

Lexden History Group

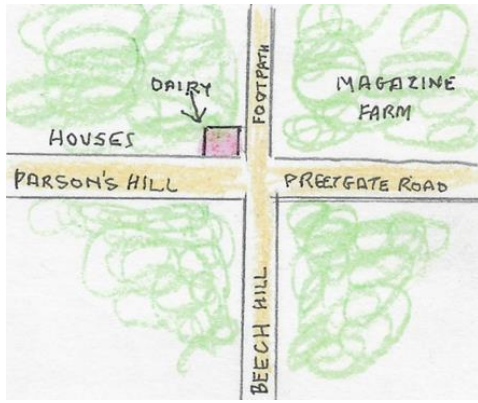


Magazine Farm Dairy Van, May 1927, on St John's Green

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Timothy (Tim) Blake was born in 1904, a member of one of the Blake families who ran Prettygate and Magazine Farms (left) for a number of years after the 1914/18 war.

At the age of 15 Tim started a milk delivery service on his bicycle for customers in the Lexden area. After a few months he was doing so well that he swapped his push bike for a horse-drawn float. The float carried several churns of fresh milk. As Tim called on his customers 'Two pints please', or the measure the customer required, was ladled into a hand-held jug and quickly covered with a

beaded net to keep out the flies. There were no Health and Safety Regulations back in the twenties! (right: horse-drawn float similar to Tim's float).

In 1925 Baker's Garage in Queen Street was selling new Trojan vans, one of which Tim Blake bought for £125 to replace the horse and float. The solid-wheel van caused a bumpy ride for milk, now in glass bottles. Do you remember the circular cardboard top (left) which had to be pressed down to pour out the milk?



If you pressed too hard, you were likely to be covered in split milk.

Maximum speed of the Trojan was 35 mph and was powered by Blue Bird Petrol which was stored in a 500 gallon tank in the garden. It wasn't such an expensive arrangement in those days as 500 gallons cost about £20 – yes, not a misprint, just £20!

In May 1927 a photograph (front cover) was taken of Tim with his Trojan van, registration number TW 7461, standing on St John's Green. Tim had his left leg on the running board. His companion in plus-fours was Wilfred Farmer, son of Colchester's Tax Collector.

Tim Blake's other interest was training greyhounds whose kennels were behind the dairy. The dogs were often entered for races at Ipswich Greyhound Track.



After the Second World War, Tim handed over Magazine Farm Dairy to a new owner and from 1948 he became landlord of the Crown Inn on the main Ipswich Road at Ardleigh.

In May 1977 the *Essex County Standard*, having seen the old photograph of Tim with his Trojan can, decided to write an article about the early days as a milkman. They took an updated picture (left) of him standing on the same spot and same pose as fifty years ago, but this time with his modern Morris saloon car.

The article also explained the name 'Magazine'. It came about because once there had been a powder magazine store there and in the garden of 'Sloping Pines', 11 Parson's Hill, stood a shot tower for producing the metal shot. In a shot tower lead is heated until molten, then dropped through a copper sieve high up in the tower. The liquid forms tiny spherical balls by surface tension and solidifies as it falls. The balls are caught at the floor of the tower in water-filled basin. Although still standing in 1932, the tower has long since been demolished probably by its then owner, Mr John Edeson (1881-1959). His wife, Phyllis, lived there until her death in 1991. Today there is no sign of the former dairy.



The Origins of some of Lexden's Street Names Lexden Garden Village

The Papillon family owned much land in Colchester, gradually selling it off for building purposes. Lexden Garden Village Ltd was created in the 1920s with the object of building houses on that land for local families to rent at a reasonable amount. The Labour Parliamentary candidate for Colchester in 1922, 1923, 1924 and 1929, Capt Richard L Reiss (*right*), whose interests were in land reform, housing and town planning, worked together with local lawyer Geoffrey C Bensusan Butt. They wanted to emulate the Garden Cities movement founded by Ebenezer Howard in the early 1900s. This was to combine the benefits of urban and rural living to enable the working classes to enjoy an alternative to farm labour and unhealthy crowded cities.



The Lexden project was supported by local men 'of all opinions and politics' who gave freely of their expertise. By 1926 86 houses had been built but when money ran out in 1927, the Council bought the remaining land and built a further 93 houses. It remained a public company until the 1970s by which time most of the houses had been sold to tenants. Alec Blaxill said in 1936 that Nelson Road was "of recent construction in 1905" and was named, together with nearby roads, to commemorate naval history", ie, to celebrate successes during the Napoleonic Wars.



Nelson Road was named after Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson (1758-1805) (*left*) who was born in Norfolk and became one of the most highly regarded naval commanders. He was an inspirational leader, prepared to be an unconventional tactician and strategist. He gained much early experience by serving with many of the top commanders and was awarded his own first command at the age of only 20. His career was varied, serving in the West Indies, the Baltic, Canada, off Central America and the French Revolutionary Wars. It was in the later battles that Nelson lost the sight of his right eye in 1794 and his right arm in 1797. He often disregarded the orders of senior officers.

The most well-known occasion was when ordered to cease action at the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801 he put the telescope to his right eye and famously said he couldn't see any withdrawal signal.

The love of his life was Emma, Lady Hamilton who in 1801 bore him a daughter, Horatia.

Trafalgar Road: Nelson's most renowned battle at Cape Trafalgar, saved Britain from invasion by Napoleon but cost him his life. It was before the start of the Battle on 21st October 1805 that he signalled to his sailors the celebrated line "England expects that every man will do his duty". In the great sea battle more than 3,000 British men were killed, 3,500 wounded and over 1,000 lost. He was shot by a French sniper whilst leading 60 ships in the attack against the joint French and Spanish fleet. His body was returned to England, preserved in a cask called a Leaguer (the largest size aboard) then filled with brandy, renewed every so often, and guarded by a sentry. The body was later transferred, still in brandy to a lead coffin and on arrival in England it was perfectly preserved. He was given a state funeral but he preferred to be buried in St Paul's Cathedral (9th January 1806) as he "believed Westminster Abbey would revert to the swamp from which it came".

A Mr Moss lived in Trafalgar Road and although he had lost an arm he still worked as Lexden's gas lamp lighter.

Collingwood Road: Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood (1746-1810) was a long-serving, celebrated naval officer and close friend of Nelson with whom he served in several British victories and during the Napoleonic wars.

The Origins of some of Lexden's Street Names Lexden Garden Village - continued



(right: Collingwood Road when newly built)

Collingwood commanded HMS *Royal Sovereign* at the Battle of Trafalgar and when Nelson died he became commander-in-chief. In gratitude for his heroic service, he was raised to the peerage and with the thanks of both Parliamentary Houses he was also awarded an eye-watering annual pension of £2,000. A fellow sailor, Robert Hay, wrote how

"attentive he was to the health and comfort and happiness of his crew! A man who could not be happy under him, could have been happy nowhere; a look of displeasure from him was as bad as a dozen at the gangway from another man". Hay continued, "a better seaman, a better friend to seamen – a more zealous defender of the country's rights and honour, never trod the quarterdeck". (right – silhouette of Collingwood by Nelson drawn whilst both serving in the West Indies in the 1780s).



In his book "Life in Nelson's Navy" Dudley Pope says of Collingwood, at home in Morpeth, Northumberland, that he would always have a pocketful of acorns when walking with his dog and would press an acorn into the ground whenever he saw a suitable place for an oak tree to grow so that there would always be oak to build more ships. Some of these trees are probably still growing!



Hargood Close: This 2013 supported housing scheme off London Road, opposite Lexden Garden Village, continues the Nelson theme with Admiral of the White Sir William Hargood, GCH, KCB (1762 –1839) (left) who served through the American War of Independence, the French Revolutionary war and the Napoleonic Wars. His rank, Admiral of the White, denoted his position as third in seniority of British naval officers from 1805-63. During his career he gained a reputation for bad luck but after his courageous actions at the Battle of Trafalgar whilst in command of HMS *Belleisle* this reputation was reversed.

De Burgh Road and Lanvalley Road: The history of these two families is very complicated and intermixed with other noble families of the time vying for the notice of whichever king was in power. Sir John de Burgh was born in 1210 at Burgh, near Aylsham in Norfolk, the grandson of William de Lanvallai (1125-1180), who was an administrator of the Duchy of Brittany in 1166 for Henry II of England. Sir John was knighted in 1229, two years after he married Hawise de Lanvallei, who was the daughter of William III de Lanvalay and Maud Peche, a niece of Robert Fitzwalter, leader of the Magna Carta barons. Maud had been placed by King John as ward with the family of Hubert De Burgh, a powerful official in England when young Henry III was king. With her came he accumulated lands of the St Clairs and Lanvalleis, possibly confiscated earlier by King John. William III was an advisor to King John and a signatory to the Magna Carta. He became Constable of Colchester Castle, a post which Sir John later held with that of Constable of the Tower of London. Sir John de Burgh died in January 1275 at Aspley Guise, Bedfordshire.

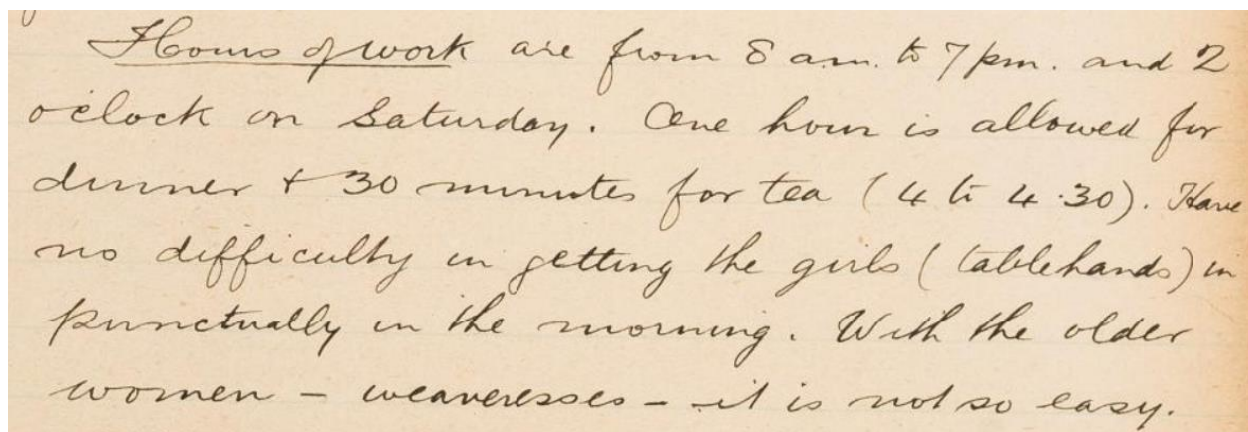


Ratcliffe Road: The Ratcliffes were related to the noble families of England. The Stanway berewick and Lexden Manor passed through the De Burgh, Fitzwalter, Ratcliffe, Lucas and Rawstorne families, and much later the Papillons. Elizabeth Fitzwalter, born in 1430 to Walter, 7th Baron Fitzwalter, married Sir John Ratcliffe KG. Their grandson, Robert

The Origins of some of Lexden's Street Names Lexden Garden Village - continued

Ratcliffe, (*above*) the most prominent Ratcliffe, served Henry VII and his first son, Arthur. Robert was present at the marriage of Arthur to Katherine of Aragon and became a close friend of Henry VIII. He was made a Knight of the Bath after Henry's coronation, a Knight of the Garter in 1522 and became a Privy Councillor in 1525. He held leading positions throughout Henry's reign, attending the King in 1520 at the Field of the Cloth of Gold and, with others, in 1533 conveying Henry's demands to Katherine of Aragon regarding the divorce. He was also appointed as joint Commissioner for the County of Essex, Lieutenant of the Order of the Garter, Chamberlain of the Exchequer for life in 1532, and a lifetime Lord Great Chamberlain in 1540. He married three times and fathered a total of five sons and two daughters. He died on 27th November 1542.

Clairmont Road: The name has no local significance and was chosen by Mr Alfred Melson (1862-1950), a Trimming Manufacturer, who had bought Langham Hall in 1927 from Sir Robert Balfour MP, but was interested in the development of Lexden Garden Village and the adjoining roads, purely as an investment. His first wife, Angelina, died in 1886, a year after their marriage but little more can be found about his personal life. However, George E Arkell in 1895 recorded Alfred Melson's views on the workers in his Bethnal Green factory making dress, upholstery and furniture trimmings. Dress trimmings depended on fashions at the time and also competition from German and French factories. Melson says in Arkell's report: "Hours of work are from 8am to 7pm and 2 o'clock on Saturday. One hour is allowed for dinner and 30 minutes for tea (4 to 4.30). Have no difficulty in getting the girls (tablehands) in punctually in the morning. With the older women - weaveresses - it is not so easy." Weekly wages were: weavers 30s, spinners 25s or 26s, tablehands (piece workers) averaged 12s, learners for two years received 4-6s and then became tablehands. He also had a factory in Coventry. He spoke disparagingly of London workers being drunken and dirty and preferred the Coventry people. By 1939 Alfred had retired with his second wife to Devon where he died a wealthy man in Exmouth in 1950.



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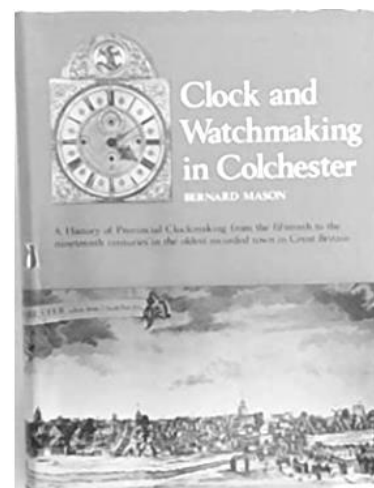
COLCHESTER CLOCKMAKERS - Trish Terry



I am sure most of you will be aware that it was Bernard Mason (*right*) who collected Colchester-made clocks and left them and his house, Tymperleys (*left*), to the town. He began collecting in 1927 when these clocks were still unappreciated and cost little. The whole collection consisted of 216 clocks and 12 watches and is said to have cost him a total of £9,685.34. His seriously researched 1969



book, "Clock and Watchmaking in Colchester" (*right*) was compiled from his own observations and studies and those of his wife, Evelyn, who did much of the genealogical research. Bernard died in 1981, his widow in 1983, and Tymperleys opened its doors as a clock museum in 1987. Now, of course, it is a tea shop.



Colchester was something of a centre for the making of clocks and watches in the 17th and 18th centuries and one of the first local clockmakers was Jeremy Spurgin. He was born in 1666 - a date we all know from a great event in London! He was a Quaker and married Jane Davill in 1690. Many Quakers became eminent clockmakers, particularly in London, and Spurgin, who started his business in 1693 by taking over part of the Castle Inn in High Street, was influenced by these London styles, many with superb marquetry. He was allowed to trade in Colchester by paying in 1697 the required "fine" of £10, a large sum in those days. By this time he was sufficiently established to attend vestry meetings to fix the parish rate. He died in 1699 aged only 33 leaving no will, but he had already made a name for himself in clockmaking. He is buried in the Quaker Chapel Graveyard next to St. Helen's Chapel in the Dutch Quarter.

To support her young family his wife, Jane, continued running the business helped by a journeyman. There is a longcase clock signed "Jane Spurgin". In about 1707 she sold the clockmaking "stock-in trade, tools and goodwill" to John Smorthwaite (not always spelt with a final 'e') and opened a hardware/ironmongery store nearby. Jane died in 1739.



A plaque (*left*) on the wall at 94 High Street Colchester, now WH Shepherd Funeral Directors, records these two Colchester Clockmakers, but not Spurgin's wife! From these premises John Smorthwaite became one of the most prolific clockmakers in Colchester. Bernard Mason recorded over 80 clocks by him and since then more have come to light. Mason's research into him is very

detailed, partly because he joined forces with Harold Smorthwaite, a descendant of John's brother, William. They meticulously recorded every detail they could find of his life but try as they may they failed to locate his whereabouts in the 37 years before he arrived in Colchester. His life was a complete mystery. Where did he live? Who trained him? Who was his first wife? When did she die? What drove him to move to Colchester as far away as he could possibly get from his family?

Fortunately another keen researcher, Brian Loomes, has discovered more about John Smorthwaite who was born in 1675 in Middleton in Lonsdale, close to Kirkby Lonsdale near Kendal. He was the second son of William who, although a highly respected farmer and gentleman, was imprisoned in Appleby for failing to repay public money. He and his brother, Henry, were also well known as highwaymen, coin clippers (a capital offence), thieves and counterfeiters. Eventually they were caught by Henry's constable father-in-law, Thomas Wilson, and tried by "hanging" Judge Jefferies, suffering the ultimate fate in 1684.



It seems that John Smorthwaite had managed to escape from a murky family background! (*right: signed clock face by John Smorthwaite - note no 'e'*). Meanwhile little more is known

of John, who would probably have been apprenticed in about 1689 aged 14 for seven years but as no national apprenticeship records existed until 1710, when stamp duty was imposed, this cannot be confirmed. However, in the 1670s William Threlkeld, a London clockmaker, moved to Brancepeth in County Durham to become a curate. He was soon followed by his sons Henry, William and Deodatus, the latter becoming a highly respected clockmaker in Newcastle on Tyne, dominating the trade until about 1730. A branch of the Smorthwaite family lived nearby in Kirk Merrington and it is highly probable that after John's father was hanged he, as a young child, was sent to this family. He may have learnt



his trade from the Thelkeld family for he was already an expert clockmaker when he arrived in Colchester in about 1708 or 1709 with his young daughter, Sarah. His wife, Ann, two daughters and a son had died a few years earlier.

He is first recorded in Colchester in 1713 when he summonsed someone for debt but he would have been established by this time. In 1720 he took William Cooper from East Bergholt as an apprentice at a fee (known as a premium) of £20. This was high for the time but it suggests that Smorthwaite was sufficiently recognised to demand such a fee. The premium covered the apprentice's instruction and food and clothing during his 7 year apprenticeship which finished in 1727. Cooper may have worked afterwards for Smorthwaite as a journeyman, ie, employed on a daily basis but still able to run his own business. *(left: two Smorthwaite longcase clocks, now in Hollytrees Museum).* Bernard Mason made an interesting comment that John never created the same clock twice but varied each one slightly with small, almost cosmetic, changes.

In 1729 William Cooper married John's niece, Magdalen Reynoldson, implying that he was still in touch with his northern family. Possibly Magdalen met William Cooper when she visited her uncle and worked as his housekeeper. Interestingly Magdalen's brother, Anthony, was apprenticed to London clockmaker John Lloyd.



In January 1722 John Smorthwaite, now aged 47, married Susan Flanner, a widow of 3 years who still ran her late husband's tallow-chandler's business. Until this time he had appeared to take little interest in town life but he became a churchwarden, juryman, guardian of the poor, an alderman and was elected Justice of the Peace in 1733. Perhaps his new wife encouraged him or perhaps being a wealthier member of the town gave him confidence to become a more public figure. *(right: Lantern clock signed by John Smorthwaite)*

In 1728 John Smorthwaite took on two apprentices: Daniel Powling with a fee of £31.50 and Nathaniel Hedge, then aged 18, for the much reduced fee of £10. It is thought that this family had financial problems for Nathaniel's father had a criminal record, dating from 1705, for stealing firewood and so struggled to make a living as a weaver.

In October 1733 John's heavily pregnant daughter, Sarah, was married by licence at Alresford Church to Nathaniel Hedge. The child was born three months later. The licence did not reflect correctly the ages of the bride and groom. Nathaniel was recorded as being 26 years old but was only 23 and Sarah recorded as 27 not 29. The couple were banished in disgrace from John's house and they and the child were not left anything in John's will. However, Nathaniel was not afraid of hard work and in due course became a well respected and wealthy clockmaker. In 1733 he went into business with Daniel Cooper.



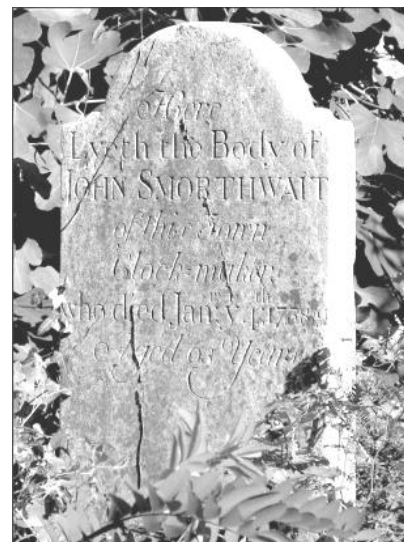
(left: key from one of John Smorthwait's clocks)

In 1737 John took on Samuel Downum, probably as a parish or pauper apprentice. This was a standard arrangement to help a child from a poor family and as there was no premium there was no stamp duty payable and no accompanying tax records. Samuel was the son of a blacksmith from Newton just over the border in Suffolk.

John Smorthwaite worked in Colchester until his death in 1739. Most of his estate, together with his business stock was left to his wife. He left his oyster beds in Tollesbury to John Cooper, the son of his niece, Magdalen; his nephew John Smorthwaite of London, son of his brother, William, was left properties in Magdalen Street. John died before his nephew Anthony Reynoldson, son of his sister Alice and Magdalen's brother, had finished his apprenticeship, so he received the income from his Magdalen Street properties to help buy his clothing.

Six weeks after John's death, his son-in-law Nathaniel Hedge negotiated with John's widow to acquire his stock-in-trade, tools and goodwill. He then set up his own business, but leaving a business arrangement with William Cooper, an early apprentice of John but he also took on John's last apprentice, Samuel Dowman.

John Smorthwaite was buried in All Saints' churchyard, High Street, and his headstone *(right)* was recut in 1923 by his descendant, Harold Smorthwaite. An interesting story has emerged from the Natural History Museum - once All Saints' Church. A member of staff was opening the Museum after several days away. He shut off the alarm but could hear an odd sound and realised it was the sound of a clock - and it was getting louder. There was no clock in the museum so he tried to locate the noise, moving to some large wooden doors at the back of the building. He opened the door into bright sunlight and the ticking was even louder. What was it? Nothing seemed out of place but when he stood in front of a large grave the ticking stopped immediately. He bent to read the inscription "*Here lyeth the body of John Smorthwait of this town Clockmaker Died 4th January 1739 age 63 years*".



To be continued.....

EVEN MORE FROM PHILLIP CARDY 1906-1996
Accounts of the people he knew in Lexden Road Part 5
(continuing from LHG Newsletter June 2022)

Phillip Cardy lived in Lexden all his life. He recorded his memories but gave strict instructions that they should not be published until after his death which is understandable as he talked frankly about the people he had known from an early age! (Editor's additions in italics/brackets: whilst researching, I have again found that some of Phillip Cardy's memories are slightly inaccurate so have added my amendments. It is also not always clear exactly the years he describes and many events may have been recalled from his parents. It is difficult to locate the actual houses where people lived as the numbers have changed several times and others have been demolished, but it appears that Lexden Street became London Road at the junction with Cooks Lane which was just past the Crown Inn.)

We now come to Cooks Lane (*under "Lexden House" on 1898 map (below)*), a rough old lane leading to the farm and the railway viaduct. This place is known in Lexden as "the dock". Down there was a farm and two cottages. In one lived a Mr Teverson and his wife. In the other lived Charlie Garnham (1857-1936?). Charlie was a nice man normally, he would not hurt a fly, but he could get a bit nasty when he had one too many. He stood six

feet and weighed in at sixteen stone of bone and muscle so you can see he was no mean opponent to get up against. One Saturday night he and his wife (*Elizabeth b1850*) went for a drink at the Crown, and this was the start of all the trouble. At closing time they both left having had enough to make them argumentative. Going down the lane Charlie got angry with the argument and, in a bad moment, he gave her a back-hander to bring her to order. He had caught her an unlucky one and, although he did not know it she was dead. So Charlie solved that part. He went down to the farm and got a wheelbarrow loading her up and took her home and put her to bed.



He got up at 5am and went to see how she was. She had not moved. So he went round the farmhouse and asked Mr Hedge (*Frederick b1860*) if he would come and see what he thought. He came and said, "I am afraid this is going to be a police job, so we will lock the door. And you had better go up Straight Road and get Nobby Clark (*local policeman*). Nobby arrived and decided there was nothing else he could do. So they set out. There is a footpath which runs across what we knew as "the fields". On the way they came across my father who was lambing the sheep in the middle field. They stopped and discussed things and gave it as their opinion that there would be a fair to middling drop of lambs for the season. With that they turned and strolled across the fields to Lexden Church.

On Saturday 23rd November 1907 the following report appeared in the local paper: "*Charles Garnham, a ploughman at Viaduct Farm, Colchester, was charged on remand, at the local court, on Tuesday, with the wilful murder of his wife. At the inquest, the jury returned a verdict of manslaughter, but it was urged, on behalf of the Treasury, that the number of blows and their violence must make the case one of wilful murder. The accused was again remanded.*"

In the Metropolitan Police Register of Habitual Criminals Charles Garnham was recorded as having a fresh complexion, grey hair, brown eyes and standing at 5ft 8¼ ins tall. He had two fleshy moles in front of his right ear and left cheek; one mole on the left side of his neck and a large scar on his left forearm. He was tried at Essex Assizes in Colchester on 31st January 1908, convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to serve his 12 year penal service term at Parkhurst with a release date of 30th January 1920. His "residence and occupation" was recorded as "Central Aid Association Horseman" and remarks included "Special Licence requirements- Sec 5 remitted". A long and detailed report appeared in the local newspaper. (*see below*).

TERRIBLE CRIME IN A COUNTRY LANE.

WOMAN BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN
KICKED TO DEATH.

Charles Garnham, 49, head ploughman at Viaduct Farm, Lekden, was at Colchester on Monday charged with the wilful murder of his wife, Elizabeth.

In reply to the charge, the accused said, "I am as innocent as a babe unborn."

The Chief Constable outlined the case, and said a search party of police that morning found a pool of blood in a lane.

P.c. Clark deposed that at 11.30 on Saturday night he was walking along the road overlooking the valley in which the farm lies, when he heard a scream in a lane below. He went in that direction, but, finding nothing, concluded that it was the scream of an owl. The next morning the prisoner came to witness and said he had found his wife dead on the bed with her face black and covered with blood. Witness examined the body, and on removing the bed covering saw that the deceased's clothes were dragged up under the armpits. Her skull was fractured, and there were incised wounds on her temples.

Witness, continuing, said the accused asked him how he should go on about the insurance money, adding that he should get £10 for his wife, and that there was £10 for his own death.

He (witness) found a wheel-barrow track leading from the cottage to the spot in the lane where the pool of blood and evidences of a struggle were seen. To get the wheelbarrow into his garden prisoner must, added witness, have lifted a kissing gate from its hinges. On a bank above the lane witness found some sausages and a piece of bullock's leg.

Detective-Inspector Simmons said that, contrary to prisoner's statement, he did not appear to have slept in bed, as there was no dent on his pillow, but there was blood on it. The accused, after being cautioned, told witness that late on Saturday night he and his wife left a beerhouse, where they had been drinking, and walked home, being quite sober. They talked about their wedding 21 years ago, and on reaching home he (Garnham) went to bed, leaving his wife sitting on the couch. He did not hear her come upstairs, but when he woke in the morning and turned to kiss her, according to his custom, he discovered that she was dead. Prisoner explained the blood-stains on his clothing by saying that his nose bled, but said he could not account for the blood on his great coat.

Asked whether he had anything to say, prisoner replied, "I am innocent of the job. That is all."

The accused was remanded.

It is supposed that the wounds on the deceased's head were caused by kicks from heavy boots.

(Above: Newspaper report November 1907 re Charles Garnham)

And that was the last that Lekden people saw of Charlie for many a long day. Time passed and we saw the start of the First World War. There were hardly any men about and what there was, were in blue – walking wounded; we boys of fourteen were being put to plough but the things were too heavy for us to turn. So in desperation Mr Hedge wrote to the Home Secretary and asked him to review the case. This he did and Charlie was let out (17th April 1916). Mr Cadman from the King's Head went and brought him home. But you know I don't think he was all that pleased to come. He said he was well fed and kept warm and he also had a pair of lovely horses. "And what am I getting in exchange? An old house with nothing in it and a couple of three legged crocks to use." Well, Hedge sent him to live at Bourne Barn and after a time he advertised for a housekeeper and a few days later a lady and her twelve year old son got off the bus. Then she went to see Charlie and on the following Wednesday her furniture arrived and was unloaded and Charlie spent six or seven years of very comfortable life there in the first real home he had. He and Bob, her son, were great pals and used to go rabbiting together. When I last heard of him he was Head Cowman on the Southend dairy farm at Prittlewell.



There were no further houses beyond the King's Head (left) until, just in front of Halstead Road, there were two old cottages facing down the road. One was occupied by a Mr and Mrs Stutter (possibly William and Gladys) and the other by a Mr Skelt (Tom 1882-1953) – he was my mother's brother. Next come to hand (66 London Road) was the Corn Merchant, HN Major and his stables. He was my first employer. I started at eight in the morning and finished at 6pm. Pay was eight shillings a week which I think works out at a penny farthing per hour. Mr Major was very religious

and very mean. His mother had nine daughters and last of all one son. They were so proud of him that they promptly named him Horatio Nelson Major. He belonged to the Lexden Wheelers and raced for them. His time trial for 5 miles was thirteen and a half minutes – that took place about a hundred years ago on solid tyres and a fixed wheel gear. He kept a horse but never used it unless I was not there. He weighed seventeen stone and could pick up two fifty-six pound weights and clap them above his head with no trouble.

(Horatio Nelson Major was born in Lexden in 1874, the fifth of eight children and by 1891 was assisting his corn merchant father from their London Road house and business. As his father was also called Horatio, his son was always known as Nelson. In 1901 he was recorded as a corn merchant living at Trevethnan in Colne Road, now Halstead Road. He continued his father's business originally at 6 London Road and then renumbered as No 66 and died at 73 Straight Road in 1941.)

I used to deliver all the goods, hay and straw, in the town. Butt Road was a lane and I used to have to draw up to the loft doors to unload. One day I climbed on top of the load, bent down and got hold of the string and it broke. I went off the front of the load head first and backwards. The load was about twelve feet high so it was a fair fall. As I came down both arms went out and I caught a window sill one side and a piece of harness on the other. It depended on the mare. She was usually fidgety but for once she stood quietly and so I got out of that very luckily – all right with the exception of a pair of very sore heels. The grocer's shop where I was unloading belonged to Moore and Sons – I wonder how many remember it now. *(Sadly, unable to identify Moore and Sons)*



The house *(left)* between Halstead and London Roads was owned by a Mr Heasman, a jeweller in the town, but he did not mix with the village. When he died it was sold and became a hardware shop. It did a fast trade and we had a sharp trade till the bank stepped in and bought it for £60,000 – so we lost our shop.

Alfred Heasman, born in

1857, watchmaker and jeweller, 1 London Road, later No 33 Nat West Bank, also had a shop at 22 High Street (right c1900), son Cecil, also jeweller, in 1939 living at 1 Gladwin Road. Son also Alfred b1882-1967 lived at 194 Maldon Road, Colchester. The business moved to Tonbridge in Kent and closed after 155 years in 2017. To be continued.....



Christmas Message from our Chairman, Stan Kordys

What a year this has been. Two new Prime Ministers (one now holds the record for the shortest tenure - 44 days), sky high utility prices, highest inflation rate for 30 years. Colchester now a City! (will it make any difference?).

We were all shocked and saddened at the passing of our beloved Queen Elizabeth II who served us so well in her 70 year reign of selfless service. The State Funeral on the 19th September was a fitting tribute to her life-long sense of duty and dedication to her people.

Looking to the bright side of life for our LHG members. Our afternoon meetings started in January have proven to be very successful. Several new members have recently joined us. We can now safely return to our homes before darkness draws in.

Best wishes to all members for a happy Christmas and most importantly a very happy and healthy New Year."

Your Committee

Chairman

Stan Kordys 01206 502282
s.kordys@ntlworld.com

Vice Chairman

Dick Barton 01206 573999
dickbartonlex@gmail.com

Secretary

Liz White 01206 522713
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Magazine Joint Editors

Liz White / Jackie Bowis
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Treasurer

Melvin White 01206 575351
melvin.s.white@btinternet.com

Membership Secretary

Jackie Bowis 01206 561528
jebowis50@gmail.com

General Member

Ian Bowis 01206 561528

Archivist and Refreshments Organiser - Positions Vacant

**Forthcoming Meetings starting at 2.30pm
at Lexden Church Hall**

Wednesday 11th January 2023

**Geoff Pettitt Memorial Lecture
Colchester in Film - Colchester Film Makers**

Wednesday 8th February

Lost or Disappearing Skills - Peter Mockford

Wednesday 8th March

**Decoding the Dead - Roman Lexden's 'Street of Tombs'
Glynn Davis**

**Membership renewals can be taken during our March and April meetings
ready for the AGM on 10th May.**

Membership Renewal is due before the May AGM

If your details have **not** changed since the 2022 AGM, then please fill in the form below and return it to:

Jackie Bowis
Membership Secretary,
20 Munnings Road,
Colchester,
CO3 4QG

When paying this year's affiliation fees please bring your membership card with you which will be signed as a receipt for renewal of your membership.

MEMBERSHIP NO NAME

Please tick the membership required: SINGLE MEMBERSHIP £15 FAMILY MEMBERSHIP £20

Cheques made payable to "Lexden History Group"

If your details have changed please ask the Membership Secretary for an application form.