

# Lexden History Group



## “Lexden near Colchester”

engraving by W. Tombleson after John Greig, published December 20th, 1824 with later hand colouring.  
Lexden Manor on right of picture (see page 2).

- Lexden Manor in 1820
- Cromwell Lodge and NatWest
- Origins of Lexden Street Names

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**Website [www.lexdenhistory.org.uk](http://www.lexdenhistory.org.uk)**

## LEXDEN MANOR in 1820

Some time ago I was given a privately produced book about the Papillon family, a letter written by Frances Papillon to her brother John and a copy of her drawing of the Manor. I subsequently managed to transcribe the letter and date it at about 15<sup>th</sup> July 1820, just four years after the Papillons had inherited the Manor and when the population of Lexden, the largest parish west of Colchester, included 457 men and 475 females.



Over the last 1000 years Lexden Manor has had a chequered history of inheritance and land grab by families with great power and influence. The Manor covered a large area but the original mediaeval manor house was on the present site of Lexden Lodge. Sir Thomas Lucas in the early 1600s bought the dilapidated tenter house in Lexden Street and built a new house (now 134/136 Lexden Road), which became known as Lexden Manor (*left*) and over the next 100 years additions were made including gardens and extensions to the north and west. Across the

main road to London, Lexden Springs was “landscaped” with ornamental water features and plantations to present a good view from the house.

Samuel Rawstorn, a London merchant, bought Lexden Manor in 1701. In 1683 he had married Sarah Papillon (1664-1739), the daughter of Thomas Papillon of Acrise in Kent, and they had seven children. Samuel died in 1719 leaving his estate to Sarah and ten years later three of the five farms between 100-200 acres in Lexden were owned by her.

*right: Chapman and Andre 1777 map showing “Mrs Rawstorn’s” property in Lexden. Just above, it states it is 49 miles to London!*



The Lord or Lady of the Manor also had the gift of the Lexden living and Elizabeth, Sarah and Samuel’s daughter born in 1693, married in 1734 Rev James Kelner, the Rector of Lexden. (Morant in his 1748 History of Colchester describes the old Lexden Church as being “always appendant to the manor, though several presentations have been made by persons other than the lords”. He obviously did not approve of livings being in the gift of landowners!) Another daughter, Susannah, who was born in Lexden in 1700 married John Eldred at Lexden Church in 1733. He was from Oliver’s in Stanway but died early in 1739 and in 1742 Hester, born in 1696, became the second wife of Rev William Bree, rector of Marks Tey when it was reported that she had a fortune of £15,000! Sarah and Samuel’s son, Thomas, born in 1710, ultimately inherited Lexden Manor and on his death in 1769 it was devised to his widow, Sophia, with the remainder to his daughter, Ann.



On Ann Rawstorn's death in 1816 Lexden Manor first came into the Papillon family when it was bequeathed to Sarah Papillon's great great nephew, Rev John Rawstorn Papillon, born in 1763, maybe because he still carried the name of Rawstorn. He is reported to have regularly travelled to his newly acquired estate in Lexden from Chawton, the home of Jane Austen, where he was the vicar. Jane wrote to her sister, Cassandra, in September 1816 that the servants in Chawton had been "hurried off into Essex to take possession of a large estate left them by an uncle". It is possible that they were not aware that it had been inherited from a woman. It is thought that Jane Austen may have based Rev William Collins, a character in *Pride and Prejudice*, on Rev JR Papillon. The Papillon family already had considerable estates including Acrise in Kent, which had been bought in 1666, and Crowhurst in Sussex, which had been acquired through a marriage in 1791.



The Lexden Manor estate was large and was greatly enlarged after the Enclosure Act of 1820 with further rights being gradually acquired and by 1838 the Papillon family owned nearly half the 2,312 acres in the parish, land which had been regularly used by the local population for grazing, horse racing and also for military camps. John Rawstorn Papillon was buried at Lexden in 1837 in the Rawstorn family vault and bequeathed his estate to his sister, Elizabeth, for her lifetime. The house was further enlarged and remodelled in 1837 and the south east corner of the present building is all that remains of the original building. Large garden parties were held there each year. Elizabeth gave her nephew, Rev John Papillon, the recipient of Frances's letter, the Lexden living after Rev George Preston died in 1840. Elizabeth Papillon died in 1854 aged nearly 90 and is

buried in the Rawstorn/Papillon family vault, now rather dilapidated, (*right*) in Lexden churchyard and the Lexden estate was inherited by her great nephew Philip Oxenden Papillon (*left*) who was born in 1826, and who also inherited Crowhurst. He was MP for Colchester from 1859-65 but according to the family history, in 1881 his father, Thomas, wished to swap Crowhurst for Lexden and Philip moved back to Crowhurst where he was buried in 1899. His son, Pelham, succeeded him but in 1931 the estate was auctioned off and broken up. Pelham's son, David, used some of the proceeds to build a new Manor in what is now Colvin Close. That house has recently been developed into flats.



Returning to the letter written in 1820 (the year that the new Lexden church had been built under the auspices of Rev George Preston) Frances Papillon was writing to her young brother, John, (and her eight sisters). She mentioned her aunt and uncle and one can only assume that they were sister and brother, Elizabeth Papillon and the Rev John Rawstorn Papillon. He was unmarried and the estate went to Elizabeth. After the death of Rev George Preston in 1840, John (to whom Frances wrote her letter in 1820), was rector of St Leonard's, Lexden, for nearly fifty years and lived with his family in the Rectory in Spring Lane, which had been built by his predecessor. John died in 1889 and was buried in Lexden Churchyard, close to the family vault.

*My Dear John*

*I have tried my best to send you according to your requests a plan of Lexden knowing my sisters too would like to have an idea of the place, which I hope this in some degree gives, so shall waive excuses for the numerous imperfections in the drawing as you know how little I am suited to the kind of thing. I am sorry my paper is not large enough to take in two grim Lions that growl on the supporters of a few steps leading from the flower gardens on to the green terraces. The Wilderness stretches back beyond the Yew Groves, for this I have a particular affection being rather a damp weedy kind of place, and entirely excluding sky and prospects, excepting one nice broad central grass path which leads to a bench and is open to the road and view beyond. I have not counted the benches and summer houses, seats etc because I believe them to be innumerable, however, my Aunt thought these had a spot in the wilderness exactly calculated to make this more open, so accordingly gave orders to the Carpenter who was to make one in their absence, that she would have it thatched and made completely rustic, with rough pillars to support the roof and a little ornamentation with knotty twisted branches of trees. The thatching and pillars was all that he remembered of her instructions; so instead of the roof branches substituted some neatly carved scollops and vandykes (small triangles) and ornamented the top of the thatch with an imitation of the Spire of York Minster, painted white. The Kitchen Garden and Stables are on the right hand. On the left behind the flower Garden is a very pretty field, (now Colvin Close and Marlowe Way) the hay on which is now nearly carried in, much to my uncle's satisfaction, that in the field beyond the road (Lexden Springs) in the front of the house (likewise, a very pretty one) is the path in to his hay barn a wooden building made on purpose, round this field is a walk in the style of that at Acrise but I always prefer walking without to within the hedge. My uncle often speculates on the spot in the side field where a house might advantageously be built but it will probably end as it began as a castle (perhaps erroneously referring to Lexden Mount). Two statues stood in the Yew Grove when my uncle last came here but he found they afforded so good a mark for the pellets of all the idle boys in the lane (see 1777 map) between the garden and the field that he removed their Deityships to quieter quarters. There was a grand roar, rabbling and hallowing yesterday evening which crossed my uncle's door drums beating flags waving etc etc. Mr Baring the new member of Colchester being drawn by the populace into Colchester thro' Lexden.*

(Having reached the end of the page Frances returns to the first page, turns it upside down and writes in the space at the top ....)

*I must now conclude and remain My dear John, your affectionate Sister F. Papillon.*

*I have no genius for drawing trees as you may recall - I long to have the one opposite the sitting room laid low.*



Frances Papillon, the writer of this letter, was born on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1797, the daughter of Thomas born 1757 and Anne (née Pelham) Papillon, (left: ivory miniature portrait by George Engleheart) the daughter of Henry Cresset Pelham who owned Crowhurst Park in Kent. They had on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1791 at St George Hanover Square Westminster and had 14 children including Frances, Thomas born in 1803 and John in 1806. Frances's uncle, John Cresset, died at sea off Mauritius in 1838 and the Crowhurst Park Estate near Battle, Sussex, was inherited by their mother, Anne, who Thomas inherited the estate at Crowhurst Park in 1839 and sold the Acrise estate preferring to live

at Crowhurst. Frances died on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1856 and was the last to be buried in the family vault at St. Martin's Church, Acrise. In her will she left £50 or £100 to her sisters and brothers and appointed her nephew, Philip Oxenden Papillon, as Residual Legatee.

Frances's drawing of the Manor (*pages 5 and 6*) also has numbers and notes explaining the garden and windows of the house. She mentions "Richard's" room but I cannot find anyone in the Papillon family of that name, and so he remains a mystery.

The newly elected Member of Parliament mentioned in Frances's letter was the Tory Henry Baring, who was born in Cromer in 1777 the third son of Sir Francis Baring of Stratton Park, Hants. He was for 20 years an inactive partner of the family bank and spent much of his time with the fashionable English society in Paris. He was also a gambler and this was thought to not help the bank's reputation, leading to his exclusion in 1823. He had, however, sought election to parliament over many years, was successful in 1806 in Bossiney, a Cornish rotten borough, failed in Grampond in 1807, then Winchester in 1812 and Lewes in 1818, the same year that he was also defeated in Ipswich. In March 1820 an earlier Colchester election had voted in the radical Daniel Whittle Harvey but this was declared void, possibly on a technicality. Harvey then supported Baring in his bid on the understanding that, at the next election, Baring would stand aside for him or they would stand together. From the Colchester population of about 14,000 only about 1,500 were eligible to vote and Baring was elected by 1,382. He rarely attended parliamentary or committee sessions and is not recorded in Hansard as actually speaking. His wife, a rich American divorcee and daughter of a US senator, was reported enjoying a ball at the British Ambassador's residence in Paris in March 1824 and not long after was accused of committing adultery over the previous three years with a Waterloo veteran, Captain Henry Webster. Baring claimed £10,000 damages in July of that year, but was awarded only



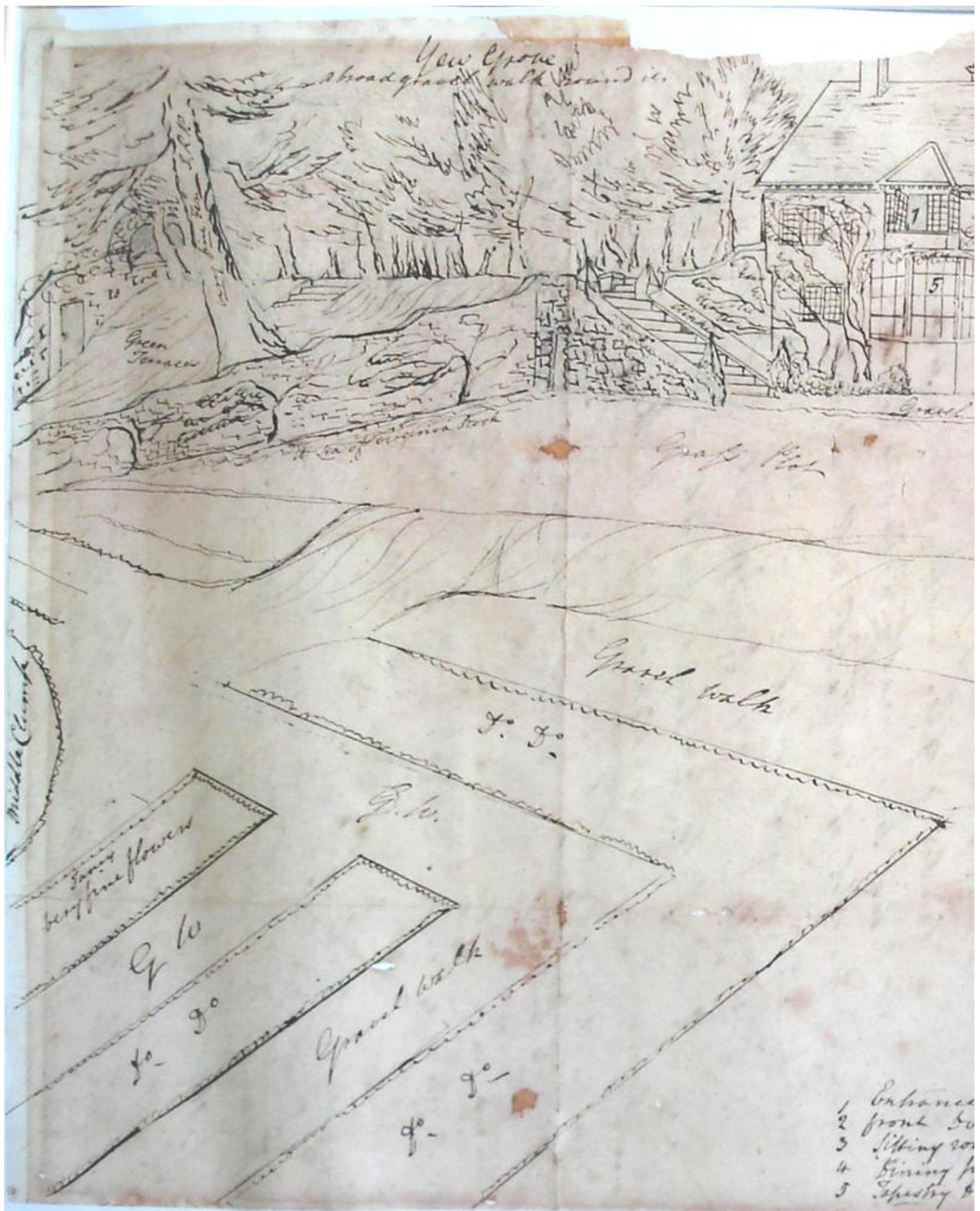
£1,000 and was granted a divorce the following February, keeping most of her fortune. It was also acknowledged that he was equally unfaithful! Having secured his divorce he wasted little time and in July 1825 married a Norfolk heiress. Soon after the marriage, whilst a guest at Baring's Hampshire house, Somerley (*left*), Sir Robert Peel who was Home Secretary at the time, thought the new Mrs Baring to be 'a short, and ugly stumpy woman', who possessed 'a great power of acquiring languages' but 'did not know how to



make tea' and appeared 'to take no interest in anything that goes on in the house'. Baring did nothing for his Colchester constituency, and losing local support, stood down on the dissolution of parliament in June 1826. Somerley was sold in 1828 to the Earl of Normanton and Baring lived between his Berkeley Square town house and his wife's property in Cromer. He died in April 1848 and provided generously for his 12 surviving children and his wife, who received an annuity of £1,500, and who lived another 26 years.

The writer of the Papillon book was Jean Lazarus-Barlow née Papillon, wife of Clinical Pathologist Dr Percy Lazarus-Barlow. She was born in 1913, the daughter of Philip Oxenden Papillon, who lived at Lexden Manor for some decades and who was the grandson of Ann and Thomas, the brother of the letter writer, Frances. Jean died in 1998.





Top: A broad gravel walk around its ...?  
 Green Terrace  
 Area of original Rock  
 Middle Clump  
 Some very fine flowers  
 Gravel Walk  
 GW (Gravel Walk)

Grass Plot  
 Do Do  
 GW (Gravel Walk)  
 Gravel Walk  
 Do Do (Ditto Gravel Walk)

1. Entrance Gate  
 2, Front Door Hall  
 3. Sitting Room  
 4. Dining Parlour  
 5. Tapestry Drawing Room

(Not everything can be deciphered!)





Gravel Walk

Grotto lined with shells

Me - ie, Frances Papillon on chair, drawing the house!

High Road

6, Yellow parlour anteroom to 5 (Tapestry Drawing Room) (Lexden Street)

7. Best Bedroom - Mine - with a door into Yew Grove Grass Walk

8. Little dressing room to 9

9. Large Bedroom Richard's

Aunt Papillon's apartment also communicates with the Yew Grove

Westminster bank at 25 High Street, Colchester, opened a branch at 33 London Road, Lexden, in 1964.

They acquired a site on the corner of Halstead Road with London Road (*right*) which was Cromwell Lodge, a late Victorian house and garden owned by Mr William Sale. In 1914 the Lodge had a new owner, Mr Alfred Heasman, the well known Colchester jeweller and watchmaker who had



premises at 22 High Street (*left*). Over the year the business passed to other family members until 1966 when the shop was sold for redevelopment and the business absorbed as a department of the Williams and Griffin store, on the opposite side of High Street.

In 1935 33 London Road became the home of Lexden Radio where Mr H E Smith offered personal service for radio repairs and recharging wireless accumulators (remember them?). After Smith moved his business across the road in 1960 the shop was taken on by West & Co (Building Materials) Ltd until 1963 when Westminster Bank bought the premises for £60,000 and updated the ground floor for

banking purposes including a new banking facility for customers (*right*).

The Essex County Standard reported on the new Lexden Bank:

*“The branch of Westminster Bank opened on Wednesday last. For motorists with accounts at the branch, simple transactions can be made from the driving seat. When the car draws level with the cashier’s window a steel drawer is projected to the car window into which the motorist places either a cheque or money. This drawer is then withdrawn into the cashier’s desk and the transaction completed.*”



Mr K M Taber, the manager, points out that apart from the obvious convenience of banking this way there is the added advantage when handling large sums of money. In keeping with the Westminster Bank’s concern with appearance of their stationery and premises, the old house, which was originally Cromwell Lodge, has been sympathetically constructed with a broad lawn stretching to the corner of the road junction.”



Customers requiring personal service would enter the bank from the front door into a reception area with an enquiry desk, three cashier counters and two interview rooms, Mr Keith Taber (*left*) always on



hand to discuss matters with his customers.

In January 1970 the Westminster and National Provincial Banks were merged to become National Westminster, commonly known as NatWest.

Over the following years there was much updating in banking procedure: the introduction of credit and debit cards – personal customer safety identification with a pin number used each time a transaction made.

The introduction of the Automatic Teller Machine (ATM), available on the front outside wall of the bank, was a simple operation - insert debit card, activate with pin number, request cash for the required amount, issued, receipt, remove card. 24 hours service every day.

The NatWest at Lexden continued to give great service to their customers until about ten years ago when Online Banking became available, they claimed .....

*“More people are doing their day-to-day banking online, by mobile app, or over the phone. Fewer people visit branches and do fewer transactions when they are there.”*

This led NatWest to plan closing some branches. So on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017 Lexden closed the door to customers after giving over fifty years personal banking service - a great loss and inconvenience to those enjoying a personal friendly service.

The nearest NatWest banks to remain open were 25 High Street and Severalls Business Park (and that too closed to personal banking in 2002) – the nearest ATM cash machine was sited at Sainsbury's Tollgate.

It is now seven years since Lexden bank closed, but the building still stands empty and neglected (*right*).



## THE ORIGINS OF LEXDEN STREET NAMES

For the purposes of this article the boundaries of Lexden, Prettygate and Stanway are not being observed!

### Hurnard Drive

This development was built on land which was once part of the garden of Hill House which was owned for many years by the Hurnard family. James Hurnard (*right*) was born in Boreham, Essex, on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1808 and when his father's milling business in Kelvedon was failing in 1819 the family left Kelvedon for New York eventually settling at Wilmington in Delaware. They struggled to adapt to life there, but in 1824 news came that a handsome legacy had been left to Robert by his wealthy aunt, giving them funds to return home. In 1828, Robert hired brewery premises in East Hill, Colchester, where he, James and a longterm



associate, Christopher Stopes, worked hard to make it pay. It became known as the Eagle Brewery.

James Hurnard was a committed Liberal and an enlightened Radical with strong views on votes for women, education, the developing railways, etc, but as a Quaker opposed military expenditure. On his father's death in 1866 he began "The Setting Sun" - his epic verse. He thought it "too late to hope for dear domestic joys" for he was approaching 60 years old but records the 'astounding' incident of his marriage on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1867 at the Friends'



Meeting House in Kelvedon to Louisa Bowman Smith, the daughter of an old Kelvedon friend. Their only son, Samuel Fennell Hurnard, was born on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1870. That year James inherited about £90,000 from a distant relative, Sarah Fennell, of Bury St Edmunds. "On the longest day in 1873" the family moved to "a lovely country home in Lexden, not far from Colchester" – Hill House (*left*). James loved it there especially enjoying his walks to nearby Lexden Springs and

the gardens which stretched down to the river. James died in February 1881 and Louisa in April 1884 and their son, Samuel Fennell Hurnard continued to live in Hill House for many years with his wife, Rose, their son, Bracey, and three daughters, all of whom made their mark in the world. Samuel died in 1949 and his second wife, Marjorie, in 2000. The house then became a nursing home and today is being redeveloped.

### Richardson Walk

Frederick Richardson (*right*) was born in Coventry in 1829 and trained as a school teacher. He had a great sense of humour and when his class tested the properties of laughing gas no pupil would experiment with it, so Frederick "duly inhaled the gas and forthwith astonished the audience by various antics which some really believed to be its magical effects"! He married Sarah Lamb in 1855 and they became Superintendent and Housekeeper at the Friends' School at Penketh, near Warrington. His teaching was very different, encouraging games and gym and 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.



He took over the boarding and day school in Lexden in 1869 at No 3 The Street (*left*), living in with his wife, Sarah. Now only the listed frontage remains as it was demolished in the 1970s for the development of flats (Jacqueline Court). In 1886 his son, Frederick Joshua and his wife, Julietta, took over the Lexden School and Frederick senior moved to what is now Cresseners in Church



Lane. On 8<sup>th</sup> May 1892 young Frederick died suddenly and was buried in Lexden Churchyard. A Portland stone drinking fountain (*right*) was placed outside the church gate 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 but she died not long after and a few weeks later on 28th April 1903 Frederick senior died.



Many well known Colchester sons went to the school, including E Alec Blaxill; the five Bunting cousins whose fathers were nurserymen and seed growers; four Daniell boys from the local brewing family; F Stanley Daniell an architect; Samuel F Hurnard of Hill House; eleven closely related Marriage boys of the flour milling company: Frank S Cant a rose grower and nurseryman and three Wheeler boys of the local Wine company.

Headmaster Frederick Richardson is buried in the Friends' Burial Ground in Roman Road.

Parr Drive



This road is probably named after Samuel Parr (*left*) who was born in 1747 at Harrow on the Hill where his father was a surgeon. After leaving Harrow School in 1761 he was encouraged by his father to follow a medical career but he decided to study divinity at Emanuel College, Cambridge. He was always short of money and after his father died he returned to Harrow School to teach, particularly as he was a great advocate of teaching English. One of his pupils was Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Parr was ordained in 1769 and in 1776 after his own school in Stanmore failed he was appointed headmaster of Colchester Royal Grammar School. His family arrived in the town in 1777 but the school, then in Culver Street, was falling apart. He organised repairs and also took in boarders in a nearby house. However, although he made some good friends in Colchester, he fell out with the trustees and left after just over a year. One of his friends was Rev Dr Nathaniel Forster, the rector of All Saints and he arranged that Parr should become the curate of Holy Trinity Church and the Hythe.

On leaving Colchester in 1779 he became Master of the Norwich Grammar School where he remained. His degree in divinity was never awarded and so he turned to studying law and his Cambridge degree was conferred on him in 1781. On leaving Norwich in 1785 he accepted various positions in the Church in different parts of the country, taking students on occasionally to boost his income.

He was a Whig political writer, a writer of epitaphs, a cleric, Doctor of Law and a schoolmaster and from 1789 he spent the rest of his days as a assistant curate in Hatton, Northamptonshire, teaching a few pupils and relishing his library. He died in 1825 after a long illness.

# **Your Committee**

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## **Forthcoming Meetings**

### **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

**Robert Cobb**  
**My Life and Times**

### **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

**Colchester Films**

### **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**Margaret Stone**  
**Cinque Ports Liberty**

**Meetings are held on**  
**the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month**  
**at 2.30pm in St Leonard's Church Hall, Lexden.**

### **Annual Membership subscriptions**

**£25 Family, £18 Single**