

WASC 2208

Summaries of
RSPF Workers
Living in Waltham
Abbey and
Waltham Cross
extracted from
1891 Census

Royal Gunpowder Factory Workers Living in Waltham Abbey in 1891

By Norman Paul

The December 1998 edition of Touchpaper listed people living in Waltham Cross and Cheshunt who gave their occupation in the 1891 census as working in the Royal Gunpowder Factory. I have now analysed the 1891 census (the most recent that we are allowed to see) for Waltham Abbey itself.

I found 203 people, all male, who said they worked at RGPF. Most people in the census simply gave their trade, so there must have been some pride when men said they belonged to the RGPF. I did not include people working at the Percussion Cap Factory, which, as reported in the last issue, was a private factory in Farm Hill Road. The workers there were mostly teenage girls, often with brothers in the RGPF.

The average age of the RGPF workers was 32. The majority called themselves labourers, although there were no less than 23 foremen. Some labourers said they worked at the Gunpowder Mills, others at the (relatively new) Guncotton Works. Most referred to the Gunpowder Factory, but the better trained census enumerators who covered the Crooked Mile and Farm Hill Road included the word 'Royal'. Some men gave more details of their work, such as:

John Primdale	Dipper Guncotton Factory
Pegrum Christophy	Proof Foreman
Edmund Maston	Water Warden
James Clayden	Furnace Stoker RGPF
John Knowles	Saltpetre Refiner
George Cook	Timekeeper Nitroglycerine
Edward Jackson	Foreman Fire Brigade RGPF
William Gething	Gunpowder Maker
Arthur Burgess	Messenger RGPF
William Perry	Foreman Sulphur Refinery
Frederick Adams	Labourer Saltpetre Refinery
William Mumford	Stores Boy
David Sebon	Incorporator of Gunpowder
James Findley	Master Worker RGPF
Edward Findley (son)	Apprentice RGPF

It is also interesting to note that 3 described themselves as 'Pensioner RGPF' with ages 68, 62 and 60. Another entry is George Wraight aged 58 described as a Retired Gunpowder Maker. This might lead us to suppose that the RGPF retirement age was 60 but, looking further at the detail we find a number of workers over 60, but under 65.

Here is a breakdown of streets where the local workers lived:

Street	No. of workers
Silver Street	4
Franchise Place	2
Paradise Row	3
Green Yard	1
Bakers Entry	11
Highbridge Street	30
Camps Alley	5
Malting Yard	1
Lee Road	6
Powdermill Lane	2
North Place	5
Romeland	11
The Marsh	1
Edmondsea	2
Sun Street	12
Sewardstone Street	10
Quaker Lane	5
Little Sewardstone Rd	2
Fountain Place	4
Town Mead Road	6
Woolard Street	16
Greenfield Street	7
Reeves Gate	5
Clavingbury	1
Galley Hill	2
Crooked Mile	19
Green Man Road	1
Broomstickhall Rd	9
Paternoster Hill	4
Pick Hill	2
New Road	1
Horseshoe Hill	1
Copt Hall	3
Honey Lane	3
Avey Lane	2
Lippits Hill	1
Farm Hill Road	4

There were often workers from the same family. 30 of the men, including 9 foremen and a timekeeper, lived in Highbridge Street, close to the works. Only 2, both Foremen, lived in Powdermill Lane and 12 workers lived in Sun Street. Some of the names are familiar to ERDE or RARDE people and may well be ancestors. They include, Adams, Chapman, Berry, Burgess, Perry, Threagold, Dyer, Pegrum and Raby.

The full list is too long to print here (5 A4 sheets) but I have handed over the complete list, with ages and addresses, for the records of Friends and the Royal Gunpowder Mills Company.

RGPF WORKERS LIVING IN WALTHAM ABBEY from the 1891 Census

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Here is a breakdown of streets where the local workers lived:

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Silver Street	4	Town Mead Road	6
Franchise Place	2	Woolard Street	16
Paradise Row	3	Greenfield Street	7
Green Yard	1	Reeves Gate	5
Bakers Entry	11	Claveringbury	1
Highbridge Street	30	Galley Hill	2
Camps Alley	5	Crooked Mile	19
Malting Yard	1	Green Man Road	1
Lee Road	6	Broomstickhall Rd	9
Powdermill Lane	2	Paternoster Hill	4
North Place	5	Pick Hill	2
Romeland	11	New Road	1
The Marsh	1	Horseshoe Hill	1
Edmondsea	2	Copt Hall	3
Sun Street	12	Honey Lane	3
Sewardstone Street	10	Avey Lane	2
Quaker Lane	5	Lippits Hill	1
Little Sewardstone Rd	2	Farm Hill Road	4
Fountain Place	4		

There were often workers from the same family. 30 of the men, including 9 foremen and a timekeeper, lived in Highbridge Street, close to the works. Only 2, both Foremen, lived in Powdermill Lane and 12 workers lived in Sun Street. Some of the names are familiar to ERDE or RARDE people and may well be ancestors. They include, Adams, Chapman, Berry, Burgess, Perry, Threagold, Dyer, Pegrum and Raby.

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John Vernon

Our grateful thanks to John for all his hard work in compiling this very valuable information. If any of you believe that you may have had ancestors working at the RGPF at this time let us know and we will compare names. Ed.

Royal Gunpowder Factory Workers Living in Waltham Cross in 1891

By Norman Paul

Many of the workers at the Mills lived in the Waltham Cross area and, thanks to the work done by the Local History Group of the Lea Valley University of the Third Age, I had access to the 1891 census for Waltham Cross and Cheshunt. From this census I have been able to identify RGPF workers living in that area at the time. The area included Waltham New Town, Waltham Cross and then northwards about half a mile up the main High Road to the 'Old Pond' area of Cheshunt. The nearest housing west of the powder works is Holdbrook, renovated in the 1960s which was built on the original Waltham New Town development which local historians believe to have been developed in response to the growth of the RGPF when guncotton was introduced in the 1860s.

The other local large employer at the time was the Royal Small Arms factory at Enfield Lock. On the returns the initials RSAF are used to indicate small arms workers. At some point during the processing of returns someone had annotated the numerators entries with either Powder or Gun and there are some instances where the wrong allocation has been made. Another problem area is the Gun Cap Factory which employed many of the young women in the area. I have been unable to find which of the two larger factories it came under, or if indeed it was a separate establishment.

A total of 64 RGPF workers were identified, of which 7 appear to be explicitly connected with gunpowder and 3 with guncotton. There are 11 foremen and the manager of the smokeless powder factory and 30 described simply as labourers.

RGPF Workers from Waltham Cross - 1891 Census (see Touchpaper March 1999, p 10)

John Savil	Cold Hall Road	Labourer, Gun Cotton Factory
Frederick Weston	“	Labourer, Powder Mills
Edward Mitchell	“	Barge master, RGPF
Frederick Bell	“	Writer
John Furnham	“	Foreman
George Campbell	“	Foreman
Henry Askew	Harold Road	Engine Driver, RGPF
George Pearman	“	Labourer
George Gater	“	Stoker
Thomas Chalkley	“	Gunpowder Incorporator
Alfred Ackwill	“	Labourer
Samuel Berry	“	Labourer
John Hopkins	“	Labourer
George Ford	“	Labourer
Henry Sibley	“	Foreman
Joseph Stamp	Melbourne Road	Foreman, Powder Stores ?
George Smith	“	Corning House
John Elee	“	Fitter
James Larman	“	Labourer
William Savill	“	Labourer
Henry Ward	“	Storeman
Charles Kimberley	Sydney Road	RPF
Arthur Kimberley	“	RPF

Edward Brown	“	RPF
Fredk Wraighte	“	Foreman
James Thomson	“	Manager, Smokeless Powder Factory
George Partridge	Waltham Lane	Assembler RGPF ??
Samuel Berry	“	Foreman
Chas Allison	“	Foreman
Alfred Beales	“	Storeman
James Perry	“	Foreman
Sidney Perry	“	Stores Assistant
Alfred Greenland	Alexandra Road	Chargeman (Danger House)
Henry Perry	Albert Road	Storeman
Samuel Clapham	“	Cooper
Thomas Chapman	High Road WX	Gunpowder Maker
Benjamin White	“	Saltpetre Refiner
Peter Edwards	Swanfield Estate	Labourer, Powder Mills
Frederick Ison	Eleanor Road	Millman, Powder Mills
Henry Kirby	“	Labourer
Henry Hickson	“	Labourer
Phillip Watts	“	Labourer
Frank Watts	“	Labourer
Albert Wombwell	“	Labourer
William Crampton	“	Labourer
R Hickson	Queens Road	Labourer
J Brooker	“	Storeman
A Rulton	“	General Labourer
William Jordan	Eleanor Estate	Labourer
?	“	Storeman
Ernest King	“	Writer, Inspection Dept
Mark Pettitt	“	Labourer
Albert Miller	Park Lane	Labourer
Cyril Wraight	“	Artificer
Alfred Brace	?	Labourer
Louis Brace	?	Labourer
Japeth Parker	Middle Row WX	Powder Maker
James Morley	Trinity Lane	Powdermill Labourer
William Harris	“	Powdermill Hand
Albert W Leader	Crossbrook Street	Acting Foreman
Richard Sharpe	“	Stoker
Arthur P Andrews	College Road	Labourer
Thomas Jackson	Turners Hill	Labourer

Chris Hicks article in the last issue asked for information on the Gun Cap Factory resulting in two responses from members.

I think these give the definitive answer to the question relating to the location of the Gun Cap Factory:

I was very interested in the article in the last Touchpaper relating to the 1891 census of workers at the RGPF from the Waltham cross area submitted by Chris Hicks. This raises a question as to where was Cold Hall Road. I was born in Lea Road (1922) which was then under the Essex Council and, although this was only a short distance from Harold, Melbourne and Sidney Roads I have never heard of Cold Hall Road. I have in my possession maps of 1864 and they mention Cold Hall Lands and what was 'Powers' Timber yard in Station Road is called Cold Hall Farm. Another point of interest to me is that my name is mentioned twice in the census.

Regarding the Gun Cap Factory, this was originally Nobels in Farm Hill Road on the old Catalins site, now flats. I have a book written by Ken Bascombe which shows Joyce House (now Joyce Court) built by Mr Joyce who moved his percussion cap factory to the Abbey in 1842. It was always known locally as Nobels Cap Factory and was a very important place during the 1914-18 war period.

George Savill

The following facts may be of use in defining the Gun Cap Factory:

1. My mother who was born in Waltham New Town in 1874, often spoke of Joyce's Powder Factory which was situated in Farm Hill Road. Joyce House was obviously associated with it.
2. Prior to 1939, Catalin's Factory was known as Nobel's.
3. The Sewardstone Gate of RGPF was known as the ICI gate up until 1939 - at least one building (P719) was fenced off and was rented to ICI as a magazine.

From the above it is apparent that there was a second factory dealing with explosives in Waltham Abbey and in later years was probably engaged in filling shot gun cartridges. There was a shot tower on the Ely's estate in Angel Road Edmonton when I was young. This may well have been associated with the filling operation at Waltham Abbey.

I wish I lived nearer and was able to help out on the working parties.

Dick Doe

The article on the 1891 Census in the Cheshunt area has prompted one of our members to do the same for the Waltham Abbey area.

John Vernon has obtained a copy of the census and is working his way through it. Look out for the results in a future issue

Letter from Australia

Yes, Touchpaper is international being read in the USA and Australia!

Joan Hills, who used to work at the Establishment, emigrated to Australia some years ago and tells us that Touchpaper is much appreciated. She has a good friend there who has given us a photo of her late husband. They used to live in Waltham Abbey and had some connection with the Green Dragon public house. His name was Robert Mills and he was a keen cricketer, playing at one time for the RSAF team. Perhaps some of our older members may remember playing against him in the 40's.



We are sorry to hear of the death of TED TULLETT who died on 15th November aged 90 years at Paternoster House.

Ted started work in the old RGPF before the war as a self-taught electrician. He was called up and was promoted to the rank of sergeant within three weeks, as a tradesman. After war service he returned to the factory where he remained until his retirement in 1973.

Ted was well known in Waltham Abbey and miles around, for his 24 hour, seven day a week private electrical work, usually arriving on his heavily laden bicycle.

**DON'T FORGET THE DEADLINE OF May 17th
FOR INCLUSION OF ARTICLES IN THE NEXT ISSUE
DUE FOR PUBLICATION EARLY JUNE**

**THE NEXT ISSUE ALSO MARKS THE FIRST FULL
YEAR OF THE ASSOCIATION WHEN RENEWAL
OF THE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION BECOMES DUE**

**THE JUNE ISSUE WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY
YOUR RENEWAL FORM AND QUESTIONNAIRE**

ROYAL GUNPOWDER FACTORY WORKERS Living in Waltham Cross in 1891

Many of the workers at the Mills lived in the Waltham Cross area and, thanks to the work done by the Local History Group of the Lea Valley University of the Third Age, I had access to the 1891 census for Waltham Cross and Cheshunt. From this census I have been able to identify RGPF workers living in that area at the time. The area included Waltham New Town, Waltham Cross and then northwards about half a mile up the main High Road to the 'Old Pond' area of Cheshunt. The nearest housing west of the powder works is Holdbrook, renovated in the 1960's which was built on the original Waltham New Town development which local historians believe to have been developed in response to the growth of the RGPF when guncotton was introduced in the 1860's.

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Christopher Hicks

Thanks to Chris who has also made a detailed analysis of the origins, relationships and marital status of those identified. If any member has relevant information from their family history we would be very pleased to add this to the survey.

A similar study of workers living in Waltham Abbey would be very valuable if anyone has access to records.

We would also like any further information on the Gun Cap Factory.

Editor

*The following page gives basic information extracted from the survey
Apologies for the small type!*

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ESTABLISHMENT ROYAL GUNPOWDER FACTORY PRO SUPP5/678

PAY LEDGER 7 Oct 1916 (Wk 27) to 13 Jan 1917 (Wk 41)

Shows daily hours worked including piece work hours, war bonus, weekly gross pay, insurance, income tax, weekly net pay. Employers contributions :- health, unemployment.

No	NAME	GRADE
101	Rogers S	Senior Chargeman
102	Massey J	Labourer
103	Farr F	Labourer
104	Wright S	Labourer
105	Rogers E	Labourer
106	Hare J	Labourer
107	Clark H	Labourer
108	Wombwell H	Labourer
110	Upton A	Labourer
111	Dennis J	Labourer
112	Tarling D	Labourer
113	Saunders G	Labourer
114	Halls A	Labourer
115	Baggatt B	Labourer
116	Weavers J	Labourer
117	Bamford J	Labourer
118	Cakebread F	Labourer
119	Andrews A	Labourer
120	Stevens AJ	Labourer
121	Reynolds G	Discharged
121	Sheldrake GT	Labourer
122	Cuckow G	Chargeman
123	Crabb A	Labourer
124	Mumford J	Labourer
125	Webb J	Labourer
126	Littlechild C	Labourer
127	Littlechild D	Labourer
128	Smith E	Chargeman
129	Acres E	Labourer
130	Feast H	Chargeman
131	Shenkins E	Labourer
132	Spearman A	Labourer
133	Bamford W	Temp Assist Foreman
134	Harvey F	Labourer
135	Meek RT	Labourer
135	Bartlett GE	Labourer
136	Mathews C	Labourer
137	Warren W	Labourer

No	NAME	GRADE
138	Hallett A	Chargeman
139	Shenkins JE	Labourer
140	Lay H	Labourer
141	Ward A	Labourer
142	Rowlands CW	Labourer
143	Moore W	Labourer
144	Simons WH	Labourer
145	Hilton AW	Mobilised
146	Newton H	Mobilised
147	King EA	Labourer
148	Ford W	Labourer
149	Harknett W	Labourer
150	Mason G	Labourer
151	Brown HE	Labourer
152	Turner JF	Labourer
153	Hammond FC	Labourer
154	Sipthorpe E	Labourer
155	Hanche H	Labourer
156	Samuels T	Labourer
157	Melton A	Labourer
158	Lay HW	Labourer
159	Tappenden E	Labourer
160	Buck EH	Labourer
161	Hastler H	Labourer
162	Sears J	Labourer
163	Crisp H	Labourer
164	Meek JH	Labourer
165	Drane H	Labourer
166	Seymour H	Labourer
167	Smith J	Labourer
168	Whitney W	Labourer
169	Athey JA	Labourer
170	Lodge J	Labourer
171	Webb EJ	Labourer
172	Hughes W	Labourer
173	Sabon C	Labourer
174	Savage AJ	Labourer
175	Whay GR	Labourer

SORTED BY NAME

No	NAME	GRADE
129	Acres E	Labourer
119	Andrews A	Labourer
498	Angus CS	Labourer
169	Athey JA	Labourer
115	Baggatt B	Labourer
3558	Baines A	Labourer
3563	Balls W	Labourer
117	Bamford J	Labourer
133	Bamford W	Temp Assist Foreman
135	Bartlett GE	Labourer
3510	Bell W	Labourer
3501	Bennett E	Labourer
151	Brown HE	Labourer
3516	Brownlie A	Labourer
3507	Brownlie H	Labourer
160	Buck EH	Labourer
118	Cakebread F	Labourer
181	Cannon C	Labourer
191	Clark C	Labourer
107	Clark H	Labourer
3502	Clay G	Labourer
190	Copping FH	Labourer
3562	Cox H	Labourer
123	Crabb A	Labourer
163	Crisp H	Labourer
122	Cuckow G	Chargeman
197	De Roure EW	Labourer
111	Dennis J	Labourer
165	Drane H	Labourer
198	Eagles CS	Labourer
3553	Eastwood G	Labourer
3525	Eastwood M	Labourer
189	Emmett F	Labourer
103	Farr F	Labourer
130	Feast H	Chargeman
3569	Field JJ	Labourer
179	Fisher JW	Labourer
193	Fiske A	Labourer
200	Fletcher J	Labourer
148	Ford W	Labourer
178	French HJ	Labourer

No	NAME	GRADE
3511	Fulker G	Labourer
3520	Fuller C	Labourer
3515	Fuller RA	Labourer
138	Hallett A	Chargeman
114	Halls A	Labourer
153	Hammond FC	Labourer
155	Hanche H	Labourer
196	Hankin CD	Labourer
106	Hare J	Labourer
149	Harknett W	Labourer
3571	Harvey A	Labourer
134	Harvey F	Labourer
161	Hastler H	Labourer
3560	Hay W	Labourer
187	Hills H	Labourer
145	Hilton AW	Mobilised
172	Hughes W	Labourer
3573	James Chas.	Labourer
177	King C	Labourer
147	King EA	Labourer
3567	Lagdon W	Labourer
183	Langridge H	Labourer
140	Lay H	Labourer
158	Lay HW	Labourer
3504	Lee B	Labourer
180	Lingwood A	Labourer
126	Littlechild C	Labourer
127	Littlechild D	Labourer
170	Lodge J	Labourer
3570	Lowe HA	Labourer
182	Mailes W	Labourer
188	Martin PP	Labourer
3523	Martin TH	Labourer
150	Mason G	Labourer
102	Massey J	Labourer
136	Mathews C	Labourer
164	Meek JH	Labourer
135	Meek RT	Labourer
157	Melton A	Labourer
199	Miles J	Labourer
143	Moore W	Labourer

