

WAsc 2056

Article on Waltham

Alber Mills

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GMSG

16/4/88

WASC 2056

Teynham

WALTHAM ABBEY MILLS, ESSEXDr J West  
6 Dorset Road  
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Located on the River Lea in the parish of Waltham Holy Cross.

Mid-eighteenth century powder makers were Philippa & John Walton (1733 - 1749); John Walton (1749 - August 1757); Thomas & Bouchier Walton (August 1757 - 1778); Bouchier Walton (by January 1779); James Walton (June 1779 - 1787).

Each change of mill proprietor within the Walton family was the result of death of the predecessor. Most of these proprietors held property in London from which their trade in gunpowder was conducted. William Walton, the first member of the family, was powder maker here between February 1702<sup>1</sup> and March 1711. Philippa Walton his widow, left with nine young children, continued the business after him. Originally of Balham in Surrey and subsequently of Ongar in Essex, she was a daughter of John Bouchier MD, of the same county.<sup>2</sup>

In 1718, the powder mills and lands were sold by Samuel Bluck to Alexander Cleeve and Jane Bouchier; the first was the husband of Jane's sister Ann and the latter a second sister. The mills were to be for the use of Philippa and her heirs during her lifetime.<sup>3</sup> In May 1732 the mills were sold by the above to Philippa and her son John.<sup>4</sup>

Philippa Walton also owned a quarter share of four acres of freehold land and a powder magazine at Barking Creek. The land was purchased in 1720 in conjunction with the powder makers of Molesey, East Bedfont, Faversham and Oare mills.<sup>5</sup> The Waltons' share was later sold to the government and, in 1833,<sup>6</sup> by the government to William Tinkler of Chilworth mills. Philippa was accompanied in the business by her second son John from 1733. Although she continued to be involved until her death at the age of 74 in 1749 and, in theory, was still active during the War of the Austrian Succession when Ordnance contracts continued to hold both names, she spent her final years in Mickleham in Surrey; undoubtedly, John had been in charge at the mill for

some time. At his death John left the mills to Thomas Walton, who was then joined in the business by another brother, Bourchier. The latter was a director of the East India Company from 1760 until 1762.

Although Philippa's eldest son William, of Yarmouth in Norfolk, was not involved with the business, his son James acquired the property in June 1779 in the apparent absence of any direct heir of the uncles who ran the business before him. The mills eventually became the property of John Walton, nephew and heir of James. It was John who sold the mills, together with the land at Barking Creek, to the Crown. Negotiations commenced in 1787 but, undoubtedly more careful after the confusion surrounding the sale of Faversham mills, the Ordnance officers expressed doubts about title to certain lands, as the result of claims by Sir William Wake of Waltham. There was no immediate conveyance. The Ordnance Office took possession but the sale price of £10,000 0s was invested by its treasurer in January 1789 in the purchase of £13,688 12s 6d three per cent reduced annuities in the joint names of Walton, William Smith the Ordnance treasurer, and Augustus Rogers its secretary, with the dividends to be received by Walton. Final settlement was not achieved until 1795.

1. PRO WO 51/65 p.8, 30 June 1702, concerning contract of February 1702.
2. Memorial to Philippa Walton within parish church of Mickleham, Surrey.
3. PRO PROB 11/766, December 1748.  
PROB 11/775, December 1749.  
SH Northumberland Papers DXXII 5a (4) 3 p.7 Abstract of title to land at Barking, 1846.
4. Ibid.
5. SH DXXII 5g (1) 23 June 1720.
6. SH DXXII 5a (4) 3 p.14. 1846.
7. ERO DP 75/11/8 23 August 1733 Poor Rate book.  
PRO PROB 11/775, March 1745.
8. PRO PROB 11/832, July 1757.
9. See Chapter 8.
10. PRO SUPP 5 682/5 14 August 1795;  
SUPP 5 682/38 14 August 1795.
11. PRO SUPP 5 682/38 14 August 1795;  
U145 27/2 17 December 1787, Agreement for purchase of mills.

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01-542-5119