

WAsc. 1974

Selection of  
Mills correspondence  
incl. Staff. Locks  
& Incorporating  
Instructions  
1788-1793

I am, Sir,  
Your humble servant,

(sgd) Wm. Congreve.  
Deputy Comptroller.

P.S. You will please to observe that if hereafter you should have any Horse Mills erected, or any new Water Mills whose Runners cannot go at the rate of Six Revolutions in a Minute as your present Mills are capable of doing you must never think of working your charges so short a time as 3 hours but must work them in proportion to the weight of such new Runners and the Velocity with which they move, compared with the Weight and Velocity of your present Runners.

I think it is necessary to give you this caution because 2 hours and a half, the time you formerly worked your charges was not sufficient to incorporate your Ingredients so as to make a Durable Grain.

To: Mr. Wm. Newton,  
Master Worker at the Royal Powder  
Mills, Waltham Abbey.

See letter dated 17th October, 1804.

This letter is interesting as it gives many particulars as to the Manufacturer of Gunpowder as carried out in 1788, and there seem to be very few records remaining.

Goodwood

16th Sept, 1788.

Gentlemen,

Major Congreve having transmitted to me your Report to him of the 4th instant. respecting the State of the Locks upon the Navigation Cut of the River Lee from the Town of Waltham Abbey up to King 's Weir, in which you state that they are so much out of repair as to cause a great waste of water to the Injury of the Powder Mills, which waste of water is particularly forbid by Act of Parliament. I am to desire that you will immediately make a regular complaint of this to Mr. Rooke Attorney at Hertford and desire him to lay it before the Trustees of the Navigation at their first meeting and take such other steps as may be directed by the Acts of Parliament in order that proper measures may be adopted to remedy the abuses or neglect you complain of.

I am, Gentlemen,  
Your most obedient humble Servant,

(sgd) Richmond, etc.

Respective Officers,  
Waltham Abbey.

31 Dec. 1788.

The Board direct that owing to the mischief done in the Storehouse by the Rats 3 cats be kept by the Store house man and that he be paid 4d per week for each.

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ROYAL POWDER MILLS,  
WALTHAM ABBEY.

18 April, 1792

\* My Lord Duke & Rt. Hon. & Hon. Gentn.

We humbly beg to report that on unloading a waggon load of charcoal Jno Redman a labourer at this place was so much in liquor (when he came to work at 6 O'clock in the morning) that on going up the ladder with a sack of charcoal he fell down but received but little injury. Jno Mason, another Labr said to him "Redman, you have had a drop of Mr. Ways Spring Water too much this morning", meaning Gin, on which Redman struck and kicked Mason ~~in~~ several times, which treatment he had prudence enough not to return.

When all the coal was unloaded Mason said to Mr. Goodfellow (Master Mixer) "It is a pity that you let Redman go up the ladder". Goodfellow answered "If I was to say anything to him I should get myself abused and you had better hold your tongue."

We request your commands whether Redman should be continued in the Service, having been guilty of the above offences of coming to his duty in liquor and fighting in the Works.

We are,  
My Lord Duke etc.

(sgd) J.W. H.

Honble Board of Ordnance.

20 Feb. 1793.

My Lord Duke, etc.

We humbly beg to represent that the undermentioned persons constantly employed by this Office as Gunpowder makers and Bargemen are apprehensive of being detained by the Impress Office<sup>†</sup> on the River Thames. We request that you will be pleased to grant them protection.

Jno. Cook  
Jno. Turnham  
Wm. Fuller.

We are etc.

(sgd) J.W. R.C.

† "seized by the Press Gang".

ROYAL POWDER MILLS,  
WALTHAM ABBEY.

3 May, 1794.

Sir,

We beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 29th ulto. respecting the persons employed in the Royal Powder Mills at this place learning the management of the same.

work

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Notwithstanding the repeated caution given to him he came to take his turn of duty to work two Mills (from 6 to 12 o'clock at night) so much in liquor that we were obliged to send him home, and have suspended him until we receive your commands whether he is to be discharged from the Service.

We are My Lord Duke & Rt. Honble & Honble Gent<sup>m</sup>,  
Your most obedient & Most Humble Servants,

(sgd ) Jas Wright      Jno Clowdesly.

Honble Board of Ordnance.

ROYAL POWDER MILLS,  
WALTHAM ABBEY.

10 Octo.1789.

\* Sir,

John Smith, a labourer at this place who came from Faversham has been upon the sick list since the 28 Aug. last. His disorder has been chiefly an ague. I have frequently observed him to walk about at improper times for a person having that disorder upon him.

Yesterday there was a Horse race at Endfield meadows and tho' the waters were so much out that no person could walk without being half leg deep in water yet Smith went there and stayed several hours in the Wet a Dirt which was dangerous for anyone in full health.

The Labourers speak much of his behaviour and I am afraid it will be a bad precedent for others to play loose when they may happen to be unwell. I have mentioned this matter to receive your directions in what manner the man is to be treated.

I am, Sir,  
Your most obedient humble Servant.

(sgd) J.W. Wright.

The Controller of the Royal Laboratory.

ROYAL POWDER MILLS,  
4 Feb. 1790.

Lord Duke & Rt. Honble & Honble Gent<sup>m</sup>,

We beg leave to report that this morning at one o'clock one of the Queen Mead Mills blew up which entirely unroofed the same. The Charge had been worked an hour. Thos. Graylin the Millman on duty had just shoved the charge up and swept down the Curb and Cheese and was going towards the door to do the same duty in the other Mill when the Blow happened. It set fire to his jacket but he received no other injury.

We beg to represent that the Quartering in the roof will do again but the covering boards must be new as the old ones are so much injured by being split and the nail holes do much more open that they will not keep out rain. We are going to repair the Mill that it may be set to work as soon as possible which we hope will meet with your approbation.

On the 23 Sept last we received your Commands to send the Fire Engines to the Tower to be Inspected and the necessary repairs done to them.

We humbly beg to represent the bad consequences which may happen by the Engines being sent from this place, as their use may be hourly expected.