

# On Her Majesty's Service

WASC1421



LS/JRS

14 February, 1964

Dear Sir,

The situation regarding the "Short History of the Royal Gunpowder Factory" is that the first stocks were exhausted and a reprint which has been on order for some time is still awaited. To avoid further delay, and to save the trouble of a loan, we are sending you for retention one of some spare copies we obtained for our library. We trust that this closes the matter satisfactorily for you (and we shall obtain a replacement in due course from the reprint).

The second matter you raised in your letter of the 6th is the whereabouts of the manuscript by John Ticking. I regret that we do not know this and it is not known by the Librarian at Royal Armament Research and Development Establishment, Fort Halstead, with whom I have checked. Since we have some interest in historical matters I should be happy to try and locate it for you. I have already written to one possible source of information but in case I have to go further would be glad to hear what enquiries, if any, you have already made and so avoid treading the same ground.

Yours faithfully,

(J.R. Seymour)  
Librarian,  
for Director,  
Explosives Research and  
Development Establishment

C.P. Davies, Esq.,  
7, Narrabeen Road,  
Cheriton,  
Folkestone,  
Kent.

LS/JRS

19th February, 1964

Dear Mr. Bryant,

I have been asked by a private enquirer whether I know the location of a manuscript account of the Faversham Powder Mill by John Ticking dated 1798. Illustrations from it are reproduced in Hodgetts' Rise and Progress of the British Explosives Industry, 1909.

Not unusually I have had to reply in the negative but remembering your enquiries into Faversham wonder whether you can help.

Yours sincerely,

(J.R. Seymour)  
Librarian,  
for Director,  
Explosives Research and  
Development Establishment

C.S. Bryant, Esq.,  
70, West Hill Road,  
St. Leonards,  
Sussex.

22 Oaks Road, E59  
Fenton, Kent.  
February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1964

Dear Mr Seymour,

I regret to say I do not know the whereabouts of the manuscript about Faversham procedures in 1798. I remember very well reading of it in Hodgett and thinking what a valuable account it was. I will however within a few days go and see the County Archivist at Maidstone; even if he doesn't know he may be able to trace the document. Moreover I believe that numbers of Faversham records have been deposited at Maidstone recently; I don't know if these include some from the powder mills but they may do so. I take it, by the way, since you enclose photostat copies of pages that the departmental copy of Hodgett's has turned up.



I heard from Mr. Jovein some time back that the Shimmonds history of R&PF had now been printed. Would it be possible for me to borrow a copy? I hope to get over to Wellham in the spring and should like to have another chat with you.

Please note my change of address.

Yours sincerely,  
D.S. Jovant.

I. Of course your private inquiries may have already tried Kent County Archives, but I want to call there so shall be going to Maidstone anyway.



7 Narrabeen Rd. E 60  
Cheriton. Folkestone. Kent.

23rd. Feby. 1964.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter & for sending me Simmons 'short history of the Royal Gunpowder Factory at Waltham Abbey'. I have read the with very great interest and pleasure & a few minor points have occurred to me which perhaps I might discuss with the author - do I write to him through you? The chief of these points is the location of the cylinder work always described as being at Hylthe but in fact I think in the adjacent parish of Saltwood where there is still a "cylinder college". I have a certain amount of information about these works but nothing as



early, as 1787 [p.23].

With regards Bartholomew BENNET [p.12] I have a note of his death from the "Kentish Gazette" of Dec. 1795 in which he is described as 'one of the oldest jurats of the town of Faversham and many years Clerk of the Works to the Royal Powder Mty.'

From the "Kentish Register" of Jan'y. 1795 is an account of an explosion at the Faversham powder mill on 9th. & a fire on the 2nd. "in the cylinder house" which suggests that there was very little delay after Br. Watson's suggestion in setting up the new process at Faversham.

Incidentally the earliest reference I have so far found to gunpowder mfr. at Faversham is in "State Papers Domestic" 1652-3 - a long time after their supposed commencement.



I was greatly interested in the illustration [p. 113] of "The last of the pair of mills" - I examined a very similar mill at Chart Mill, Faversham, last summer - but do not know if it still remains.

The plate - p. 111 - of the regulatory device for the water wheel is specially interesting to me - such a device was occasionally fitted to corn mills & I have seen two - one at Fourhill Horsham, & one at Crabble Mill Dover It is also illustrated in Joseph Glynn's ... Power of Water ... 1877.

I have a cutting from the "Daily Telegraph" of 28 Dec. 1954 in which the preservation of the last pair of mills at Waltham Abbey is discussed - was the preservation actually carried out?

Is Frederick BRAYSON'S M.S. [Supply 5/762]

readily available at the Public Record Office?

With regard to John Tschering's manuscript - I have only made enquiry for this in the London library of the I.C.I. It was suggested to me that I contact Dr. M. F. C. Paeji, I.C.I. Stevenston ays, but I'm afraid I have not done so. I should be most interested to know if you succeed in tracing it - it is 32 years older than Drayson's account, and altho' the drawings are very crude compared with his it would be a valuable find. It is unfortunate that no clue as to its ownership is given in the Rise & progress of the British Explosives industry. There seems to me a close and interesting parallel between some of the machines used in the powder mills & those used in the manufacture of flour & I may say that even as late as World War I a Cambridge millwright - a specialist on flour mill work was employed occasionally at Faversham P. Mill.

J. R. Seymour, Esq.

Yours faithfully - David.



22 Oaks Road, E61  
Sunderden, Kent.

March 2<sup>nd</sup> ~~February 25<sup>th</sup>~~ 1964

Dear Mr. Seymour,

I have been to the county archives office; they do not know the whereabouts of the Faversham document you asked about but are very interested and quite keen to make enquiries. Before doing so however they would like to know what sources your enquirer has already tried; they are naturally not anxious to go over ground your man has already covered. Has he been eg. to the Public Record office? If he will say where he has been and failed to get the information, I will ask Maidstone to make further enquiries.

Yours sincerely,

b.s. Bryant

P.S. Curli's and Harvey was up till

1511

the formation of ICI, a large firm  
of explosives manufacturers which  
had grown over many years by  
the absorption of smaller concerns.

I seem to remember having seen  
at the county archives that some  
of the records of burstis and Harvey  
Kentish gunpowder mills (they had  
works at Faversham, Dartford and  
Lomburidge) are in ICI. archives. I  
wonder if your enquirer has  
tried there.

best  
B



WAC 105/02

4<sup>th</sup> March, 1964

Dear Mr. Davies,

Thank you for your letter of the 23rd February and for letting me know the scope of your enquiries for the manuscript by John Ticking. I am sorry to say that my own first enquiries for it have been unfruitful but I have others in hand and will let you know how they fare.

I agree that it is a pity that Hodgetts does not make the ownership or location clear but wonder if it is true that he does not give a clue. On p. 29 he says "now owned by Messrs. Curtis's and Harvey." ~~The phrase is ambiguously placed and I do not know who Curtis and Harvey were (or are). Do you?~~

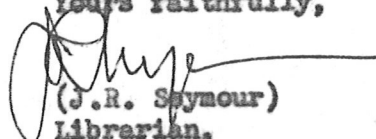
(I do now!) JRS

The major part of your letter comprises points you wish to put to the author of the "Short History of ... Waltham Abbey." He, Mr. W.H. Simmons, is not in government service, but we have forwarded a complete copy of your letter to him at his last known private address.

I can help a little on two of the minor points you raise:-

- (i) No old mills are preserved at Waltham Abbey. The last were finally demolished in 1956. The original painting "The last pair of Mills" is here at E.R.D.E.
- (ii) Before making a visit to the Public Record Office to see any particular document or group of documents I would advise a preliminary letter stating the date of the intended visit and what it is wanted to inspect. Certainly many of the "Supply 5" documents are kept in a remote store and can not be seen on the day of asking and the Drayson "Treatise ..." should still be in P.R.O. custody but may well be in remote store as indicated above. At E.R.D.E. we have a complete photocopy of this work. We are of course anxious not to lose it but would be prepared to lend it to you if you wish. The copying is not entirely satisfactory but you might find it more convenient having at home.

Yours faithfully,



(J.R. Spymour)  
Librarian,  
for Director,  
Explosives Research and  
Development Establishment

C.P. Davies, Esq.,  
7, Narrabeen Road,  
Cheriton,  
Folkestone, Kent.

WAA 105/02

E63  
4th March, 1964

Dear Mr. Simmons,

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter dated 23rd February sent to me by Mr. C.P. Davies, of 7, Narrabeen Road, Cheriton, Folkestone, Kent. Also enclosed for your information is a copy of my reply to him.

You will see that the bulk of this letter comprises points that Mr. Davies would like to put to you as the author of the "Short History of R.G.P.F." and I trust that you will agree it was best to forward the copy to you for this purpose. (I hope you can read the copy! Not being certain that you are still at the above address I preferred to hold on to the original).

The manuscript which Mr. Davies wishes to trace (and I should like to know about it and perhaps obtain a copy for E.R.D.E.) is described on page 29 of Hodgetts' Rise and Progress of the British Explosives Industry (1909) as "a MS book evidently compiled by John Ticking, Master Worker of the Royal Faversham Mills in the year 1798, now owned by Messrs. Curtis's and Harvey." A number of illustrations from it are reproduced in the same book.

Yours sincerely,



(J.R. Seymour)  
Librarian,  
for Director,  
Explosives Research and  
Development Establishment

Mr. W.H. Simmons,  
Five Elms,  
Hamp Avenue,  
Bridgwater,  
Somerset.



WAA 105/02

H March, 1964

Dear Mr. Bryant,

Thank you for your letter of the 2nd and for the trouble you have taken in enquiring for the John Ticking manuscript at Maidstone.

At the time I wrote to you first I did not know what steps the enquirer had taken to find it himself and I wrote to you in the hope that you could put your finger on it without trouble and so avoid asking around. However, I did write asking him what he had done and he says that the only place he has tried is "the London Library of I.C.I." It seems that this enquiry was left somewhat inconclusively and that in view of your information about the Curtis's and Harvey archives it would be worth clearing it up with them.

Thank you for your offer to take the matter further through the County Archives people. However, before troubling you and them again I will check the P.R.O. and get the I.C.I. question settled. I will let you know how I get on with these and if unsuccessful would be most grateful for any additional assistance.

Incidentally, the enquirer who started all this is a Mr. C.P. Davies of 7, Narrabeen Road, Cheriton, Nr. Folkestone. He is quite unknown to me outside this enquiry and when I first wrote to you I did not feel I could disclose his name and address. However, it is clear that he has a considerable knowledge and interest in gunpowder matters and mills in the south of England and you might like to get in touch with him some time. Would you mind if I gave him your name and address for the same purpose?

I understand that Dr. Johnson has recently sent you a copy of the history by Mr. Simmons.

Yours sincerely,

(J.R. Seymour)  
Librarian,  
for Director,  
Explosives Research and  
Development Establishment

C.S. Bryant, Esq.,  
22, Oaks Road,  
Tenterden,  
Kent.

3 MAR 1964

E 65

FIVE ELMS  
HAMP AVE.  
BRIDGWATER  
S. 3 64

The Director  
ERDE, Wellman Allen, Essex

Dear Sir,

Your Ref. - WAA 105/02

Many thanks for your letter of March 4<sup>th</sup>, enclosing correspondence from Mr. C.P. Davies. I am afraid I can't help him very much, but will do what I can.

Incidentally, you may be interested to hear that I wrote to J.C.I. Arden about Tuckin's note book, and got no answer.

Yours sincerely  
W.D. Summers.

WAC 152/02

9 March, 1964

Dear Dr. Paige,

Manuscript book by John Ticking (?)  
ca. 1798 describing gunpowder mills  
at Faversham, Kent.

I wonder if you can tell us where this manuscript book is? We were asked if we knew by a private enquirer and should be glad to find out about it for our own interest as well as his.

Before coming to us he tells us that he had approached "the London Library of I.C.I." They suggested that he wrote to you but he has not done so. All we have done is to ask a couple of persons who might have known about it privately and we have asked the Kent County Record Office at Maidstone. They do not know of it but think many of the Curtis and Harvey records among which this might have been were transferred to I.C.I. So it was inevitable that you should be caught up in the matter!

The only evidence we have for the existence of the book is in Hodgetts' "Rise and Progress of the British Explosives Industry" (1909). There is a reference to it in the text on page 29 and several illustrations from it are reproduced. (You probably have Hodgetts but for your convenience I enclose a photocopy of p. 29 and of one of the illustrations.) Our copy of Hodgetts is incomplete but I think that he does not anywhere else make clear where the book was.

I hope that this matter will not put you to too much trouble. On my part it is a pleasure to have to write to you since it recalls the visit which Mr. McLaren and I enjoyed with you a couple of years back.

Yours sincerely,

(J.R. Seymour)  
Librarian,  
for Director,  
Explosives Research and  
Development Establishment

Dr. M.F.C. Paige,  
Librarian,  
Nobel Division,  
Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd.,  
Stevenston,  
Ayrshire.

7 Narrabeen Rd.

Cheriton, Folkestone, Kent.

12<sup>th</sup> April, 1964.

Dear Mr. Seymour,

Thank you for your letter [WAC 105/02] of  
4<sup>th</sup> March.

I am indeed sorry to hear that no mills  
have been preserved at Waltham Abbey - I feel  
this is the more regrettable - as none probably have  
been preserved elsewhere. As far as I know of the  
several Kent and Sussex mills only the numerous  
Chatham mill at Faversham retains any old mach-  
inery - and the future of this, I believe, very un-  
certain.

Curtis & Hasmer's business activities were so  
very extensive that there is no knowing where  
they kept Fitching's book - even if it was actually  
in their possession. Do you think the reference on  
p. 29 of the 'Rise & progress of the British Explosives Industry'  
refers to the book or the mill? It might have been  
retained at Faversham, or held at their head  
office in London or perhaps (though this is perhaps  
unlikely) retained by one of the partners in his  
private library. The title books of the Faversham mills  
for some of them are at the Kent Archive Office, but  
I'm sure they haven't got this MS. - I know the staff  
there & feel sure they would have told me about  
such a treasure.



1241  
I have had a most interesting letter from  
Mr. Simmons. He implies that Drayson's M.S. is  
actually at the P.R.O. but I should not think of  
attempting to see it without making a requisition  
well in advance. I shall, in any case, hope to avail  
myself of your kind offer to borrow your photo-  
copy later in the year.

Yours faithfully

Forster

T. N. Simmons, Esq.

ENR 3132  
E 163

12 February 1979

Mr. Malcolm McLaren  
PERME  
Powdermill Lane  
Waltham Abbey  
Essex

Dear Mr. McLaren,

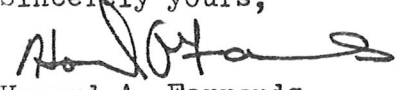
I would like to ask for your help again and hope that it is not too much of an imposition.

In reading through 'The Rise and Progress of the British Explosives Industry' published under the Auspices of the VII Industrial Congress of Applied Chemistry by its Explosive Section (Whittaker and Co., London, 1909) I ran across a reference to a manuscript book compiled by a John Ticking, Master Worker of the Royal Faversham Mills in 1798. Curtis's and Harvey Ltd., once owners of the Faversham Mills, seemed to have had the manuscript book in 1909. Curtis's and Harvey were merged with Nobel's Explosives Co. in 1918 which in 1926 merged with other companies to form Imperial Chemical Industries. I wrote to Mr. A. A. Cole, the Librarian of ICI but he has no knowledge of the manuscript book. Mr. Percival of the Faversham Society has heard of the book but does not know of its whereabouts. Are you familiar with this work? I would certainly like to track it down if it still is in existence.

I have been in touch with Mr. George D. Kelleher regarding information about the Ballincollig Gunpowder Mill. He mentioned some material in the PRO which I shall check but also writes that you have a map and a report about Ballincollig. Would it be possible to see this material or have photocopies made? The Ballincollig Mill was not sold (according to Mr. Kelleher) to the Ordnance Office until 1805. This date is a little beyond the scope of my thesis but I would like some information about the mill in the eighteenth century, if there was any relationship between it and the Ordnance Office.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,



Howard A. Farrands

Address label stuck to envelope

Howard A Farrands  
Flat 3  
Wolsey Court  
8 Dartaston Road  
Wimbledon  
London SW19 4LG

E164

Howard A Farrands Esq  
Flat 3  
Wolsey Court  
8 Dartaston Road  
Wimbledon  
London, SW19 4LG

WAA/105/04 - ENQ 3132

23 February 1979

Dear Mr Farrands

Thank you for your letter of 12 February concerning the John Ticking manuscript book of 1798 and the Ballincollig Gunpowder Mills in Ireland.

We carried out a thorough search in 1964 for the Ticking Manuscript making approaches to a number of local (Faversham), County, Government and commercial organisations who may have some record of its whereabouts.

It is unlikely that anyone would knowingly destroy such an item but the possibility exists that it may have fallen into private hands and may not reappear for many years.

I am enclosing a photocopy of the map at Ballincollig Powder Mills. The original lies, unindexed, in a collection of Congreve Rocket Papers in the Public Record Office as PRO/WO/44/643 together with rather more flimsy drawings of the Ballincollig buildings.

All but one of my references to the date of the Royal Powder Mills at Ballincollig give the dates of 1794 or 1795. However I received a letter from George Kelleher in February 1973 which stated that the Mills were founded by Charles Henry Leslie in about 1793, sold to the Board of Ordnance in 1804 and then re-sold into private ownership (Tobin's) in 1835. Although I have made no separate written record I am sure that I have come across entries in the late 18th Century letter books for Waltham Abbey referring to Ballincollig as a Government factory. Perhaps a similar state of affairs existed there as at Waltham Abbey where the Government took over in 1787 using Government employees to produce Government powder although the actual deed of release from John Walton to the Crown is dated 1795.

I shall continue to look into my old records and if anything comes to light I shall write to you again.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

M McLaren  
Head of Library Services

FLAT 3 WOLSEY COURT,  
8 DARLSTON ROAD,  
WIMBLEDON,  
LONDON.  
S.W.19. 4LG.

7 August 1979

Mr. Malcolm McLaren  
Head of Library Services  
PERME  
Powdermill Lane  
Waltham Abbey  
Essex EN9 1BP

Dear Mr. McLaren,

When I wrote to you on 12 February about the John Ticking MS I mentioned that Mr. Arthur Percival of the Faversham Society had heard of the MS but did not know of its whereabouts. I neglected to mention that Mr. Percival did say that when the Chart Mills at Faversham were being restored Mr. Andrew Osborne (who was involved in the restoration) did run the MS to earth somewhere in Hampshire or Dorset. Strangely enough Mr. Osborne denied knowing anything about the MS. Mr. Percival thinks that it might be in private hands in Hampshire. That certainly does not pin point the location of the document but it is a small lead and perhaps some library in Hampshire might know the owner. But perhaps you have already investigated this area.

Shortly before Brigadier O.F.G. Hogg passed away he told me about an old letter book, originally kept at the Factory at Waltham Abbey, which begins with a letter to Major Congreve dated 6 February 1789. He said that these Waltham Abbey papers might be in the Public Record Office. Can you tell me where these letters might be kept? I would like to examine them any other 18th century documents pertaining to the Waltham Abbey Gunpowder Mills that you might know about. In your letter of 23 February you mentioned the 'late 18th century letter books for Waltham Abbey.' Could these be the same papers Brigadier Hogg told me about?

Again I would be most grateful for your kind help.

Yours sincerely,



Howard A. Farrands



Howard A Farrands Esq  
 Flat 3  
 Wolsey Court  
 8 Darlaston Road  
 Wimbledon  
 London  
 SW19 4LG

ENQ 3132/3178

14 August 1079

Dear Mr Farrands

Many thanks for your letter of 7 August with the news, albeit unconfirmed of the Ticking MS. It is the only lead I have had since first reading the "Rise and Progress of the British Explosives Industry", 1909, and I shall raise it with Arthur Percival when I have lunch with him shortly.

Almost certainly the old letter book mentioned by the late Brigadier Hogg would have been one which is now in the Public Record Office. The Royal Gunpowder Factory records exist in the PRO series of Supply 5 papers as Items Nos 188 to 865 inclusive with a few later items, 975-984. The papers date from 1787 when the Government took over from private ownership until about 1945 when the Royal Gunpowder Factory closed and the research establishment came onto being. The early papers exist in date order in unindexed "In" and "Out" letter books but later ones are grouped according to subject.

The full listing of Supply 5 papers can be consulted at the PRO at Ruskin Avenue, Kew. It is too large to have copied but I enclose the first two pages of the RGPF items as an example. These contain all the 18th century papers with the exception of 633, 666, 683 and 684.

The Faversham records are far less extensive and I enclose a typescript of the complete list. Of course there will be isolated papers originating from Waltham Abbey and Faversham in the "In" letter books of other organisations.

To consult the Supply 5 papers it will be necessary to make application at Kew and then call back later because they are in store at Ashridge. It may still be possible to see them at Ashridge itself which adjacent to Ashridge Management College in Ashridge Park which is located by turning to the right at Berkhamsted on the A41 from London.

Yours sincerely

M McLAREN  
 Head of Library Services

E167

FLAT 3 WOLSEY COURT,  
8 DARLASTON ROAD,  
WIMBLEDON,  
LONDON.  
S.W.19. 4LG.

26 March 1979

Mr. Malcolm McLaren  
PERME  
Powdermill Lane  
Waltham Abbey  
Essex

Dear Mr. McLaren,

I must apologise for not writing sooner to thank you for your letter and plan of the Ballincollig Mill. Research, teaching and illness has put me a little behind in my correspondence.

I agree that there is little chance of locating the John Ticking MS but I shall keep my weather eye out for any clue and let you know if I get any leads.

Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely,



Howard A. Farrands