

WASC 2249

Papers relating
to Robert Hilton
Surgeon, W.A.R.M.
1791-1839

Waltham Abbey Historical Society

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Mr L. Tucker,
Friends Association,
Royal Gunpowder Mills.
8, The Heights,
LOUGHTON,
Essex, IG10 1RN

Dear Les,

It is a long time since I was in contact for which I apologise, and I hope all is well with you.

I was very interested to learn of the progress being made with your archives at the Gunpowder Mills. The subject of our display on King Harold's Day last year was the 'Waterways at Waltham', prompted by thoughts of the Olympic Games and the desire to show the historical significance of the Lea, before possible media overkill. Obviously the Mills and other industries were included and we were pleased to offer Richard Thomas space on our stand to publicise his booklets. He was able to share his vast knowledge and give us fixed dates as well as the names of personnel and places in some of our photographs.

One of our members recently discovered a letter on e-bay written by Robert Hilton, surgeon to the Board of Ordnance. In 1792 he had only been in Waltham Abbey for a year and a half, and owed a large sum of money to a solicitor in Alnwick, Northumberland. Further research has found evidence that he was born in 1761, was apprenticed to a surgeon in Cheshunt in 1779, then surgeon for 48 years to the Board of Ordnance, died in 1839 and along with his wife Charlotte, son Frederick also a surgeon, and five infant children was buried in Waltham Abbey. I am enclosing copies of

the letter written by Robert Hilton in 1792, with a transcript,
UK Register of Duties paid for Apprentices' Indentures 1701-1811
a summary of all the detailed information about the family that has so far been gathered.

If you would like copies from the relevant census and parish records and trade directories for Robert Hilton and his family I would be happy to pass them on. Contact has been made with descendants now living in Australia and they have been delighted to receive such a wealth of evidence.

We are wondering if you have any records of Robert Hilton's long service as a surgeon to complement the picture that is building up of when and where he and his family lived in Waltham Abbey.

The bulk of the documents we received from Curwens solicitors have been delivered to the appropriate record offices, leaving us to concentrate on those with particular relevance to Waltham Abbey. This should allow more time to return to other projects, including the Census Returns!

Kind regards,

Mary

4 enclosures

Research into Robert Hilton Surgeon of Waltham Abbey

It is not known where Robert Hilton was born. The first record found is of his apprenticeship to a surgeon, Thomas Sanders, of Cheshunt, in 1779. Cheshunt is very close to Waltham Abbey. It is on the other side of the River Lee.

In 1792 Robert wrote a letter to a solicitor in Alnwick, Northumberland. Robert owed the solicitor a great deal of money. He stated that he had only been in Waltham Abbey for a year and a half.

A transcript of the 1823-24 Pigot's Directory shows "HILTON Robert Waltham Abbey surgeon, Sun Street" In 1839 the Pigot's Directory shows under Surgeons "Hilton Frederick, East End and Hilton Robert (to the honourable board of ordnance) East End.

The 1841 Census shows that Robert's wife Charlotte is living with their son Frederick in Sewardstone Road. They have one female servant. The previous entry is for a house with a Naval man and his wife together with a Swedish Baron and Baroness and a Lord Chichester and six servants.

A tithe map of 1843 showed that Frederick Hilton was still living in Sewardstone Road. He has a House with offices, garden and an orchard. The map shows that this stood opposite two houses that are still standing. These are Thrift Hall and Thrift Cottage. Again the previous entry show a grand neighbour, a Lady Le Man

A book "Our Parish Registers" by William Winters, printed in 1885 gives the following account of the Hilton family in a chapter entitled The Churchyard Waltham Holy Cross (as Waltham Abbey was then known): -

"Mr Robert Hilton Surgeon born 26 Oct. 1761 died 23 June 1839. He was a Surgeon for the Honourable Board of Ordnance 48 years. Near lie the remains of his five infant children. Also Mrs Charlotte Hilton wife of the above dep. 1 July 1845 aged 78. Also Frederick Coleman Hilton son of the above dep. 22 Nov. 1846 aged 52."

A plan of the graveyard was made by South West Essex Technical College in 1952, before many of the gravestones were removed. This shows the Hilton grave to have been No. 188. This was under the rose window at the east end of the church. Three large graves still remain that were near to the Hilton grave.

Dear Sirs/ Waltham Abbey Dec 16th 92

With unremitting exertion since I saw you I have been able to collect the sum of £100 which will be ready for payment on any day you may please to name & to any house. The surplus I must request your indulgence till I have been able to collect in some of my bills as I have been here one year & a half & I have not before this Christmas had an opportunity of sending in one of them which has drained my pocket of a good deal of ready cash but as soon as I receive some of them I will immediately pay off the remainder. after your polite acquiescence to my former request I do not at all doubt your acquiescence to this & you may depend on my speedy compliance. I am
PS. Request your acceptance of it usual compliments of the season

Dr Sir
Signature
Robt Hilton

Thos Adams Esq
Alnwick
Northumberland

16th Dec 1792
Rt Hilton Lw

Thos. Adams Esq

Ordnance

Waltham Abbey

1792 WALTHAM ABBEY



1792 Waltham Abbey

16 Dec

1792

Dear Sir

Waltham Abbey Dec 16 1792

With unremitting expectation
 since I am now I have been able to collect
 the sum of £100 which will be ready for
 Payment on any Day you may please to
 Name & to any House, the Sum I must
 request your Indulgence till I have been
 able to collect in some of my Bills as I
 have been here one Year & a half & have not
 before this Christmas had an Opportunity
 of sending in one of them which has drain'd
 my Pocket of a good deal of ready Cash
 but as soon as I receive some of them I will
 immediately pay & remain'd, after your polite
 acquiescence to my form or request I do not
 at all doubt your acquiescence to this & you
 may depend on my speedy Compliance. I am
 P^t. Request your Acceptance of this & I shall
 of Journal Compt. of the
 Securon

Robt Hilton

UK, REGISTER OF DUTIES PAID FOR APPRENTICES' INDENTURES, 1710-1811

39

1779

23 April	W ^m Sherman	of Saint Paul Church in Middlebury	Harbours	W ^m Higgins	Ind 2
	Samuel Pantall	of Hampton Bishop in E. Hertsford	Woolwinder	W ^m Watkins	1
	John Edward	of Haverhill in E. Suffolk	Spicer	W ^m Edwards	2
	Lawrence Marsh	of Lacey in E. Kent	Coastwainer	W ^m Dunbar	2
	J ⁿ Perkins	of Northampton	Surgeon	J ⁿ Jackson	1
	Ann Rice	of the City of Hereford	Miliner	Magdalen Skitt	1
	Amey Woodley	of Margate Street in E. Middlesex	Mania	Janah Breechall	1

26 June	W ^m Abston	of Longfield in E. Surrey	Whaleright	John Rogers	Ind 2
	Christopher Wetbank	of Dorset Buildings, London	Attorney	Joseph Lockhart	Ind 2
	Thomas Brown	of Saint Martin in the fields in E. Middlesex	Coastwainer	George Brown	Ind 1
	W ^m Andrews	of Gosport in E. Hants	House Carpenter	Henry Waterman	Ind 2
	W ^m Parker	of Saint Clement dans in E. Middlesex	Attorney	Robert May	Ind 1
	W ^m Larkins	of Hellingbourne in E. Kent	Coastwainer	J ⁿ Larkins	Ind 1
	Richard Pritchard	of Saint Mary le Strand in E. Middlesex	Attorney	J ⁿ Pritchard	Ind 2
	James Spater	of Inverness in E. Scotland	Cutler	W ^m Fraser	Ind 1
	Mary Spiter	of Saint Ann Lane in E. Middlesex	Marchant	Isabella Spiter	Ind 2
	George Hodder	of Gosport in E. Hants	Coastwainer	John Hodder	Ind 2
	Ben. Wetherall	of the City of Lincoln	Merchant	Samuel May	Ind 1
	William Goodrich	of the City of Durham	Cabinetmaker	Robt. Jernick	Ind 1
	John Haggerton	of Cambridge	Attorney	James Jernick	Ind 1

27 June	W ^m Walker	of Torrington in E. Nottingham	Taylor	John Clark	Ind 1
	Thomas Duntan	of Olney in E. Bucks	Whaleright	John George	Ind 2
	Henry Pettit	of Stevenage in E. Hertsford	Spicer	Isaac Henry Handewort	Ind 1
	Mary West	of Saint Alban in E. Hertsford	Barber	George Pichin	Ind 2
	William Phippen	of Broad and Curwens of London	Stationer	Richard Lisco	Ind 1
	Ann Jernick	of the City of Bath	Stationer	J ⁿ Mayberry	Ind 2
	Ann Jernick	of Wootton Bassett in E. Somerset	Embroiderer	Ann Jernick	Ind 2
	John Holt	of Wootton Bassett in E. Somerset	Coastwainer	Lewy Jernick	Ind 2
	Elizabeth Jernick	of Church Langton in E. Leicestershire	Shoemaker	Mark Davis	Ind 1
	Helen Hodgkinson	of Bishops Cleeve in E. Somerset	Blacksmith	Thomas Parrnell	Ind 1
	William Hall	of Bishops Cleeve in E. Somerset	Blacksmith	Richard Parrnell	Ind 1

12 Jan	Joseph Robinson	of Saint Neots in E. Huntingdon	Baker	Edward Green	
	Thomas Brown	of Greatwood in E. Essex	Spicer	Thomas Parrnell Parrnell	
	William Bennett	of Rokeston in E. Essex	Woolwinder	Thomas Bennett	
	Thomas Fosdyke	of Rokeston in E. Essex	Woolwinder	William Fosdyke	
	J ⁿ Mees	of Frome setwood in E. Somerset	Taylor	William Greenblade	
	Thomas Lynders	of Cheshunt in E. Hertsford	Surgeon	Robert Hilton	
	Thomas Christian	of Melton Mowbray in E. Leicestershire	Baker	Michael Parrnell	

← Robert HILTON

Barnard Presland, Noah Sayer, brimstone and saltpetre millmen. Barnard Presland worked from 4th to 11th April, 1810, making 7 common days and $\frac{1}{2}$ day extra and one watch; $7\frac{1}{2}$ days at 2s—15s, and one watch at 1s 6d—16s 6d. There is a memo beneath: To be paid to his wife 16s 6d. The signature of his wife Ann Pressland. Noah Sayer worked $5\frac{1}{2}$ days common, no watch; $5\frac{1}{2}$ at 2s—11s. The signature of his widow. Memo. beneath: To be paid to his wife Ann Sayer, X her mark. John Horrod, James Rowley (afterwards sausage maker in Highbridge Street) mixing house men (at 2s 6d per day), appear to have witnessed this serious affair.

This name (John Horrod), occurs in some parts of the book as Samuel Horrod, he does not appear to have been suspended, and there is no remark against his name; both of the above made one watch each. In 1812, Samuel Horwood had 3s 3d per day.

It would appear that the fatal occurrence took place in the day time, according to Sayers' only making $5\frac{1}{2}$ days; and also that Pressland kept on at his work $1\frac{1}{2}$ days after the death of Sayers. The 7 days' work from 4th to 11th, can only be attributed to their working on Sunday, which they did at that time. We are not aware of the amount of punishment Presland received for killing his mate, beyond being dismissed the service.

April 12th.—Instalments of compensation paid for land.

May 30th.—Reed. H. S. Mathews, Esq., storekeeper, the sum of £5, being the amount of a fine levied on the Ordnance property at Waltham Abbey in lieu of taking an orphan child balloted upon the Ordnance, Bd. prs. order, dated 6th April, 1808, per J. S. Jessopp, vestry clerk. Witness, Wm. Breeze.

August 21st.—Report states that 950 tons of

treble refined saltpetre can be produced annually by working $1\frac{1}{2}$ days and on Sundays.

August 31st.—Report that powder is to be sent to magazines at Windsor.

Sept. 29th.—David Streeter seeks compensation of the Board for relinquishing possession of land in Edmondsey Mead, for the erection of a Corning House. Compensation, £15.

Nov. 13th.—Relating to refinery and store for saltpetre.

Oct. 8th.—Estimates for increasing the Refinery from 950 to 1,200 and to 1,900; also increasing and renewing the Saltpetre Refinery.

1811.

March 31st.—Edward Reynolds humbly craves an allowance for the undermentioned wine by him supplied for the use of the sick artificers and labourers employed in the Royal Manufactory of Gunpowder at Waltham Abbey, between 1st Oct., 1807, and 31st Dec., 1810. To 2 dozen bottles of red port wine (13 bottles to the dozen), as above mentioned, at 50s per doz., £5; 26 bottles at 1lb. 6oz. each, 35lbs. 12ozs., R. Hilton, surgeon. Between Jan. 1st and March 31st, 1809, seven of the men were on the sick list from ague. Tho. Foreman suffering from *paralysis*; between this date he got 14lbs. of wine. Jas. Collop, *scrophula*; Job Bendall, abscess and debility; Tho. Cross, diarrhea and phthisis.

Men first appointed.—Edward Goodwin, first storehouse man, appointed Jan. 17th, 1788; John Goodfellow, first master mixer. Feb. 1st, 1789, being Sunday, for which he had two days' pay; Roger Seabrook, first cooper, Feb. 6th, 1789; James Newton, first bargeman, 1s 6d per day, Nov. 24th, 1788; Joseph Mitchell, first bargeman, 1s 9d per day, 15th Dec., 1788; Nath. Etheridge, one of the first labourers away in May, 1792, on militia duty; Geo. Garnet, collar

May 2nd.—Poor rate for Fullars Field, now Engineers Yard. Probably the ancient site of Fulling Mills. [Bulwer says: "Even in the article of bonnets and hats, it appears that certain wicked fulling mills were deemed worthy of a special anathema in the reign of Edward IV. These engines are accused of having sought, 'by subtle imagination,' the destruction of the original makers of hats and bonnets, 'by man's strength—that is, with hands and feet.' And an Act of Parliament was passed (22nd of Edward IV.) to put down the fabrication of the said hats and bonnets by mechanical contrivance."]

May 15th.—Correspondence relating to the Corn Mill, Waltham Abbey.

May 31st, 1815.—Explosion of one of the Head Mills at 12.20; millman's face slightly scorched. This mill had been working since 1764.

August 29th.—Three houses building in Powder Mill-lane out of the materials forming the Horse Mills at this place. Tenants are not allowed to have lodgers, that no unnecessary dilapidations may take place on the premises, being of timber, etc.

November 25th.—An appeal to the Board for more houses for the men working in the Factory. Purchase of two houses from Mr Jessopp. Correspondence urging the advantage of workmen living on the spot.

Annual consumption of refined saltpetre during the great war from 1803 to 1815:—Issued to the manufactory: 1803, 285 tons 7 cwt.; 1804, 57 tons 9 cwt.; 1805, 522 tons 10 cwt.; 1806, 642 tons 6 cwt.; 1807, 664 tons 17 cwt.; 1808, 643 tons 15 cwt.; 1809, 636 tons 12 cwt.; 1810, 657 tons 3 cwt.; 1811, 612 tons 2 cwt.; 1812, 742 tons 2 cwt.; 1813, 785 tons 16 cwt.; 1814, 639 tons 12 cwt.; 1815, 524 tons 13 cwt.—total, 7,356 tons 15 cwt. Issued to Purfleet for merchants: 1803, 18 tons 1 cwt.; 1804,

57 tons 11 cwt.; 1805, 88 tons 15 cwt.; 1806, 292 tons 17 cwt.; 1807, 299 tons 4 cwt.; 1808, 260 tons 12 cwt.; 1809, 95 tons 8 cwt.; 1810, 190 tons 10 cwt.; 1811, 246 tons 5 cwt.; 1812, 1,093 tons 16 cwt.; 1813, 778 tons 5 cwt.; 1814, 1,119 tons 9 cwt.; 1815, 456 tons 13 cwt.—total, 4,997 tons 6 cwt.

1816.

Manufactured up to 31st March, 3,918 Barrels.

Feb. 5th.—Congreve's new grandulating machine placed in a room at Lower Island.

March 8th.—Mr Congreve proposes to line the barrels with lead.

March 14th.—Reduction in the number of men in the Factory.

May 6th.—B.O., approves of old powder regenerated by re-working. Purchased some houses, late occupied by W. Congreve and Mitchell, property of Mr Newell Connopp.

Oct. 30th.—Sir Wm. Congreve grandulating machine to be received and report made monthly how it works, and if the powder is equal in quality.

Dec.—Three tenements formed out of the dwelling-houses in the Tanyard, lately purchased of Mr Connopp. The following are recommended to occupy them at a rental:—Rich. Hudson, Foreman of Stoves, at 3s per week; Thomas Mason, Foreman of Reeling House, 3s per week; Wm. Dudley, Saltpetre Millman, 2s per week.

1817.

Manufactured 2,270.

Feb. 19th.—Directions relating to Refining.

Nov. 1st.—John Challis injured by his work. Application to the Board for a Truss for him. Recommended by Mr Hilton, Surgeon.

Nov. 5th.—John Blackbee seeks assistance from the Board for the injury sustained in his eyes by the explosion of No. 6 Horsemill. No

00/00/1766

Record of Wages paid to Artificers and Labourers

03/07/1795

Supply 5/217

1. Robert Hilton was born circa 1766 and appointed Surgeon on the 1st April 1791 (Supply 5/217 dated 3rd July 1795, and remained in that capacity on the same salary until the 18th June 1807, according to a document of that date (Supply 5/226). In the remarks column of this document, it also stated that in addition to his salary, each of the Foremen and Labourers paid Robert Hilton an allowance of 6d per month for medicines, . This was also the case in August 1808, and in September 1810.
2. List of Officers and Other Persons Employed dated the 29th August 1812 (Supply 5/229) stated that Hilton was earning £63.17.6d, and confirmed that in addition to his salary, each of the Labourers paid him an allowance of 6d per month for medicines .
3. Winters (op.cit., p.122) confirmed he was appointed Surgeon to the Mills in 1791, and retained that position until 1839.
4. In 1814 Robert's Terms of Employment were changed, insomuch as he received a lump sum of £50 per annum in lieu of stoppages for medicines from the men (Supply 5/230 dated 13th February 1814).
5. Supply 5/231 dated 25th June 1818, confirmed that he was employed as Surgeon, that he was 52, resided at Waltham Abbey, and was married with 7 children. It also confirmed that he was appointed on the 1st April 1791, and that his salary in 1818 was £63.17.6d per annum. In additon, he was allowed £50 per annum in lieu of "stoppages for medicines". He did not have a house, but was "Upon the Establishment".
6. According to a further List of Employees (Supply 5/231dated 19th May 1819) Mr. Hilton was still the Surgeon, he was then aged 53, and all the other information given previously remained the same.
7. List of Employees dated the 13th September 1820 (Supply 5/232) updated the previous entries; his age was given as 55.
8. List of Officers and other Persons Employed dated the 9th April 1821 (Supply 5/232) confirmed that Robert Hilton was still Surgeon, that he was then aged 55, was married with 7 children and resided in Waltham Abbey.
9. Supply 5/232 dated 6th February 1822 indicated that Hilton was still paid £63.17.6d, plus £48.8.0d per annum for medicines, giving him a total income of £112.5.6d. He had served for nearly 34 years, was 56 years old, and was married with 7 children.
- 10 In June 1822, the Establishment at Waltham Abbey was reduced, and with the decrease in numbers, the Board ordered the Storekeeper to reduce Hilton's salary to £40 per annum, and that the allowances for medicines should be discontinued (Supply 5/232 dated the 16th July 1822).
- 11 According to the document, 'Alteration in Return A' dated the 1st April 1823 (WO54/542) Mr. Hilton's salary was confirmed at only £40 per annum, with his allowance for medicines discontinued. His family details and date of appointment were also confirmed.
- 12 Hilton was replaced as Surgeon at the Mills by Edwin Wheble in 1839 (Winters, op.cit.p.132).
- 13 It is possible that Robert had died, since the 1841 Census recorded that only Charlotte Hilton, Independent aged 70, Frederick Hilton, Surgeon aged 45, and Marriett Goss, female servant aged 20, were all living in Sewardstone Road.