

Lexden History Group



The Sun Inn – Can you guest the Year?

This issue features:

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 - Silk in Colchester
- Frederick Richardson and Lexden School

Newsletter No 41 – June 2016
Website www.lexdenhistory.org.uk

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Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7.45pm in St Leonard's Church Hall, Lexden, except August when there is no meeting.

Entry £1 for members, £3 for non-members, refreshments included.
Annual membership £15 for single person. £20 for a family living at the same address.

Sunday 18th September- Stow Marie's 100th Anniversary Vintage Flying Event

A celebration of 100 years of Stow Marie's. - 10 am - 5pm

Come and see vintage and modern aircraft flying into this unique WW1 aerodrome.

Tickets are limited to 500 per day.

If you are interested in attending please let me know so that I can organise the booking of tickets under a group booking. Ticket prices will vary according to numbers.

If you would like to book tickets please contact Jackie Bowis

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Tales from the Churchyard The Hayward Family

Set back from the main path to the church door are three side-by-side table tombs (*picture right*), commemorating three generations of the Hayward family. They were born in Colchester or Lexden, apart from the first Henry Hayward who is thought to have been born in Suffolk in 1754. Successive generations followed the same trade or profession – building and architecture. The first tomb records the death in 1817 of Maria Sophia Hayward aged 66 “the affectionate wife of Henry Hayward of this parish” and that of Henry Hayward on Dec 20th 1829 aged 75 years. Henry later married Mary Carter who outlived him and benefitted from his considerable will. He was originally a carpenter but had turned his hand to property developing, building, and generally enlarging his “portfolio” over the years.



The second tomb remembers two of Henry and Maria’s four children: Sophia Maria, who died in 1838 aged 61 years, the wife of Mr Robert Hale; and Henry Hammond Hayward who died on 11th January 1862 in the 78th year of his life. His wife Charlotte Elizabeth who died in 1853 aged 70 and Eliza Hayward, youngest daughter of Henry Hammond Hayward and Charlotte died in 1865 aged 43 years and are also recorded here. Robert Hale is buried at St Mary’s at the Walls. The third tomb completes the picture recording the death in 1865 of Elizabeth S Hayward aged 57 years unmarried daughter of the first Henry Hayward, and Mary, his second wife, who died in 1841 aged 70 years.

The first Henry Hayward was a carpenter/builder, an enterprising young man who in 1781 paid duty for the apprentice indenture of James Bollard and another in 1789 for John Sparrow who later became one of his tenants in St John’s Street (or Gutter Lane as part of it was called then owing to a



large gutter running down the centre!). He was a busy and increasingly wealthy man who, like many others, subscribed 10s 6d in 1798 for the Defence of the Country during the French Wars. One of his many buildings was erected on the corner of Spring Lane and Lexden Road in the early 1800s (Forge House) and is now called Spring House. He paid 10gns per annum for 14 years to Ann Rawstorn in November 1800 for the lease of a “messuage or tenement north of Lexden Street” where he was already the occupier. The copyhold was renewed in August 1815 at £35 pa and again in June 1824. In July 1802 he was paid the princely sum of £3 14s “for attending going the bounds, fixing posts, etc” and in April 1803 appeared to be auctioning a freehold estate in Stanway. In 1804 the will of Samuel Winnock mentions his house in Lexden parish as being “held under Henry Hayward”. It seems that at some time he also owned Love’s Land (now Rawstorn Road/Papillon Road area) which was next acquired by Henry Vint. He was closely involved with a Mr Winnock, developer and publican of the Castle Inn in High Street and at about that time they were building in Crouch Street which was then purely residential. Under the Enclosure Act of 1820 they developed the newly enclosed Lexden Heath west of Straight Road.

Henry Hayward was church warden of St Leonard’s Lexden for 19 years during which time he loaned money for the rebuilding of the church in 1821 and was also the builder. His death on 20 Dec 1829 “after a long affliction” was greatly mourned by many who were possibly comforted by the generous nature of his long will leaving many members of the family swathes of property throughout the area.

His only son, Henry Hammond Hayward, was born in Lexden on 27th March 1784 and followed in his father’s footsteps. He is recorded in successive censuses as a builder but also as an architect. He

Tales from the Churchyard

The Hayward Family - continued

seemed to specialise in prestige buildings and in 1820 he built the original Corn Exchange (now colloquially called "the Fire Office") to the design of David Laing. David Laing also designed the Custom House in London and Lexden Park. After a large fire on Christmas Day 1834 he rebuilt the north side of Crouch Street and in 1836/7 he built the workhouse to designs by John Brown of Norwich who was responsible for many workhouses in the country. This later became St Mary's Hospital and has now been rebuilt as St Mary's Field. Henry Hammond also built the "new" Corn Exchange in High Street in 1843, now the Co-op Bank, but when the old Moot Hall was rebuilt the same year he refused to build the replacement – a wise move as this was later demolished and replaced in 1901 by the present one.

Henry Hammond Hayward's architectural business was very successful and he designed many of the now listed buildings in Colchester including St Mary's Terrace in Lexden Road. The houses were very up-market and the occupants expected them to include "the new-fangled water closets" but this caused him a major problem as the effluent would have passed directly into the local water supply and he was forced to build, in Oaks Drive, the largest cess-pit ever constructed. At one time the west end of the terrace housed St Mary's School (*picture right*).



He also rebuilt Colchester Royal Grammar School in Lexden Road which was opened in 1853. At an elaborate ceremony he gave the key of the new buildings to the Headmaster, Dr William Wright, and the Chelmsford Chronicle of 5th August 1853 reported that "The handsome edifice, which is erected in the mediæval style of architecture, is built of red brick, with Bath stone dressings at the angles, windows, etc. Accommodation is provided for 80 boys, including 20 boarders; and the structure comprises a noble school room, 41 feet long, by 20 feet 6 inches wide, and 16 feet to the ceiling, which is very beautifully moulded and panelled in wood and lighted with six elegant windows, a class-room, dining and excellent bed rooms." It appears that the gardens were incomplete at the opening ceremony as "There is a large garden for the headmaster walled in from the playground, which is being tastefully laid out."



He spent most of his life in Heath Cottage, Lexden Heath, near Hunter's Farm at the top of Cross Road (now Heath Road). He was sufficiently wealthy to always employ at least two live-in servants to assist his wife, Charlotte Elizabeth, in household duties. His son, Henry Winnock Hayward was living next door in 1861 and next to him in Rose Cottage was a builder, Joseph Barker, who probably had worked for the Haywards for many years. (His poem glorying 50 years of marriage was included in LHG Newsletter No 32).

Continuing the family tradition of building but calling himself an architect, Henry Winnock Hayward, born in 1825, was the only son of Henry Hammond Hayward. He was a staunch Conservative serving on Colchester Borough Council from 1853-8 but fell out with the Party. Father and son worked together for some years but between 1855 and 1857 Henry Winnock was instrumental in the major restoration of All Saints Church (now the Natural History Museum) including rebuilding the north arcade in 13th-century style, inserting new windows in the south wall of the nave and refacing it. In 1858 its old rectory was replaced by a relatively modest red brick building



Tales from the Churchyard

The Hayward Family - continued

for Rev J T Round but in 1955 it became the Post Office at No 66 High Street and is now much altered. He seemed to enjoy working for the local churches as he built the Church School in Straight Road in the early 1861/2 and in 1863 a new rectory was built on open land on Hythe Hill for St Leonard's. He designed houses along Lexden Road and the magnificent Wivenhoe House in his favoured Gothic style but also completed the more modest drinking fountains in Middleborough and at St Nicholas' Church.



Henry Winnock Hayward moved further afield during the 1850s, rebuilding Harrow School in his familiar Gothic style and became involved in the still prestigious Phillimore Estate in North Kensington, London. Most of the houses in the development were the standard Italianate variety but he built one contrasting group of four houses in Phillimore Place (formerly Durham Villas) in his Tudor Gothic style. Two were detached houses (*picture left*) of red brick with blue brick in diaper patterns (Nos. 6 and 12) either side of two similar semi-detached houses (Nos. 8 and 10). Henry Winnock also leased the detached houses – one of which is on sale today for £12.5m! In 1879-1880 on a 1½ acre plot on

Campden Hill Road, Kensington he completed a grand house, The Abbey, in his signature decorated gothic style, for a wealthy stockbroker, William Abbot, who had lived in No 8. He had ordered a Broadwood grand piano for his new house which appeared to be ordered specifically to compliment the interior decorations of The Abbey (*picture right*). Unfortunately The Abbey was badly damaged in a bombing raid in April 1941 and remained derelict before the site was cleared and replaced by the modern Kensington Central Library in 1959.



Another project was reported in the Colchester local press in October 1856 – Henry Winnock “had bought building ground of The Avenue and will construct a terrace of middle class residences ... no less than £30 rateable value”. At that time a £10 rateable value was the minimum qualification to



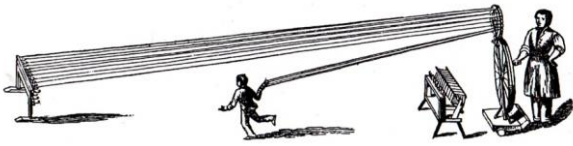
vote and he thought that they would sell easily. He designed Nos 2-4 and 6-8 The Avenue (*picture left*) and by this time George Gard Pye was articulated to him, joining his office at 3 Bank Buildings in Colchester. By 1868 the houses were still unoccupied and Henry Winnock Hayward was responsible for the considerable unpaid rates. At last, the Army bought them to accommodate senior officers after the Crimean War but it was too late for him and he was declared bankrupt. This project did not have the success that his London ones did and, adding to his problems, there appears to have been an acrimonious parting with Pye when “the dissolution of the Partnership” was

announced in the Essex County Standard of 25 January 1878. Pye had himself become a successful architect designing many now listed buildings in Colchester. They had worked together for several years during which time they built the Globe Inn in Military Road (now the Oliver Twist).

Many local buildings were designed and built by the three overlapping generations of Henry Hayward and it is often difficult to determine who built what but Colchester must be grateful to the Hayward family for serving the town and Lexden so well and designing so many notable buildings.

Acknowledgements: J Bensusan Butt, Fabio Casale, Chris Graves, Andrew Phillips

Silk in Colchester



It is not generally known that Lexden people worked in the Colchester silk industry but this does stretch the point as they lived in Water Lane (now Sheepen Road) which in the early 19th century was part of this parish! The English silk industry originated in the 14th century and relied heavily on female labour with the guild system applying strict controls on what the women could do. By the 18th century the industry was thriving particularly in Spitalfields but women and children, often working from home, were confined to the lower paid and inferior tasks of warping (preparing the warp for weaving), throwing - "throwsters" twisting the fibre into thread (1843 picture above), and winding.

Winding was vital but in the early days it was hard manual labour at home. Thread in hanks or skeins, each containing 560 yards, was transferred by a small hand-turned wheel to bobbins for the shuttle but this was hampered by the thread breaking and the constant change of full bobbins. As the maximum that could be earned doing this was about 2s or 3s (10p or 15p) a week much of the work was done by young children or the elderly. Occasionally it would be done by a young woman who would also be given a meal, but in addition to winding she was often expected to assist in household duties and child care, etc.

In the late 18th century competition from northern mills and the war with France had reduced the weekly output of the famous Colchester bays from 400 to 160 pieces. At the same time and to avoid rising wage costs silk weaving families were moving from Spitalfields to set up looms in East Anglian towns. Some businesses were throwing mills, but others also wove silken fabrics of various kinds. Michael Boyle, an Irishman, was recorded as a "silk weaver" and by 1790 he had established a silk and ribbon factory in Colchester, partly to supply his milliner wife, Mary.

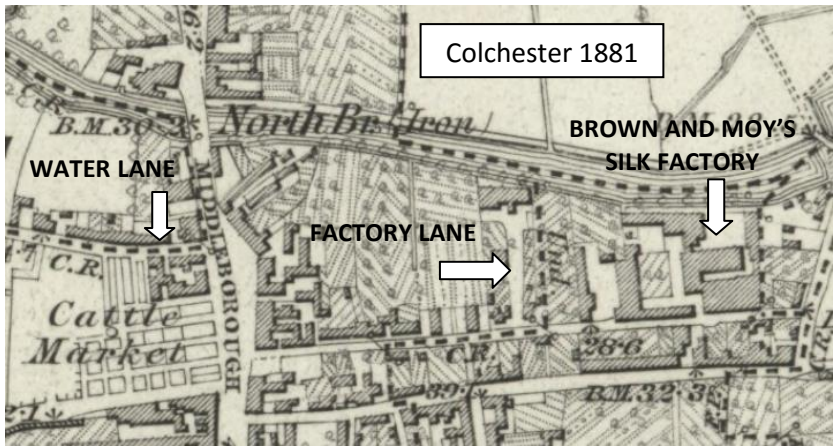
At this time women's earnings locally were 5s to 5s 6d (25p or 27p) a day and many single women and widowed silk weavers drifted to the town from the surrounding villages. Looms were set up in workers' homes often in an upper room (picture right), also serving as a bedroom and sitting-room, particularly in winter to save a second fire. In the early 19th century employment in the new silk factories was rapidly replacing home work and in the first quarter of the 19th century the Essex silk industry had reached its peak. Between 100 and 160 looms were employed in silk manufacture and the wider area of Braintree, Sudbury and Halstead were internationally important.



A few years after Michael Boyle's death in 1809 a firm in Wyre Street was producing silks, velvets, and bombazines, and after the Napoleonic war a group of Colchester silk weavers began to produce broad silk, bombazines and other materials for the local market. Bombazine was an expensive material woven from silk and worsted yarns and generally black for mourning, but its hand looms were small and easily built in houses. "In the broad-silk loom," J Farley wrote in 1838, "adapted to weaving satins, serge, and small figures, the order in which the (8 or more) treadles are required to be worked, varies for each fabric, which is a constant tax on the memory, or rather on the attention, of the weaver; the perpetual motion of the feet proves very fatiguing, and the distance of some of the treadles obliges the weaver to bear with his breast on the loom, which is apt to bring on cough and serious disorders, more particularly if the weavers are women, as is often the case".

In 1826 Pigot, wrote: "a very extensive building has just been erected for the purpose of silk mills, which promises to be of great benefit to the working classes." The company was owned Stephen Brown, who had been born in 1797 at Wivenhoe Hall (now demolished). He acquired a large site by the River Colne at the east end of St. Peter's Street and built a steam-powered mill comprising a red brick building four storeys high, a small mill and reel room, a single storey winding shed and an

Silk in Colchester - continued



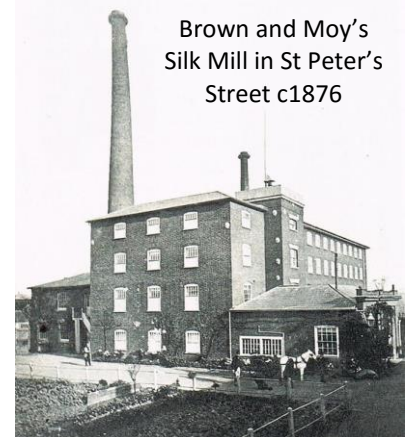
engine house with a 90ft chimney. Here he established his silk mills and a throwsters business. The road which ran north to the river on the west side of the factory, formerly Deadman's Lane or Dead Lane, soon became known colloquially as Factory Lane. In 1827 the overseers of that parish withheld relief from paupers who refused to send their children to work in the mills

By the 1830s various silk goods were manufactured in Colchester with the industry still employing mostly women and children. In 1832 the Colchester silk-makers included William Comber, a maker of broad silk, and William Willimont, a manufacturer of "bombasin" and "crape". Crepes were made of yarns which had been highly twisted before weaving, giving the fabric a distinctive appearance and considerable suppleness.

In the 1840 Sessional Papers of the House of Lords it was reported that in Colchester "Umbrella silk paid 6d, 7d or 9d a yard". Pay rates, however, continued to be very different for men and women, eg, weekly pay for male parasol silk weavers was 9s 9d; women 5s 3d; boys 4s 1d, but then deductions could be 9d for the loom, with similar charges for providing light and quilling (winding the weft thread on to the quill or cone ready for weaving). Another very real problem was that work was not always available or there was a delay before more orders arrived.

Also recorded in the 1840 Sessional Papers was that one lucky weaver in Colchester was "engaged making a splendid and expensive pattern of parasol silk which was to be brought out at the coronation. It was sent down to Colchester to be done in order to diminish the risk of any other manufacturer taking the pattern. It was made by the Jacquard loom." Jacquard looms used a punched card system and produced a woven pattern with the depth and thickness of brocade. The town's silk industry, never of great importance, had actually been declining from the 1820s when protection from foreign imports was removed. By 1840 (Sessional Papers) some of the remaining 40 to 60 weavers were outworkers for London firms: "Some are weaving umbrella and parasol silk for Mr Foot of Spital Square, London but the great part is given out by the agents of Messrs Randall and Anderson of Gutter Lane, London and consists of satins, three singles, four singles, three doubles and serges". The average wage, however, was not above 8s (40p) a week and agricultural labourers were considered far better off as they had the expectation of extra wages in harvest time, gleaning by the family and growing their own vegetables, etc, and above all they had no overhead expenses.

Another silk-throwing mill was recorded in 1832 as belonging to John Moy born in Warwick in 1789. In the 1841 Census he was living with his family in East Stockwell Street, recorded as Silk Merchant. By 1840 Colchester's silk mills had merged becoming Brown and Moy, silk manufacturers and throwsters, and employed George Courtauld's patent spindle for throwing silk (Patent No 3834 granted on 4 August 1814) but business was not always good and in 1848 White wrote of two throwing mills in the town, one near the Castle (Brown and Moy) and the other in a large building, formerly the barrack tavern. The uncertain state of Brown's silk business is mentioned in William Wire's diary in February 1843 - "Several men were discharged from the silk factory of Brown and Moy, and it is closed two days a week in consequence of the depression of the silk trade." (Wire was a self-educated radical and watchmaker.) The silk industry, however, served Stephen Brown well. By 1849 he had acquired Grey Friars - the impressive house at the top of East Hill and was a local magistrate. Later the two



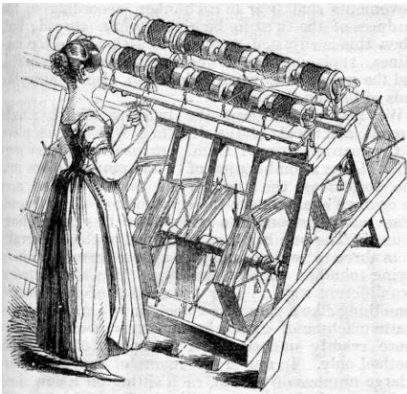
Brown and Moy's
Silk Mill in St Peter's
Street c1876

Silk in Colchester - continued

factories came under the ownership of Campbell, Harrison and Lloyd (afterwards Harrison and Lloyd) and Stephen Brown Maldon respectively. John Moy by the 1861 Census was recorded as a retired silk throwster. The former firm disappeared about 1868, but Stephen Brown's continued until 1881 when the silk industry finally died out in Colchester. The decline increased from 1872 with the recent opening of the Suez Canal (1869), the rapid industrialisation of European silk-producing countries, notably France, and raw silk being imported from Japan at competitive prices - probably due to their advanced reeling techniques.

Brown and Moy were not model employers for in July 1842 the Inspector of Factories reported that he had found children under 13 years of age employed in cleaning, oiling and greasing machinery (which could be interpreted as repairing) for more than 10 hours a day and also that some under the age of 18 were doing the same at night, ie, before 5.30am. Although Brown said it was unintentional to contravene the law he was taken to court but wriggled out of the charge by encouraging the magistrates to agree that greasing is not repairing only preventing further repair being necessary! The inspector was unhappy and stated that the law should be revised to define more clearly the protection needed for children.

At the riverside factory spinning was carried on mainly by low-paid young women and girls, who occasionally took industrial action but with little hope of resolution in a declining industry. The Essex Standard reported in April 1843 that two or three hundred women and girls had protested outside the mill gates. Four, probably the ring leaders, were brought before the magistrates and said that Stephen Brown had expected them to do four reels instead of the usual three at 5s a week. He had paid them an extra shilling before but argued that in a declining industry they could do the extra with little effort. Knowing that the women faced three months in prison if convicted the magistrates recommended that instead of Stephen Brown paying them for their extra work and discharging them, he should allow them to return to three reels and discuss payment for a fourth. An agreement was reached but there is no record of the outcome.



Silk winding in a factory

Brown and Moy were in trouble again in July 1846 for employing unlawfully. Following a report the sub-inspector was asked to visit the factory after normal hours and arrived at 8.30pm to find nearly 70 women working from 5.30am to 9pm with only 1½ hours for meals and that this had been going on for 10 days. Working more than 12 hours a day was illegal, as was after 8.30pm, and fines were high - up to £5 per person, although £100 was the maximum that could be paid. The magistrates, including Henry Wolton (the Mayor) and George Saville (Hythe distiller and Mayor in 1836), having heard very questionable evidence from Stephen Brown, only enforced a lesser fine totalling £36 as only 12 workers were cited. The inspector was furious and instructed his sub-inspector that when visiting "any one of these establishments belonging to that firm, not to place any dependence on their professed wish to comply with the provisions of the Act, but to prosecute any obvious neglect or contravention of the law and to summon a larger proportion of the persons who shall have been wrongly employed." The court cases beg the question, how well was Stephen Brown known in magisterial circles?!

Stephen Brown was again in difficulties over his employment policies when the Essex Standard printed a letter in January 1862 stating that "... there are hundreds who are employed in the factory working 6 days for 4 days pay". Through his solicitor, James Talbot, he demanded and received an apology for this inference as he had intended "to convey that as a result of short time working these workers were impoverished". It was a hard life as out of work weavers were often forced to become labourers, bricklayers, gardeners or even join the army, but several hundred remained unemployed in Colchester, some having to enter the workhouse with their families. Meanwhile Stephen Brown was acquiring Orchard Mill in Coggeshall and another mill in Tiptree.

Silk in Colchester - continued

Life was not always miserable for silk workers and the owners were not always hard task masters. It is reported that in July 1861 more than 300 "silk girls" working for Stephen Brown went to Birch Hall, owned by Charles Round and his wife, to enjoy "refreshment to body and soul" in the form of sports and a "sumptuous" tea with fresh fruit. The revellers also heard an address by a visiting cleric. This was not a one-off occasion but occurred at least until 1868 and possibly ended only with the death of Stephen Brown in 1869. In September that year over 600 workers from Colchester and Ipswich enjoyed a trip to Harwich by train and boat respectively.

The Water Lane workers included John Davies, born 1816, a silk throwster who died in 1850 leaving a widow and 3 children in poverty. She then lived with her charwoman mother and labourer brother in Duck Lane, Middleborough. Sarah Appleby was another 15 year old silk worker in 1841 and she married in 1844 moving to Mill Road. By 1861 she was widowed with four children, had moved to Middleborough and returned to the silk factory as a sorter. In 1871 her 22 year old daughter was also working there but by 1891 Sarah was back in Mile End, recorded as a midwife but sick. Matilda Hayward is the only silk worker in 1841 in Water Lane whose parents, James and Sarah, were from Lexden. She married Lawson Alston of West Bergholt in 1845 and had eight children. In 1851 she was still in Lexden at 6 Bergholt Road and by 1861 she was back in Water Lane, apparently not working, but her husband was a Railway Engine cleaner. Nearby were several members of her extended family. She died in 1882 but Lawson married again and lived in the same house, now 26 Sheepen Road, until his death in 1910.

The brother of Matilda, Charles Hayward, was born in 1831, and lived in Water Lane for much of his life, surviving two marriages and several children. In 1841 his older brother and sister were silk workers. Later he became a carpenter but in all his children's baptisms he was described as a Mechanic or Engineer at the Silk Works. In successive censuses he was recorded as an Engine or Pipe Fitter but when the factory closed he became a publican living in Middleborough and in 1901 was back in Water Lane (newly named Sheepen Road) with his married daughter and working as a gas fitter. He died in 1907.

Many silk workers lived in Magdalen Street; William Spinks born in 1814 was living in Duck Lane in 1841. In 1851 he was working as an umbrella maker at 26 North Hill and with wife, Sarah, as his assistant. This was obviously a precarious living for in 1861 he was a marine store dealer and in 1871 a bird dealer but by 1881 and 1891 they were still at 26 North Hill and he was again an umbrella maker! He died in 1895. Another silk weaver was William Piddington born in 1808 and recorded as living in Stanwell Street in 1841. In 1851 he was still there but in 1861 and 1871 he was a hairdresser living in East Street and by 1881 he was still a hairdresser but working in Scheregate Passage. The local silk industry was certainly not a long-term guaranteed occupation!

It is interesting to note that in 1911 the Colchester Co-operative Society was one of the largest retailers and wholesalers with their first shop in Culver Street. It had been set up on 2nd August 1861 by such great men as James Paxman, but another was John Castle (born in Coggeshall in 1820) who in 1841 had been a silk weaver living in Maidenburgh Street. He was instrumental in 1849 in getting the London firm of Campbell, Harrison and Lloyd to take over the St Peter's Street Silk Factory. He was obviously a cut above the others as in 1851 he was living in Fingringhoe Road and working as "Foreman to a Silk Factory". He then had a change of direction for in 1861 he was manager of a Soap Factory but by 1871 the family was living in Abbeigate Street and he was manager of a silk factory where two of his daughters were silk winders. In 1881 when the local silk industry had ceased, he was still "in silk" but as a Silk Mercer and lived in Ebenezer Cottage, Sir Isaac's Walk until his death in the summer of 1888.

The Colchester silk industry lasted until 1881 and Stephen Brown's factory in St Peters Street was taken over by the Eagle Brewery (formerly run in East Hill by Robert and James Hurnard with Christopher Stopes) and was finally demolished in 1967 for redevelopment.

Frederick Richardson and Lexden School

The Society of Friends (Quakers) ran schools from as early as 1691 and over a hundred years later John Kendall, who died in 1815, left £1,000 in trust to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to six poor boys from around Colchester at a boarding school with a Quaker master. This legacy was combined with £500 received from the will of Francis Freshfield (d 1808). Kendall bequeathed his library in trust for the public and especially for the use of "Teachers and Scholars" at the Friends' School but the Trustees declared them of no use to the school and in 1865 with the sanction of the Charity Commissioners sold the 1,030 volumes – just eighteen made £150! In 1869 the Trustees approved Frederick Richardson's new school in Lexden.



Frederick Richardson (*picture right*) was born in Coventry in 1829, the son of a watchmaker and in 1842 entered a newly founded Quaker School in Sibford, Oxfordshire, with over 50 pupils, girls and boys, and later he became a pupil teacher and held the higher position of master until he was 23. One pupil remembers that "evening Readings were very pleasant - boys and girls met in the same schoolroom, and listened to some nice book, or had a lesson in easy style from Frederick Richardson. After that the Bible reading, silence and then, shaking hands with Governess and Master, we filed out to bed." The Lamb farming family were also closely associated with the school attending the quiet Quaker meetings and "good old Joshua Lamb led us through the Bible in narrative way".



He had two years formal teacher training at the newly founded Flounders' Institute at Ackworth in Yorkshire (*picture left*) where he used his considerable sense of humour to advantage. His class was testing the properties of laughing gas but no pupil was prepared to experiment with it. Frederick "duly inhaled the gas and forthwith astonished the audience by various antics which some really believed to be its magical effects!" He was later appointed to the Friends' School in Mountmellick, founded in 1785 in an old monastery but in the

spring of 1855 he and his fiancée, Sarah, the daughter of Joshua Lamb, became Superintendent and Housekeeper at another Friends' School at Penketh, near Warrington. They were married in July that year in Sibford returning to Penketh for the start of term on July 27th. His teaching was far different from the norm of the time and he made many changes, decorating the school with large maps, sourcing better equipment for chemistry lessons and introducing a wider range of books to the library. He believed in the benefits of games and gym and converted a disused pit in a nearby field into an open-air pool. He also arranged for a 3,000 gallon rain-water cistern to be built under the courtyard of the school which was paid for by special subscription. An upstairs lavatory was built for the girls, the boys had their wooden bath replaced by an enamelled one, and a pump was installed in the scullery (operated by the boys) to enable soft water to be pumped to the top of the house. The boys were also encouraged to plough, milk the cows, set potatoes and turnips, sow corn, make hay, gather apples, and reap the harvest with sickles.

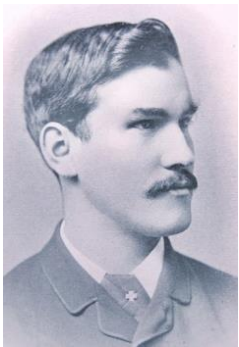
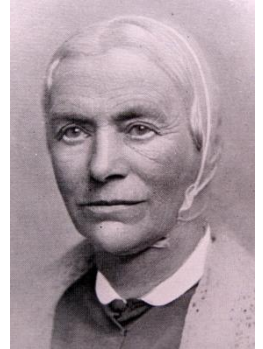
Their daughter Mary was born in 1857 but sadly died aged two. Sarah suffered a breakdown so the Richardsons left Penketh school in 1861 and Frederick became a private tutor to James King's son in Rochdale where their son, Frederick Joshua, was born in 1863. Next he ran a private school in Bishop Auckland and finally he took over the boarding and day school in Lexden in 1869 at No 3 The Street (*picture right*), living in with his wife, Sarah. Only the listed frontage remains of the old house as it was demolished in the 1970s for the development of flats (Jacqueline Court). Richardson revived the lapsed endowment for the education of six boys.



Frederick Richardson and Lexden School - continued

The limited records of the school include a list of students who attended between 1869 and 1903. The Census details record boarders, not day pupils, but in the 1871 there were 16 boarders and by 1881 there were 27 between the ages of 11 and 14 with a cook and two servants to look after them. The boarders were accommodated in the upper floor of the coach house (now part of 187 Lexden Road) and it still bears evidence of its original use, ie, remnants of stables, tack hooks, etc. There are also fireplaces but whether any fires were lit when the scholars were in occupation remains a mystery. A narrow staircase leads up to the large dormitory and as it was only a single brick building it would have been bitterly cold.

In a Memoir written by three old boys, Frederick Richardson is remembered as being "bright and cheery" and was fondly called "The Governor". He took great trouble to study each boy's character and "deal accordingly with him". He apparently made science great fun and also showed slides on the magic lantern in the dining room. He was good at games and encouraged the boys to join in cricket, rugby and swimming. His "underarm twisters" in cricket games were famous. Later he suffered crippling injuries in a fall from his trap but he would ride his horse and encourage the teams from the side lines. The boys were encouraged to keep pets and had rabbits, white mice and silk worms in the wood store. They also loved the Richardsons' dogs, Keeper and Prince, and enjoyed working in garden plots producing flowers, including white roses which everyone wore on the last day of the summer term. In season the pupils would go blackberry picking bringing their harvest back for Sarah (*picture above*) to make puddings to accompany the stews she produced for them. She was a superb housekeeper mending their clothes, cooking and creating a homely feeling for the boarders who called her "Mammy".



Frederick Richardson was a well known and familiar figure in the area, well respected and interested in everyone and everything. He was financially prudent and methodical with great common sense. His son, Frederick Joshua (*picture left*), spent some time training in another Friends' School in York and took over the Lexden School on his marriage to Julietta Maud Theobald in 1886. His father moved to what is now Cresseners in Church Lane, taking one of the loyal servants with him. On 8th May 1892 this beloved son died suddenly and a Portland stone drinking fountain (*picture right*) was placed outside the church gate in Lexden Road with the inscription 'Erected by the Old Boys of Lexden School in loving memory of Frederick Joshua

Richardson 1893.' Frederick senior once again took over responsibility for the school with Julietta. The school had prospered but numbers were falling. By 1901 Julietta and her two sons were living at the school and she was the Housekeeper Domestic but the numbers fell to 7 when Frederick Richardson died from bronchitis and heart failure on 28th April, aged 74. Sadly Julietta died only months later on 12th January 1903, aged 42, and is buried with her husband in Lexden Churchyard just in front of what is today the Colombarium but the grave is now completely hidden by thick bushes. Sarah, aged nearly 80, was left to care for their two grandsons who both attended the school. Eric Henry b1887 became a dairy farmer in Oxfordshire and later Ormskirk and Cedric Theobald b1892 lived for many years in Earls Colne. Sarah died in April 1908.



Many well known Colchester sons went to the school, such as E Alec Blaxill born in 1873, who became an Alderman and was twice Mayor of Colchester; the five Bunting boys were cousins whose fathers were nurserymen and seed growers. The four Daniell boys were from the local brewing family and F Stanley Daniell became a well-known architect; Cecil Benham was the son of William Gurney Benham, another Mayor of Colchester; Samuel F Hurnard's father was James Hurnard of Hill House. The eleven Marriage boys were all related and their fathers were farmers and millers around Chelmsford except Francis whose father, Wilson Marriage, was a flour miller and farmer in Colchester and a Mayor of Colchester. Frank S Cant b1887 was the son of Frank Cant, of Baker's

Frederick Richardson and Lexden School - continued

Farm in Baker's Lane, another Mayor of Colchester, a rose grower and nurseryman – a name familiar today. There were three Wheeler boys and John F, the son of George Wheeler of Lay and Wheeler, took over the company and his descendant, Johnny, is now President after the takeover by Majestic Wines.

Frederick Richardson made a good living at the school for he left over £8,500. Probate was granted to Wilson Marriage and Joshua and Richard Lamb, nephews of Sarah, from Sibford. The school survived until 1907 when the charity was passed to Ferdinand Gröne's school, which taught mostly girls, at No 17 Wellesley Road but in 1917 it was taken over by the Boys' High School and, as it was non-Quaker, the trustees withdrew payment of the charity money. Under



Pupils of Lexden School c1888 and one of the dogs! Edwin Alec Blaxill is to the right of Frederick Richardson. Does anyone recognise an ancestor? Photo: Tony Blaxill.

a Scheme of 1922, which divided the income between the Kendall and Freshfield educational trust and the Kendall book charity, the income from £3,280 stock was to be used to help boys, preferably from Colchester, to attend schools associated with the Society of Friends.

Frederick Richardson is buried with his wife, Sarah, in the Friends' Burial Ground in Roman Road and his name is also remembered in Richardson Walk (off The Commons in Prettygate).

FORTHCOMING SPEAKERS/EVENTS

Wednesday 13th July

Mr Miller - The Suffolk Punch Horse

Saturday 13th August

Summer BBQ

12noon – 4pm

Carol & Tim Holding

Little Glebe, Spring Lane

Tickets £5

(Available at our June & July meetings)

Wednesday 14th September

Paul Gallifant - The Motor Trade in Colchester

1896 - 1945