. 11. 1845	30. 6. 1852	CAPT. A.T. TULLOH. R.A.
1. 7. 1852	14. 2. 1854	MAJOR C.C. DICKSON. R.A.
		<u>ACTING INSPECTOR OF GUNPOWDER.</u>
- 2. 1854	- 3. 1854	CAPT. W. HENDERSON. R.A.
- 4. 1854	1855	COL. W.H. ASKWITH. R.A.
		<u>SUPERINTENDENT.</u>
18. 8. 1855	26. 2. 1868	COL. W. H. ASKWITH. R.A.
27. 2. 1868	31. 3. 1875	COL. C.W. YOUNGHUSBAND. R.A.
1. 4. 1875	25. 5. 1875	LT. COL. YOUNG. R.A. (DIED 25. 5. 1875)
		<u>ACTING SUPERINTENDENT.</u>
26. 5. 1875	28. 6. 1875	CAPT. MORGAN. R.A.
		<u>SUPERINTENDENT.</u>
29. 6. 1875	30. 6. 1880	COL. R.J. HAY.
1. 7. 1880	30. 6. 1885	COL. C.B. BRACKENBURY R.A.
1. 7. 1885	17. 5. 1892	MAJ. GEN. W.H. NOBLE. (DIED 17. 5. 1892)
		<u>ACTING SUPERINTENDENT.</u>
1. 4. 1892	30. 9. 1892	MAJOR F.W.J. BARKER R.A. (APPOINTED DURING GEN. NOBLE'S ILLNESS.)
		<u>SUPERINTENDENT.</u>
1. 10. 1892	13. 7. 1894	LT. COL. W. Mc CLINTOCK R.A.
		<u>ACTING SUPERINTENDENT.</u>
31. 5. 1894	26. 7. 1894	MAJ. F. L. NATHAN R.A.
		<u>SUPERINTENDENT.</u>
27. 7. 1894	20. 1. 1900	COL. J.B. ORMSBY.
21. 1. 1900	4. 8. 1909	BT. COL. SIR F.L. NATHAN R.A. (SUPT. OF R.G. & S.A. FACTORIES FROM 8. 2. 1909 TO 4. 8. 1909)
6. 8. 1909	14. 12. 1917	MAJOR F.T. FISHER R.A. (SUPT. OF R.G. & S.A. FACTORIES.)
15. 12. 1917	11. 7. 1934	LT. COL. P.H. EVANS. R.A.
12. 7. 1934	31. 7. 1939	DR. R.C. BOWDEN O.B.E. PH.D., M. Sc., F.I.C., M.I. CHEM. E., F.C.S.
1. 8. 1939	31. 12. 1943	MR. P.G. KNAPMAN, M.B.E., B.Sc., F.I.C.
1. 1. 1944	28. 7. 1945	<u>MANAGING CHEMIST.</u> MR. R.F. SMITH. B.Sc. A.R.I.C. A.M.I. CHEM. E.

ON 28TH. JULY 1945 THE ROYAL GUNPOWDER FACTORY WAS CLOSED DOWN AS AN ORDNANCE FACTORY & WAS TRANSFERRED TO CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT ARMAMENT RESEARCH DEPT. FOR USE AS AN EXPLOSIVES EXPERIMENTAL ESTABLISHMENT.

IN THE YEAR 1779 GENERAL SIR WILLIAM (THEN CAPTAIN) CONGREVE WAS SENT TO PLYMOUTH TO EXAMINE THE FLEETS GUNPOWDER, ON WHICH HE REPORTED THAT ONLY FOUR BARRELS WERE SERVICEABLE IN THE WHOLE OF HIS MAJESTY'S SHIPS. THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS WAS UNDOUBTEDLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT ALL POWDER WAS PRIVATELY MANUFACTURED & THAT THE PROOF TO WHICH IT WAS SUBJECTED WAS NOT SUCH AS TO ENSURE ITS BEING OF GOOD QUALITY. THE DISCOVERY OF THE GROSS FRAUDS LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT GUNPOWDER FACTORY AT WALTHAM ABBEY WHICH ABLY SUPERINTENDED BY SIR WILLIAM CONGREVE SUPPLIED THE ARMY & NAVY WITH POWDER OF GREATLY IMPROVED QUALITY.

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Portraits of the Superintendents

In 1787 the Gunpowder mills were taken over by the Crown under the direction of Major William Congreve, then deputy controller of the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich.

For many years, the Waltham Abbey works was known as the Royal Gunpowder Factory. After the Second World War, the site became a research establishment with a number of different titles.

These photographs record the directors and superintendents of the site spanning an uninterrupted period from 1845 until the site closed in 1991.

These venerable gentlemen effectively shaped the course of our history.