

WASC 1904

Newspaper reports  
on future of RARDE



# Waltham Abbey

WEST ESSEX

# Gazette

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# Axe threat to RARDE

A WHITEHALL report on the future of the Ministry of Defence establishment at Waltham Abbey has recommended closure, employees were told on Monday.

The announcement came just two days after celebrations were held at the 195 acre site in Powdermill Lane to mark 200 years service to the Crown.

Speaking to Gazette reporter Alan Davis, a spokesman from the Ministry cited "economic factors" as the reason

for the prospective relocation of the 70 scientists involved to a larger site in Kent.

The site on which RARDE (Royal Armament Research

and Development Establishment) stands, first saw the manufacture of gunpowder in the 17th century, and as a Royal powder mill sold ex-

plosives to both North and South during the American Civil War.

If the report's recommendations are adopted, the main site will close by April 1990, with the Sewardstone Road site owned by Royal Ordnance being vacated by mid-89.

The plans come as part of a rationalisation programme by the Government to set up just one research establishment for each of the armed services.

But they leave a question mark over the future of some 50 support staff including technicians and industrialists who comprise half the workforce.

Unions involved have been invited to consider the proposals and make representations before a final recommendation is made to the Secretary of State for Defence, George Younger.

On Tuesday, the Ministry's spokesman dismissed all talk of redundancies as premature.

"No decision has actually been taken," he said.

But if the proposals are adopted it will mean the end of a long-standing relationship between Waltham Abbey and the defence industry and Crown. In the days prior to the first major re-organisation in 1945 the Royal Gunpowder Factory was the town's biggest employer.

And as a research establishment, work continued to focus on new explosives, and better production methods, together with chemical research into propellents for missiles and weapons.

A final decision on the future of RARDE Waltham Abbey is not expected until mid-November.

## Open day for the 200th anniversary

TWO hundred years of continuous contribution to the Crown is being celebrated at the Royal Armament Research and Development Establishment in Waltham Abbey.

The bicentenary celebrations got underway on Saturday with an open day for employees, their families and invited guests.

The establishment is not normally open to the general public because of the nature of the work, and this was the first open day for selected people since 1968.

There was an extensive turnout at the weekend, with a great deal of interest being shown in the various demonstrations and exhibits at the site in Powdermill Lane, and a spokesman said afterwards that it had been a "very successful day."

The varied programme included a band concert, a display of smoke and flares, a police dog display, a demonstration of an F170 gun by

the 27th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, and underwater explosions at Newton's Pool.

In the evening there was a fireworks display and a barbecue. It is intended to make the open day display more accessible locally by staging it as an exhibition in the Epping Forest District Museum in Sun Street, Waltham Abbey, starting in December.

*Cresham  
Waltham  
Mercury  
18.9.87*

## It went like a bomb

THERE was a rare chance to see inside Waltham Abbey's royal arms research establishment when it began its bicentenary celebrations at the weekend.

Employees, their families and guests were able to explore laboratories and other parts of the site.

Next month marks 200 years of nationalised explosives operations on the site which started life as John Walton's gunpowder mill.

*Cresham  
Waltham  
Telegraph  
17.9.1987*



# 50 jobs to go

## FIFTY jobs are to go with the closure next week of a Cheshunt factory.

Everest Double Glazing is shutting down its Delamare Road plant on Thursday and switching production to other areas of the country.

Some of the workforce have been offered the possibility of a transfer to the company's factory at Northampton.

"The reason for closing the Cheshunt factory now is that productivity in the company's factories in the north-east, Scotland and Wales has increased rapidly as a result of automation," explained personnel manager Mr John Stradwick.

"Company production in each of the past three weeks has exceeded £3.3 million in value with the Cheshunt factory contributing around £200,000 of the total."

The factory, which was opened in 1970, had been considered for the production of replacement uPVC windows but insufficient space ruled out that option.

The decision to axe the factory leaves the company without a manufacturing base in the Lea Valley.

From 1972 to 1984 Everest ran two factories in Delamare Road, but two years ago closed one with the loss of 49 jobs.

At the time, declining sales due to the imposition of VAT on home improvements and increases in mortgage rates were blamed.

Despite this week's announcement, the company says it will retain "a substantial presence" in the area, with 270 staff employed at the head office and sales office in Cuffley and Waltham Cross.



Osborne House in Cheshunt was the home of Broxbourne MP Mrs Joan Townsend this week.

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clergy, the police and probation officers.

"I was delighted to accept the invitation to visit and see for myself the important service it offers," Mrs Roe said later.

The MP is pictured with (left to right): Peter Blackburn, committee chairman Gilbert Pusey, the Rev. John Furness, Marion Bengt, the Rev. Michael Banks, committee member Joan Townsend and committee secretary Elizabeth Edmondston.

## Handcuffed during two-hour ordeal

BURGLARS handcuffed a female supervisor to a chair during a raid on the Little Chef restaurant off the A10 near Waltham Cross, on Sunday.

Three white men entered the premises at 10.30 pm when the supervisor was the only member of staff there.

They handcuffed her to a chair while they made their getaway with £1,500 in takings.

A spokesman for the restaurant chain said the supervisor remained bound until her boyfriend became suspicious and tried to telephone her. She was there for two hours.

Police say they have no description of the raiders except that one was carrying a knife and one was wearing a balaclava.

## Shoppers surprise

HIGH Street shoppers in Waltham Cross got a surprise on Saturday afternoon when 10 trolleys, full of everything but the shopping, tore past.

Although the trolleys were pushed by an axeman, pirate and Nazi, there was nothing sinister about the zany event which was a sponsored charity run and part of National Rotaract Week.

the trolleys, from Sainsbury's in the Waltham Cross Pavilion to the Old Pond, Cheshunt.

## CONGA

Nationwide this week, the charity group for 18-28-year-olds is concentrating on fund raising.

Tomorrow a huge conga, led by a band of 500...

## Park authority wants to buy gunpowder site

INTERVENTION of a government minister now seems certain over the disposal of the old gunpowder factory site at Waltham Abbey.

At a committee meeting last Thursday, members of the Lee Valley Park Authority agreed in principle to buy the 250 acres, currently the Royal Armaments Research and Development Establishment (RARDE).

It will not happen until at least 1991, when the Ministry of Defence has finished with it.

But selling government property to a local authority needs special ministerial dispensation from rules requiring it to be sold to the highest bidder on the open market.

This was reported to the authority's development committee when members agreed to safeguard the scheduled ancient monument and area of scientific interest on the site.

The monument is the powder mills where the first gunpowder used by Britain in warfare was made.

## HUNT FOR MEN

POLICE are hunting two men who assaulted a motorist after an accident in Waltham Cross on Saturday evening.

The incident happened at the junction of Swanfield Road and Monument Way.

Two men got out of one vehicle involved — a white Ford Escort van — and approached the driver of the car they had been in collision with.

The shorter of the two, described as about 5ft. 6in. tall, smashed the windscreen of the car with a pick-axe handle, slightly injuring the driver.

His accomplice was wielding an iron bar and described as 5ft. 10in. tall and heavily built.

## WARNING

FORGED £50 notes are turning up in the Lea Valley again. Cheshunt police have warned the public to be on the lookout.



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**BLOOMING BULB FESTIVAL**



Mercury. 14.3.86.

## 350 jobs 'on the line'

**DOUBTS** loomed large over the future of Waltham Abbey's Royal Ordnance site and its 350 jobs this week.

Management representatives have asked the planning authorities (including Epping Forest District Council) to consider alternative uses for their 200-acre site off Sewardstone Road.

They say that combining

**By  
ROLAND  
CURTIS**

# Ordnance bombshell

### Looking at options for 200-acre site

their research and development work with similar activities at Westcott, near Aylesbury, "could be a logical move to improve the company's efficiency."

Site director, Mr Harold Williams, told employees on Wednesday that their work was valuable to the company but available research and development funds had to be used in the most effective way.

At a Press conference, he said: "The message is quite simple. We are looking at the options and talking to the planning authorities about this site."

He said the site was valuable. "We cannot simply lose it. If we did, we would have to find it elsewhere and that is an expensive business.

"We need to be sure what the value of this site is before we commit ourselves."

Mr Williams made assurances that no decisions had been taken and that it was possible that the company could remain at Waltham Abbey if the conditions were right.

Union representatives were more than dubious about the recent moves, though. They pointed out that if the site lost

its Green Belt status, it would be worth millions as housing or industrial land.

A spokesman said this would more than pay for the costs of relocating at Westcott.

He said: "We are pretty depressed and anxious about this. There are 200 acres here and 350 jobs are on the line."

The management say that if relocation were to happen, all reasonable steps would be taken to avoid redundancies, wherever possible.

Though scientific staff might be available for the move, the unions say there are about 150 industrial workers who would not be.

Wednesday's announcements were described as "a blow to Waltham Abbey and in particular to the people employed at the site."

About 35 acres of the Royal Ordnance Small Arms Factory at Enfield has also been included in the planning discussions but this will have no effect on employment there.

Mr Williams said industrial relations were excellent at Waltham Abbey and there would be no question of running the site down. He said they would continue to recruit and to make it more efficient and effective.

*Chestnut and Waltham Telegraph  
13.3.1986*

## EXPLOSIVES FACTORY MAY QUIT ABBEY

ONE of Waltham Abbey's biggest employers may be pulling out of the area with the possible loss of 350 jobs.

Staff at the Royal Ordnance Factory in

Sewardstone Road were called to a special meeting yesterday (Wednesday), where they were told of shock plans to sell the site and move the top secret explosive works to

Buckinghamshire.

Details of the move are still sketchy, much will depend on whether the site can be sold for a good price, said company director Harold Williams.



Lea Valley Mercury 4.4.1986

# PLEDGE OVER GREEN BELT

A warning shot has been fired by Epping Forest District Council in the wake of fears for the future of the Royal Ordnance Explosives Division site at Waltham Abbey.

The council has pledged support for the Green Belt status of the land at Sewardstone Road as part of its local plan for development in and around the town.

Last month it was revealed that management representatives had asked the planning authorities, including Epping Forest, to consider alternative uses for the 200-acre site.

At a Press conference, site director Mr Harold Williams said it was simply a matter of looking at available options. But union representatives were more dubious and pointed out that if the land's Green Belt status was removed it would be worth millions for housing or industry.

## Scrapped

However, the council's plan reaffirms the status of land around the edge of Waltham Abbey as part of the Green Belt, including the Royal Ordnance site.

In addition, previous proposals to release Green Belt land north of Parklands and Paternoster Hill for housing have been scrapped.

The plan — now the subject of a public consultation exercise — also puts forward a special policy to prevent the

redevelopment of Honey Lane Hospital and adjacent vacant land.

Although the future of the Brooker Road allotments site is still in doubt, the council has indicated that it favours retaining it as an open space.

Other developments proposed in the plan include:

- New housing on 3.25 hectares of land of Shernbroke Road.

- Redevelopment for shops/offices of the present branch library, and the Abbeycraft site, both in Highbridge Street.

- "Hi-tech" office/industrial development of the Government House-Abbey Mills site in Highbridge Street.

- A major hotel at the M25/A121 junction on the site of Upshire Hall Garden

## EDGE OF TOWN LAND STATUS REAFFIRMED

Centre.

- A new link road from Honey Lane to Upshire Road.

- Extension of the Cornmill public car park.

- A new visitor centre at the Abbey Gardens.

A large area of new native-species woodland around the M25 at Waltham Abbey, and nature conservation measures to Obelisk Field, Upshire, and extensive parts of the Lee Valley in the Fishers Green area are also sug-

gested.

Copies of the plan can be seen at Waltham Abbey Town Hall, Waltham Abbey Library and the council offices at Epping and Loughton.

Any member of the public wishing to make objections to the plan's contents must obtain a form from the council's planning department (Epping 77344 extension 3120). Objections must be made by May 9.



Lea Valley Mercury  
19 July 1985

## Close look at future

RARDE →

THE future of the ~~Royal Ordnance~~ installation at Waltham Abbey will be "looked at closely" according to a visiting government minister.

Minister of State for defence procurement, Adam Butler MP, made his comments during a tour of four such sites in south-east England last week.

Unions at the Royal Armament Research and Development Establishments had expressed their concern over the future role and the prospects of a reduction in the number of RARDE sites.

The minister said that with the emphasis on transferring de-velopment work to pri-

vate industry, RARDEs would have to concentrate on re-search.

As far as the closure of sites was concerned, there were no immediate developments likely but in the long term sites, including the one at Waltham Abbey, would be looked at closely.



# Park proposals

## Guidelines for general development

**DRAFT** proposals for the future development of the Lee Valley Park up to the year 2000 have been issued for public consultation.

The package lays down the authority's proposed guidelines for the growth and general development of the park.

And it also includes a whole host of proposed new leisure facilities, such as a canoe slalom course at Dobbs Weir, a trout fishery at Admirals Walk, Hoddesdon, a country sports centre at Nazeing,

a glasshouse museum in Waltham Abbey, a motor cycle centre at Waltham Cross, a water sports centre at The King George Reservoir, Sewardstone, and a botanical garden at Myddleton House, Bulls Cross.

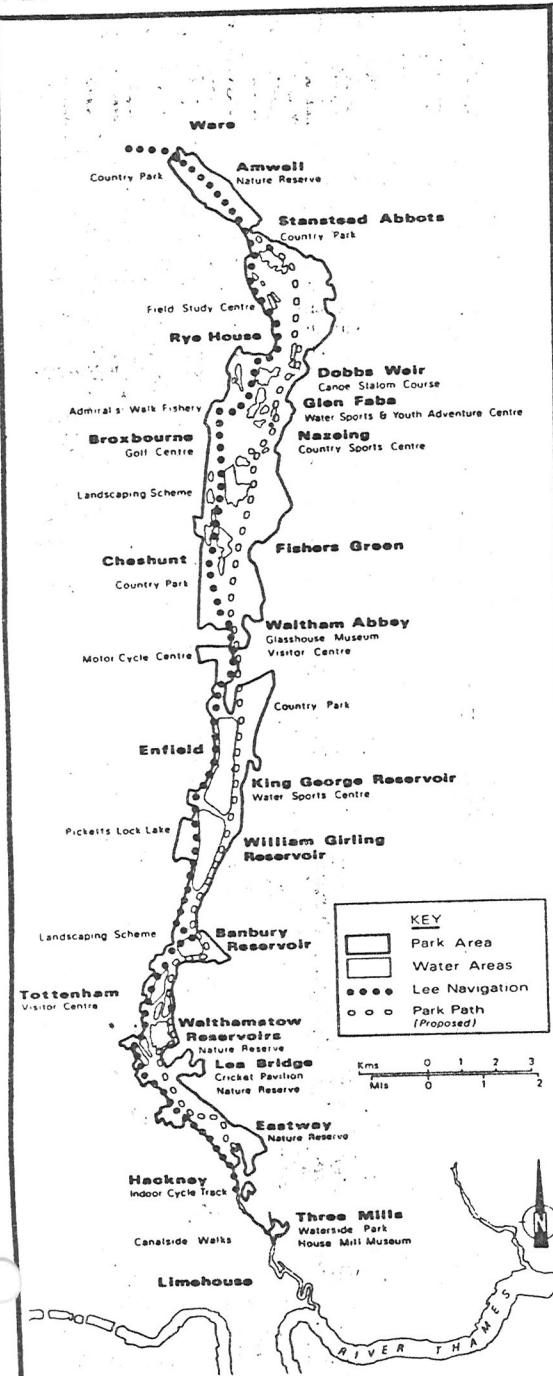
The revised plan, which has taken four years to draw up, proposes to landscape the park areas to give them "the coherence" they lack at present, and to improve access for all modes of transport.

Also to be considered is another passenger boat, a minibus service and a cycle hire scheme. Improvements to the Lee Navigation Towpath are

already programmed, and a park path, designed to accommodate cyclists, horseriders and pedestrians, is also suggested.

The document also proposes to protect its wildlife and features of historical and architectural importance, and plans visitor centres throughout the park.

The suggested development for the next 15 years is set out, with the programme for the first five years in some detail. This period concentrates on opening up the park for informal recreation and nature study as well as landscaping and developing land.



## PUBLIC WILL BE CONSULTED

A FULL public consultation exercise is being launched by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.

Posters illustrating the main proposals will be displayed at town halls, information centres and libraries, as well as at major park facilities.

Copies of the Consultative Draft Plan, the Summary of Draft Proposals and leaflets will also be deposited at these locations, or can be obtained from: The Planning and Development Officer, Lee Valley Park, FREEPOST, Abbey Mills, Highbridge

Street, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1BR (priced £3, £1 and free, respectively).

This is also the address to send your comments and views on the draft plan.

And a conference has been arranged for September 10 at the Picketts Lock Centre, Edmonton, from 10am until 4pm, when a number of organisations with an interest in the Lee Valley Park should be represented.

The various proposals have different time scales for completion, ranging from five to 15 years.

A MAP of the Lea Valley Park, which runs south from Ware all the way to Limehouse in London.

The areas of the park are marked in heavy type, and the proposed facilities in the draft plan are shown in the lighter type.

## THE MAIN IDEAS

### DOBBS WEIR, BROXBOURNE, NAZEING

Main proposals for Dobbs Weir, Broxbourne and Nazeing: Nether hall: Restoration of the barn and manor house for public access.

Dobbs Weir: Canoe slalom course, landscaping and car parking.

Admiral's Walk lake: Trout fishery and canoe training facilities.

Former gravel workings of Nazeing New Road: Golf centre with 18 hole course, a par 3 course, driving range, putting green and shop.

Nazeing Meads and St Pauls Field: Landscaping area for sailing.

Riverside and Carthagenia: Acquisition and phased demolition of properties, followed by landscape treatment. The authority will seek to acquire all properties, by means of compulsory purchase if necessary, to get the area landscaped in the 15 year scheme.

Nazeing Marsh and Rushey mead, south of Nazeing New Road: Country Sports Centre, including clay pigeon shooting, working dog tests, archery, cross-country eventing, dressage and steeplechasing for horses,

angling and country fairs.

Wharf Road, Wormley: Acquisition and clearance of all structures to create landscaped area for recreation, over a 15 year period. This may include the opportunity for gravel extraction and the creation of extra water areas.

## RYE MEADS AND ROYDON



Lea Valley Mercury  
19 July 1985

## CHESHUNT AND WALTHAM ABBEY

Main Proposals for Cheshunt and Waltham Abbey: Waltham, Hall and Cheshunt Marches: Landscaped country park.

RARDE: Gunpowder interpretation centre and woodland nature reserve. Part of the site is a scheduled ancient monument and part is a site of special scientific interest.

May not be available for park purposes within the plan period.

Abbey Nursery, Crooked Mile: Museum of the Lee Valley glasshouse industry.

Abbey Farmhouse and gardens: Visitor Centre.

Rammey Marsh — west; Motor cycle centre. The site is bounded by the railway line to the west and the M25 to the north. A feasibility study will be undertaken, for the site's suitability as a trial park and roadcraft training centre. Development would include earthmounding, landscaping and noise control. Also an additional indoor leisure facility there will be looked at.

## TURNFORD AREA

Main proposals for Turnford, Holyfield and Fishers Green: Paynes Lane Fishery: Restoration from angling to agricultural use.

Turnford and Cheshunt Pits: Nature study and informal recreational area with a new bridge over the Lee Navigation.

Fishers Green: Landscaped area for informal recreation.

Hayes Hill and Holyfieldhall farms: Demonstration farms with buildings used to interpret traditional farming practice.

## FINANCE

THE majority of expenditure in the Lee Valley Regional Park is financed from a precept on the rates of London, Hertfordshire and Essex, although this is supplemented by income from park facilities, grants and loans.

The Authority considers that a capital budget of some £2.25 million per annum — approximately the present level — is appropriate at the start of the plan period.

## ROYDON

Main proposals for Rye Meads and Roydon: Marsh Lane, Stanstead Abbots: A landscaped country park, with car park, picnic site, adventure playground and football pitch.

Marina, Stanstead Abbots: Improved access to expanded marina.

Rye House Marsh: Extended nature reserve and field study centre.

Gatehouse at Rye House: Improvements to the ancient monument.

Glen Faba: Water sports and youth adventure centre, with a possible campsite for touring canoeists.

## Sewardstone

Main proposals for Sewardstone and Bulls Cross, Sewardstone Marsh: Landscaped country park.

King George Reservoirs: Water sports centre, including tuition for boardsailing, dinghy sailing, water-skiing and sub-aqua diving.

Sewardstone Caravan Park: Landscaping at the caravan park.

Myddleton House: Botanical Garden, made more accessible to the public.