



Richmond House

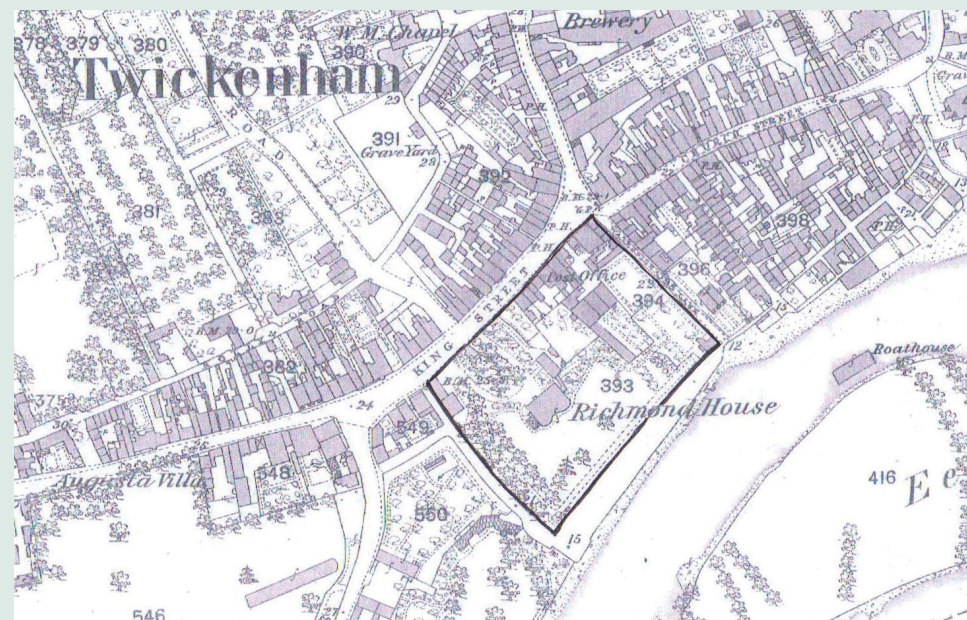
and its inhabitants

Inhabitants of Richmond House

	Edward Birkhead (d.1662)
1662	Ellen Birkhead (d. 1680)
1680	William and Mary Birkhead & Ellen and John Izard of Baldock
1682	Francis Newport, Earl of Bradford (1620-1708)
1708	Thomas Newport, Lord Torrington (1655-1719)
1735	Anne, Lady Torrington (1683-1735)
1735	Anthony Browne, 6th Viscount Montague (1686-1767) & Lord North
1744	Sir Anthony Tracy- Keck (1708-1767)
1754	Sir Stephen Theodore Janssen (d.1777)
1766	Mary, née Fitzmaurice, Countess of Shelburne (d.1780)
1780	The Hon Thomas Fitzmaurice (1742-1793)
1790	John Symmons (1741-1831)
1792	Elizabeth Allanson, née Aislabie (1726-1808)
1810	Martha, Countess of Elgin(1739-1810)
1812	Sir Claude and Lady de Crespigny (1749-1812, 1734-1818)
1815	Lambert Blair (1767-1815)
1816	Williamza Damer (d.1825)
1825	John and Williamza Budgen (1791-1866)
1829	Dowager Duchess of Roxburghe (d.1838)
1836	Lady Louth (d.1878)
1836	Sir Henry Willock (1790-1858)
1840	John Budgen (see above)
1845	Lady Ann Murray (1797-1850)
1855	Alexander Herzen (1812-1870)
1855	George Lenox-Conyngham (1796-1887)
1861	Elizabeth Maule (1818-1905)
1863	Lord Montague
1865	Field Marshal Sir Edward Blakeney (1778-1868)
1868	George Gordon Mackintosh (1812-1903)
1903	Jane Mackintosh (1829-1922)
1923	Joseph Theophilus Mears (1871-1935)

N.B. Some residents stayed several times in the house over the years.

Introduction



Ordnance Survey from 1863, showing original extent of Richmond House grounds

The history of Twickenham reveals many famous houses; indeed, John Macky described it in 1720 as a village home to “an abundance of curious seats”[1]. Some of these houses still exist (eg York House, Marble Hill House, Strawberry Hill House) and many of those that do not have been immortalized by famous artists. However, there is one, Richmond House, whose past and whose inhabitants and owners would seem to qualify it for as much recognition as the others, but which has been strangely and sadly neglected. Those artists who painted Twickenham Riverside from the other side of the river found their view of the house blocked by Eel Pie Island, so tended to paint the houses they could see either upstream or downstream of the island. The only view accessible to the public is the one seen in Peter Tilleman's 1725 painting of “Prospect of Twickenham”, now held in the Borough of Richmond art collection at Orleans Gallery. The house no longer exists physically and, as it was surrounded by high brick walls on three sides, it was too difficult to depict. The story following is an attempt to right this injustice.

The House



"A Prospect of Twickenham" by Peter Tillemans, 1725, and enlargement showing Richmond House, courtesy of Richmond Borough Art Collection, Orleans House Gallery

What do we know of Richmond House? Sadly very little, as the house itself was barely mentioned, except in maps, over the 350 or so years of its existence, and to date there are only two glimpses of it, first its original form in a painting by Peter Tillemans in 1725, and second, a photo taken after it had been rebuilt in 1816 when it was put up for auction in 1923 (see later).

Why is it so-called? In 1635 Moses Glover was asked by Algernon Percy, 10th Earl of Northumberland, to create a survey map of the Isleworth Hundred,

an administrative district or Manor, of which the Earl was the Lord. The map, not drawn to scale and still kept at Syon House, shows that some land opposite Eel Pie Island, adjacent to Richmond House land (and roughly where Thames Eyot now stands), was in the possession of the Clarke family. Richard Clarke and his father were fishermen, as well as Churchwardens of St Mary the Virgin Church in Twickenham. In 1659 the Birkhead family bought this land from them and the Deed referred to it as "Richmond Ayte". This probably gave rise to the house being known as Richmond House (or sometimes "Richmonds").

Twickenham Manor.
18th Oct 12... } Present. That Rich. Clarke since last
Geo 2^d 1659 } Court viz. 7th June last did seized of
Rent 0:1:4
The above 16 is all as I know
of as was paid to Twickenham Manor
That Rich. Clarke fisherman of Twickenham

The Messuage ca-
roll of land adjoining
the ayte called Richmond
Ayte
in South 138 foot in
Broadth from North to
South 78 foot...

[Above] Record of copyhold lease of a messuage on Richmond Ayte to Richard Clarke, 1659 (reproduced by courtesy of Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, ref DE/Pr/78255)

[Right] The location of Richard Clarke's land (known as "Richmond Ayte"), according to Moses Glover's map, 1635



The Hearth Tax records of 1664 [2] show that Richmond House was already the fourth biggest house in Twickenham, and by 1708 it was even larger (see chapter on Francis Newport, Earl of Bradford).

Francis Newport and his two sons were avid collectors of art. An inventory taken (possibly following the death of Thomas Lord Torrington) of the house and its art collection in 1719 gives us our first glimpse of just how grand the house was, naming the rooms and the 172 important paintings that were housed there.

In 1739 in an Act of Parliament [3] relating to the late Hon. William Townshend and his young son Charles (qv) there is a description of the house as a "mansion-house, with all the appurtenances, called or known by the name of Richmonds with all the houses, edifices, buildings, barns, stables, coach-houses, yards, backsides, gardens, orchards, brick-walls, walks, trees, ways, lights, passages, easements, waters,

water-courses, commons, commodities, with the appurtenances whatsoever ... containing together about four acres".

This first house was pulled down in 1816 and a new one built, and then extended in 1829 "one front of which faces the Thames, with a pleasing garden and extensive terrace guarded by handsome iron rails. The other front is to the street, but hid by a high wall, at one end of which is a porter's lodge" [4]. There were also two pairs of entrance gates. When the house was eventually auctioned off in 1923 [5] the sale details specify:-

"9 bedrooms + dressing rooms, a wc downstairs, 3 reception rooms, a library, hall, pantry, stores, kitchen, scullery, mess larder. Servants quarters with 3 bedrooms, stables, 2 cottages, set in 2.5 acres".

Thus, 1.5 acres of land had been sold off at some stage since 1739, though there appears to be no record of the sale, or who benefited from it.

Edward Birkhead

The first occupant of Richmond House that we can be sure of was Edward Birkhead. What do we know about him as a man? Sadly, very little. There are neither portraits of him, nor obituaries written about him. In 1623 he married Eleanor Myddleton (known as Ellen) in All Hallows Church, London Wall ; there is no record of them having children.

The Birkheads were obviously an educated family of good standing and almost certainly lived in London. At the time of his death there were still eight brothers and sisters alive so he came from a big family. One brother, Christopher, was a goldsmith and another, Nicholas, was a goldsmith and watchmaker. Their sister Isabel married another goldsmith, John Shorter, who later was knighted and became Lord Mayor of London in 1687. There follows a long and complicated line of connections to Twickenham and with Richmond House. Isabel and John had a son, also called John, who had two daughters: Catherine mar-

ried Sir Robert Walpole and their son was Horace Walpole, of Strawberry Hill House fame; Charlotte married Francis Conway, 1st Baron Conway, and their granddaughter was Anne Seymour Damer whose sister-in-law William Damer rebuilt Richmond House in 1816. Their great-granddaughter was Lady Mary Georgiana Emma Seymour, the “adopted” daughter of Mrs Fitzherbert, the mistress of the Prince Regent. Lady Mary (always known as “Minnie”) married the Rt.Hon. George Lionel Dawson Damer.

Edward and many of his closest relations and friends (including the Middletons and the Izards who feature later in the story) were early Quakers. Unfortunately the records of the earliest Quakers are fragmentary until 1668 when records of Meetings started to be kept, but it is known that George Fox, the Founder of the Quakers, attended a meeting at Birkhead’s home in Twickenham. Fox records in his diary in 1658 “*had a meeting at Serjeant Birkhead’s at Twickenham, to which many people came,*

some of considerable quality. A glorious meeting it was ...” [6].

Edward attended St Margaret’s Church, the parish church of the Palace of Westminster, in common with the Puritans of the seventeenth century. They had become unhappy with the highly liturgical Westminster Abbey, and chose from 1614 to hold Parliamentary services in the more “suitable” St Margaret’s.

From Edward Birkhead’s Will [7] we know that he owned two properties actually in the churchyard of St Margaret’s. One was the Mason’s Lodge, a lodging for masons working on the Abbey; the other was a “newly built brick house” which he had both built and lived in. These houses were demolished in 1737.

In his Will Edward left £10 to the poor of the Parish of St Margaret’s, Westminster and the same amount to the poor of the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Twickenham – which was recorded on a board on the north stairs of the Twickenham church. The board is still there but sadly his name is now illegible. His signature as a witness to parish business however is seen many times in the Parish Record books from as early as 1651.

Edward Birkhead first comes to our notice when in 1637 he is made a Serjeant at Arms for life, initially on a salary of one shilling a day, though this was later raised to £500 a year, plus £250 “*for the entertainment of his servants*” [8]. The Serjeant at Arms was the attendant of the Speaker when Parliament was sitting, the Mace Bearer, and was there to see that order was kept. He was also in charge of issuing Warrants issued by the Speaker. He was sometimes called upon to attend the Sovereign or foreign digni-

ties when they visited the House.

Edward’s close friend and brother-in-law, Henry Middleton, was also a resident of Twickenham, though where he actually lived in Twickenham is unknown. In 1637 Henry was granted lifetime appointment as Keeper of His Majesty’s Garden Doors, in charge of the Privy Garden in Whitehall Palace, at two shillings a day. He too was appointed Serjeant at Arms alongside Edward Birkhead.

Both Edward Birkhead and Henry Middleton took part in Cromwell’s funeral procession in 1658.

The high point of Cromwell’s funerary ceremonial was a great procession, on Tuesday 23rd November, which led the hearse with the effigy through the streets of London and Westminster, from Somerset House to the Abbey. The date had in fact been put back twice, so that the most elaborate preparations could be completed.

The whole event was carefully stage-managed: tickets were printed and issued to mourners; soldiers, dressed in new red coats with black buttons and ensigns wrapped in cypress, lined the whole route. The numbers involved were astonishing, including the poor men of Westminster, members of the domestic household (including waiters, ale-brewers and fire-makers), officials of the court, civil servants, politicians, officers of the army and the fleet, preachers, chaplains and physicians, friends and family of the Protector. It was as if the whole protectoral regime, from top to bottom, was on parade. The full procession took seven hours to travel little more than a mile. And its centrepiece was the effigy itself, on a carriage, accompanied by the chief mourner, Oliver’s son-in-law, Charles Fleetwood. (Richard, as the new Protector, could not mourn in

public for his father.) [9] According to The Publick Intelligencer, which picks up the story:

The Death and Funeral of Oliver Cromwell by Patrick Little.

The royalist, John Evelyn, reported of events on 23 November that 'it was the joy-fullest funeral that ever I saw, for there was none that Cried, but dogs, which the soldiers hooted away with a barbarous noise, drinking & taking tabacco in the streets as they went'. [10]

Maybe the seven hour long procession took its toll on Edward's health because by 26th March 1659, "in regard to his frequent indisposition of health" Henry Middleton was instructed to take over his duties when necessary. But by May, now because of his "great indisposition" he was given leave to retire to the country for his health's sake, and Henry Middleton stepped into his place.

In 1660 Edward was asked to relinquish his post and hand the Keys of the House and the Mace over to Serjeant Norfolk. He petitioned successfully, on the grounds that he was appointed Serjeant at Arms for life and he wanted to attend the King when he came to London, but his name does not appear in House of Commons literature again, so maybe his health had once again deteriorated. From February 1659 until May 1660 Birkhead was not paid his salary and was owed £1,166/1s/3d; it was agreed that he should be paid at least part of it, so he was given £100, with presumably the rest to follow in instalments.

It is probably the increased salary that Edward received in 1647 that gave him the opportunity to start purchasing houses and land in both Twickenham and London at an alarming rate.

By 1653 he was describing himself as "Edward Birkhead of Twickenham", so he was already living in Twickenham. It is not known whether he built the first Richmond House, or acquired it from an as yet undiscovered previous owner, but by the time of his death in 1662 it was already one of the grandest houses in Twickenham, occupying the prime site on the banks of the Thames in the centre of Twickenham and opposite Eel Pie Island.

A survey made in 1661 of all the real estate in the Parish of Twickenham [11] shows that he was the principal landowner in Twickenham. A copy of some of his land and houses (DE/Pr/78232) can be seen in documents in the Hertfordshire County Council Archives. In 1664, two years after Edward's death, Hearth Tax records show that Richmond House was the fourth largest house in Twickenham.

On his death in 1662 he left all his possessions, with the exception of a few legacies, to his wife Ellen and after her death all was to go to his nephew, William Birkhead, the second son of his brother John. In 1664 William married Edward's niece, Mary, the daughter of Henry Middleton; their daughter Ellen married John Izard, a wealthy draper and land owner from Baldock.

Thus the lives of the Birkheads, Middletons and Izards become so entwined that it is difficult to be specific about the subsequent selling and purchasing of the various houses and lands in Twickenham, especially as the children received the same Christian names as their parents. Ellen Birkhead died in 1680 and in 1682 John Izard (presumably on behalf of his wife, also Ellen, or his mother-in-law Mary) sold Rich-

mond House to Francis Newport, later the 1st Earl of Bradford, and he and his family became the owners for the next 55 years.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, along with many Puritans and Quakers, members of the Middleton, Izard and Birkhead families emigrated to South Carolina in America. They were to intermarry and it is Henry Middleton's great-great grandson, Arthur Middleton, who was a signatory of the

American Declaration of Independence. Arthur's Middleton's wife was Mary Izard, a grand-daughter of John Izard's brother Ralph. The Middleton Plantation, now a National Historic Landmark District, is a Museum set in the oldest landscaped gardens in the United States.

Francis Newport, First Earl of Bradford

In 1682 Richmond House entered its Golden Age, thanks to its new owner Francis Newport, First Earl of Bradford. It was to remain in the possession of his family for the next 47 years.

In 1642 Francis Newport, the eldest son of Richard Newport, 1st Baron Newport, married Lady Diana Russell, fourth daughter of Francis Russell, 4th Earl of Bedford. They had five daughters and four sons - five others died in infancy. He was MP for Shropshire, during both the Short and the Long Parliament.

He was created Viscount Newport of Bradford in 1675 by Charles II, and Earl of Bradford in 1694 by William III. (He was named not after the town of Bradford but the Bradford Hundred, an administrative division in Shropshire).

When he came to Richmond House he was Treasurer of the King's Household and Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, having



*Francis Newport, 1st Earl of Bradford
(reproduced by kind permission of Trustees of
Weston Park Foundation)*



[Left] The Breakfast Room in Weston Park, Shropshire [Above] Holbein's "Ann Boleyn" [Right] van Dyck's 1633 portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria with Sir Jeffrey Hudson

previously been Comptroller of the Household as well as a Privy Counsellor.

Francis Newport was a staunch Royalist. It is rumoured that he spent much of his wife's dowry of £7000 supporting the Royalist cause. He was taken prisoner in the Battle of Oswestry in 1644 and was arrested and imprisoned twice more, once in the Tower of London.

On February 27th, 1700, King William "knowing his abilities and great merit" honoured him with his presence at dinner to celebrate his 80th birthday. At the time it was said of him "He hath a great deal of Wit, is a just Critic, a Judge and Lover of Poetry, Painting, and nice living; hath been a handsome Man, but is now near eighty Years old, was always a great Libertine" [12].

It was also said that "he was a loyal sub-

ject, a true son of the Church of England and a great benefactor to its clergy. He also looked after the poor people of his town in Shropshire" [13].

When in Twickenham he attended St Mary the Virgin Church, Twickenham, where his family were assigned several pews. He also donated to the Church a green velvet pulpit cloth embroidered with gold. In his Will he left £10 for the poor of the Parish.

In Francis Newport's Will [14] he writes of Richmond House that "it hath cost me in building and reparations since I bought it as much as purchase money at least". These works were done presumably to house the amazing collection of Old Master paintings and portraits of people that his family had known in the

Civil War and Restoration era. Both the Earl and his two sons were avid collectors of remarkable works of art by some of the most important painters of their time, including 13 by Van Dyck, 23 by Sir Godfrey Kneller, one by Michelangelo, four by Lely and one by Holbein - 172 paintings in all in Richmond House alone, as well as others in their London house. I don't believe that any of the inhabitants of Richmond House ever elevated the house to such magnificence.

A view of some of these paintings now in the Breakfast Room in Weston Park, Shropshire (which is open to the public) gives us some idea of how Richmond House must have looked. The van Dyck portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria with Sir Jeffrey Hudson was in the hall of

Richmond House and the Holbein "Ann Boleyn" was on the staircase.

It is said that he was considering marrying Lucy, the young daughter of his neighbour Sir Thomas Skipwith, when he died at the age of 88. His wife had died in 1694.

An interesting aside is that in 1698 his coachman bought a cottage in the area known as Strawberry Hill Short, allegedly from the profits of feeding his master's horses with chopped straw instead of hay. The cottage was nicknamed Chopped Straw Hall, was bought by Horace Walpole in 1747 and later become Strawberry Hill House.

Francis Newport died in Richmond House in 1708 and is buried in Wroxeter in Shropshire.

Thomas Newport, Lord Torrington

In 1708 Francis Newport, Earl of Bradford, left Richmond House in his Will [14] to his second son Thomas Newport on condition that he lived in it for at least two months a year as it was *"a convenient house for him to dwell in"*.

Otherwise the house was to be sold and the proceeds put towards the repairs of another Newport home in Shropshire, The Manor of High Ercall, which had been fortified to act as a Royalist stronghold and garrison during the Civil War. This was the house in which Thomas was born. Thomas must have appreciated Richmond House as he and subsequently his widow continued to own the house until 1735.

Thomas was MP for Ludlow and later for Much Wenlock. He was Lord of the Treasury in 1715, created Baron Torrington of Torrington in Devon in 1716, and in 1717 he served on the Privy Council of Great Britain. He was married three times, but sadly there were no children.

Anne, Lady Torrington

Anne, Lady Torrington (née Anne Pierrepont) was Lord Torrington's third wife. She was a cousin of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, a member of the Pierrepont family. She appears to have remained in Richmond House until the 1730s when she

His third wife, Anne Pierrepont, inherited Richmond House in 1719. It is thanks to her that we have our only glimpse of what the inside of the house was like, as she did an inventory of the 172 paintings in the house on the death of her husband, naming the rooms in which they were to be found.

On her death in 1735 it took nearly 30 cart loads to move these paintings up to Weston Park in Shropshire, now the family home. The art collection at Weston Park, largely assembled by Francis Newport and his two sons, is now considered of International importance.

Thomas, like his father, was involved with St Mary the Virgin Church, Twickenham, and was one of the 20 Trustees appointed to consider the rebuilding of the Church after it had fallen down in 1713. The family also owned pews in the Church. Lord Torrington died in 1719 and, like his father, is buried in Wroxeter in Shropshire.

moved to Bath, where she died in 1735. Her Will [15] stipulated that she desired a very private and simple funeral, with only the Hearse and two mourning coaches, and no ornament except for black feathers on the Hearse. She also asked that no rooms were to be hung in black on the road and no lying in State.

She was buried next to her husband in Wroxeter.

She gave away legacies totalling over £2000 as well as instructions to pay her staff a sum total of £175 a year for life, and regretted that she couldn't do more for people because of her *"loss in the South Sea and other disappointments"*. £50 was left to the Poor of the Parish

of Twickenham and there were various individual legacies but the main part of her estate, her houses and lands she left to the Hon. William Townshend. There appears to be no relationship between the Bradford/Torrington/Townshend/Pierrepont families to explain this generosity, except that a Miss Ann Townshend was Lady Torrington's God-daughter.

Anthony Browne, Sixth Viscount Montague

When Lady Torrington retired to Bath in the early 1730s it is thought that she let Richmond House out to Anthony Browne, 6th Viscount Montague. However, on her death in 1735 she left Richmond House in her Will to the Hon. William Townshend, the son of Charles Townshend, 2nd Viscount Townshend, commonly known as "Turnip" Townshend. William's stepmother was Dorothy Walpole, sister of Sir Robert Walpole and aunt of Horace Walpole. On inheriting the house, William Townshend signed a contract to sell it to Viscount Montague for £2200, but William died in 1738, aged only 36, before the sale had been completed. His father died only a few months later. An Act of Parliament was necessary to ensure that the proceeds of the sale, in Trust, went to William's young son Charles rather than with the rest of the Estate to Henrietta, his widow. [3] The Trustees were Viscount Montague and Francis North, 1st Earl of Guildford. (It is often reported that Lord North, the Prime Minister, lived in Richmond House but as he was only a young boy at this time

it is more likely that the reference is to his father, who was young Charles Townshend's Trustee).

Viscount Montague continued to live in Richmond House until 1744. His country estate was Cowdray House in Midhurst. He had sold Battle Abbey, another of his homes, a few years earlier. Cowdray House had been visited several times by Henry VIII who was fond of it, but Horace Walpole wasn't impressed when he went there. In a letter to his friend George Montague he wrote [16]: *"Mr. Chute and I are returned from our expedition miraculously well, considering all our distresses. If you love good roads, conveniences, good inns, plenty of postillions and horses, be so kind as never to go into Sussex. We thought ourselves in the north-east part of England; the whole country has a Saxon air, and the inhabitants are savage"*

In 1741 a Nicholas Friend is listed on the Twickenham Museum website [17] as staying in Richmond House but I have been unable to track down this gentleman.

Montague sold the house on to the Keck family in 1744 after possibly having stayed in it for up to 14 years.

Sir Anthony Tracy-Keck

Sir Anthony Tracy-Keck was the next owner of Richmond House; he and his family lived there from 1744 – 1766. Earlier he had bought three adjoining cottages on the land from Lady Torrington, the Earl of Bradford's daughter-in-law. As Anthony Tracy he married Lady Susan Hamilton, the 7th child of the 4th Duke of Hamilton, but adopted the name Keck as a condition of inheriting the Manor of Great Tew from his great-uncle, Francis Keck, his grandmother's brother.

With the help of his wife, Lady Susan, he was elected MP for Woodstock in 1754 and throughout his parliamentary career he remained the Duke of Marlborough's dependent and protégé. In 1759 Marlborough wrote to the Prime Minister, Pitt, to say "He is in every respect an honest man, and a gentleman, and will not prove unworthy of any favours you may please to confer on him"[18].

He and his wife had two children, Henrietta Charlotte in 1744, the year they moved into Richmond House, and Susan, a year later, in 1745. Lady Susan, their mother, died on 3rd June 1755. She had been a political figure in her own right, whose activities as a tireless canvasser on horseback attracted much press coverage in the Oxfordshire election of 1754.

Henrietta Charlotte Keck was appointed Maid of Honour to Queen Charlotte in September 1761 and, on a salary of £300 a year, stayed with the Queen until June 1774, when she married Edward Devereux, 12th Viscount



Portrait of Sir Anthony Tracy-Keck, Lady Susan Hamilton Keck with daughters Susan and Charlotte. Artist unknown

Hereford. In the same year she took back the name Tracy by an Act of Parliament in accordance with her uncle's Will. Her husband lived only for a further nine years. She died 23rd June 1835, aged 91.

Her sister, Susan, was a competent artist, exhibiting at the Royal Academy. In 1771 she married Francis Wemyss Charteris, Lord Elcho. She was a distinguished bibliophile, whose valuable collection of books was sold after her death in 1835. She died, aged 90, the same year as her sister.

The Kecks were in Richmond House for 22 years. According to records in the London Metropolitan Archives [19], in 1751 Sir Anthony was in trouble for

Sir Anthony KECK
1630-1695

Ferdinand TRACY = 1st Katherine 2nd = Edward CHUTE

John TRACY
1701-1776

John CHUTE

Anthony TRACY (became Sir Anthony TRACY-KECK)

Chart: Relationship of John Chute to Sir Anthony Tracy-Keck

building a new wall in front of the courtyard and setting it on land beyond its old foundations, thus encroaching on land that didn't belong to him.

Six months later he was reprimanded for not doing anything about it. He also trespassed onto neighbouring land in order to lop, or cause to be lopped, several elm trees that were growing near the front of his home. There is sadly no record of the punishment that was meted out to him for these misdemeanours.

There are occasional mentions of the Keck family in Horace Walpole's diaries. Anthony Tracy-Keck may have moved to Twickenham to be near his relation John Chute, who was one of Horace Walpole's "Committee of Taste". Sir Anthony was related to John, though it is complicated to work out the relationship: Katherine Keck married firstly Ferdinand Tracy, and Anthony Tracy-Keck was her grandson. Her second husband was Edward Chute and John Chute was their child (see Chart). Chute was immensely important to Horace Walpole and when he died Walpole wrote, in a letter to Horace Mann [20],

"Mr. Chute and I agreed invariably in our principles; he was my counsel in my

affairs, was my oracle in taste, the standard to whom I submitted my trifles, and the genius that presided over poor Strawberry! His sense decided me in everything; his wit and quickness illuminated everything. I saw him oftener than any other man; to him in every difficulty I had recourse, and him I loved to have here, as our friendship was so entire, and we knew on another so entirely, that he alone never was the least constraint to me. We passed many hours together without saying a syllable to each other; for we were both above ceremony. I left him without excusing myself, read or wrote before him, as if he were not present. Alas! alas! and how self presides even in grief. I am lamenting myself, not him! — no, I am lamenting my other self. Half is gone; the other remains solitary."

Sir Anthony's greatest love was for horse breeding and racing. He died in 1767 from a stroke suffered at Epsom Races when his horse won its heat.

It was said of him that he was "a gentleman, universally admired for the ingenuous openness of his disposition, engaging affability and peculiar integrity towards his friends" [21].

Sir Stephen Janssen

In 1754 Sir Stephen Theodore Janssen claimed Richmond House as his residence during the time he was Lord Mayor of London. He was grandfather to Williamza Budgen (née Moore) who later in 1825 inherited Richmond House and its contents from her mother's cousin, Williamza Damer.

Sir Stephen was the founder and owner of the Battersea Enamel factory based in Battersea on the south bank of the Thames, having provided the financial capital in partnership with the potter Henry Delamain and the printer John

Brooks. Their products were much admired by Horace Walpole and are still eagerly collected nowadays. Sadly he went bankrupt and the factory had to close in 1756, but its name lives on.

After the bankruptcy he received £600 a year from his relatives and became a recluse, living on only one-fifth of the money, the other four-fifths being used to pay off his debts. He died in 1777 "universally respected for his many public and private virtues".

Mary, Dowager Countess of Shelburne

In 1766 Mary, née Fitzmaurice, the Dowager Countess of Shelburne, moved into Richmond House and lived there until her death in 1780, when she left it to her second son, the Hon. Thomas Fitzmaurice.

Mary had in 1734 married her cousin John Petty Fitzmaurice, 1st Earl of Shelburne, an Anglo-Irish peer and politician. In 1754 he bought Bowood House and gardens in Wiltshire on the death of Sir Orlando Bridgeman (a Teddington resident whose family owned Weston Park until 25 years ago when it was passed over to the care of the Trustees of the Weston Park Foundation). Lord Shelburne died in 1761 and the contents of Bowood, Bowood Park

and its lands in Calne and Chippenham, various tenements and meadows at Mannings Hill in Calne and its park were sold two months after his death by Mary, to her eldest son William Petty, now the 2nd Earl.

He furnished Bowood with superb collections of paintings, furniture and classical sculpture as well as constructing, at the request of his mother, a Mausoleum designed by Robert Adam situated in a park designed by 'Capability' Brown. The 1st Earl and the Dowager Countess are both buried in this Mausoleum; Bowood remains in the ownership of the same family and can be visited.



Venus Callipyge

The Dowager Countess of Shelburne died in 1780 while staying at Lleweni Hall, the home of her second son, Thomas. In her Will [22] she instructed that "*my body may after lying ten days be put into a coffin wrapped up in a clean linen sheet and be conveyed in an open carriage of my own coach to Bowood Park in the county of Wilts the seat of my said eldest son and deposited in the Mausoleum which I have caused to be erected there to memory of my said late beloved husband in the same sarcophagus as near as may be to his much honoured remains*". She also left close friends and family money "*for mourning*". An interesting bequest to a grandson was the island of Valentia, off the coast of Ireland. The name is familiar to us as being mentioned in the shipping forecast. It was also the site where the first transatlantic

cable was laid between Europe and Newfoundland in the U.S.A. The first message sent was between Queen Victoria and President Buchanan of the U.S.A. in 1865. Valentia was also the home of a quarry which supplied slate for the roofing tiles for the Houses of Parliament.

Poor Lady Shelburne was regarded as being "*very foolish*" by Horace Walpole. She once sent for him to show him how she had furnished the niches in her hall in 'Twitnam'. He found six casts of the same statue, viz. the Venus Callipyge, or "Venus looking at her hind parts". He said, '*Madam, one is very well; but why did your Ladyship like to have six all the same?*' She replied, '*To tell you the truth, I bought them a pennyworth.*' '*To be sure, Madame,*' said he '*the proprietor sold you a bargain.*' [23].

This may explain why, on her death, Walpole wrote [24] to the Countess of Upper Ossory: "*My old acquaintance, or rather my acquaintance, old Lady Shelburne, I see by the papers, is dead. How has she left her fortune, once so great, but which, with superabundant cunning, she had rendered almost as crazy as she was latterly?*"

She appears to have been a strong, intelligent, ambitious lady – a force to be reckoned with both personally and financially in her family. Maybe if he had known this, a certain John Dillon, in 1774, might not have stolen from her a "*blunderbuss mounted with brass, value thirty shillings*". For this he was found guilty and transported for seven years [25].

Her eldest son William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne became Prime Minister in 1782 (after his mother's death). As a result of his negotiations to establish peace with America at the close of the War of Independence he was created Marquess of Lansdowne, a name by which he is better known.

The Honorable Thomas Fitzmaurice

Brother of William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne
(later 1st Marquess of Lansdowne (Prime Minister))

On her death in 1780, while staying at Lleweni Hall, Denbighshire, the Dowager Countess of Shelburne's "realized personal estate, being very considerable", passed to her youngest son, the Hon. Thomas Fitzmaurice (he was given his mother's maiden name in order to take advantage of her Estates in Ireland). He spent a great deal of his time with his mother in Richmond House, was close to her and she was fond of him.

That, together with the fact that Thomas had benefited from his mother's Fitzmaurice estates which brought him in a small income, while his elder brother William the 2nd Earl had inherited his father's debts and responsibilities, caused difficulties between the two brothers. Thomas was said to be an outgoing, friendly man whose close friends included Dr Samuel Johnson and David Garrick; the latter lived only a couple of miles away from Thomas at Hampton House, now known as Garrick Villa. William, Thomas's brother, was a more reserved man.

The Hon. Thomas Fitzmaurice was MP for Calne, and then later for Chipping Wycombe, now known as High Wycombe. With his Irish estates increasingly unproductive and his financial situation deteriorating, in the 1770s Thomas

bought Lleweni Hall from the Salisbury family, and set up a linen bleaching factory to bleach the cotton being produced in his factory in Ireland.

He employed two to three hundred of his poorest tenants and neighbours, introduced modern methods of agriculture (which were initially laughed at by everyone), was an excellent paymaster and a skilful mechanic. In 1785 Richard Twining (of the Dial House Twickenham family) wrote "He has plunged himself into a business which might make even a tradesman tremble. He is bleacher of linen. The buildings which he has erected, and the machines and apparatus which he has placed in them are really astonishing. He has a shop in Chester at which he sells his linen when it is bleached" [18]. Cliffe wrote in *The Cambrian Tourist* [26] "He travelled by his coach and six to Chester where he then stood behind a counter selling his cloth. He lived with the affected humility of a tradesman and the pomp of a Lord – his conduct was singular but his motives were good"

Once again in financial difficulty, in 1777 he married a prospective heiress Lady Mary O'Brien, daughter of Murrigh, 5th Earl of Inchiquin and Mary, Countess of Orkney. Apparently he only told his mother of his wedding the day before and his brother was enraged that his consent had not been sought.

His London home, 105 Pall Mall, later became the home of Mrs Fitzherbert and was used by George IV as an annexe to Carlton House. It is now the home of the Reform Club.

In 1790 his wife succeeded to her mother's title of Countess of Orkney and came into an estate in Cliveden in Buckinghamshire (later the home of the Astors), and Thomas seems to have made his home there, meanwhile letting out Richmond House to John Symmons. A picture of him in the last year of his life, having suffered a stroke, sunk in drink, dropsy and depression, and in reduced circumstances, is given by his nephew Lord Wycombe, who wrote "I think him on the whole dejected and disgusted, not so much with the fatiguing business to which he is so unaccountably attached as with the world at large. He told me that he rather wished for death, and that he thought his life was not to

be of long duration" [18]. He died in 1793.

His obituary [27] said "His love of the poor, for his country, for real improvements of every kind, his benevolence in general, and his uncommon skill in the management of the great concerns wherein he was engaged were such as meet not often in one person; such virtues as those continue true nobility and rendered Mr Fitzmaurice the noblest ornament of his noble family."

Recent research suggests, however, that there may now be a contender for the title "the noblest ornament", in the form of Kate Middleton, now Duchess of Cambridge; her Middleton ancestry can be traced back to Mary, Countess of Shelburne and her son, the Hon. Thomas Fitzmaurice.

On Thomas's death Richmond House was sold to Mrs Elizabeth Allanson, *née* Aislabie.

John Symmons

John Symmons is listed as living in Richmond House in 1790/91. Judging by the high calibre of the previous inhabitants, this is most likely John Symmons F.R.S., "a wealthy man, and a noted collector of books and botanical specimens, with a wide circle of friends in London among the nobility and the legal profession, with Walpole being a distant cousin" [28]. John Symmons was a member of the Society of Dilettanti, and he seconded Lord Elgin's second attempt to join it.

John Symmons is known to have corresponded with Sir Joseph Banks (of Kew Gardens), and it was probably he who

owned an Egyptian Mummy, whose grisly description is found in "Observations on some Egyptian mummies opened in London by John Frederick Blumenbach M.D., F.R.S. Addressed to Sir Joseph Banks Bart P.R.S."

He moved to Paddington House in 1795 where his collection of 4000 plants is commemorated in a book still in print. *Hortus Paddingtonensis* [29].

It is said of him that he was "a liberal, elegant and hospitable character", was a member of the Linnean Society, the Horticultural Society, and the Society of Antiquaries. He was described as "eminently distinguished for his botanical pursuits"

Mrs Elizabeth Allanson, née Aislalie

Mrs Elizabeth Allanson, née Aislalie, a rich heiress, lived in Richmond House from 1791 until at least 1795. Her husband, Charles, MP for Ripon, had died in 1775 and was buried with “great funeral pomp” in York Minster. His father was William Allanson Esq of Little Sion, a grand private house within the grounds of Syon House, which may explain why Mrs Allanson, a Yorkshire lass, chose to live in Twickenham. She also had a house in London.

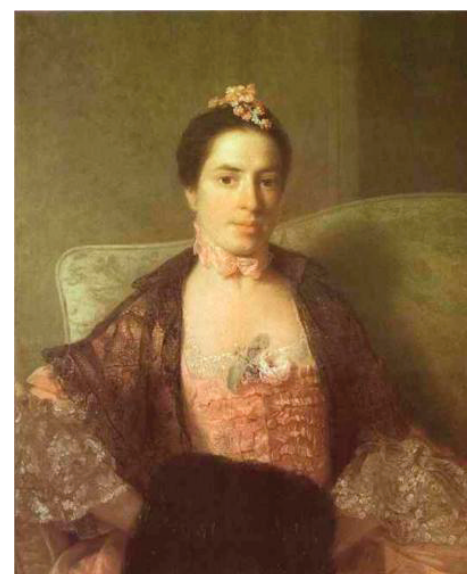
Her grandfather John Aislalie created the gardens at Studley Royal Park in Yorkshire and after his death in 1742 her father, William, extended the scheme by purchasing the adjacent remains of Fountains Abbey and Fountains Hall. After William’s death in 1781 the estate passed to Mrs Allanson who continued to improve it. This Park (now owned by The National Trust) is arguably England’s most important 18C Water Garden and has been designated a World Heritage Site.

Mrs Allanson died in London in April 1808 and her obituary [30] says *“The high estimation in which her character was deservedly held by all ranks and conditions in life is far above panegyric; her benevolence and liberality to the public in general, to the tenants, and the poor in particular, was unabounded; and it may be truly said that in her society has lost one of its brightest ornaments”*.



Mrs Elizabeth Allanson, née Aislalie, by Thomas Hudson, 1749

Martha, Dowager Countess of Elgin



Martha Countess of Elgin, by Allan Ramsay, 1762

Martha, Countess of Elgin was the daughter of Thomas Whyte and married Charles Bruce, 5th Earl of Elgin, in 1759. He was a founder member of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, so maybe she was one of the earliest “golf widows”.

She had a sad early life; of her eight children, only three outlived her, and 1771 must have been a particularly difficult time. Her husband died aged 39, and two weeks later she bore her eighth child. Her eldest surviving son thus became the 6th

Earl at the age of 7, but then died in the same year, leaving his 5 year old younger brother Thomas as the 7th Earl.

Martha was left with very little money but George III took an interest in the family and gave her a small annuity to help her bring up her family, and also paid for the education of Thomas, the 7th Earl. Later when her children had grown up she was appointed Governess to the one year old Princess Charlotte, daughter of the Prince of Wales (later George IV) and Princess Caroline.

Charlotte loved her governess, whom she called “Eggy” and apparently was heartbroken when the Countess retired when Charlotte was only 8 years old. Later Princess Charlotte died in childbirth aged 21 or she would have been Queen of England instead of Victoria. Nobody is quite sure why Martha retired early, but possibly it was because she had gout and was in pain. There is also a theory that the Prince of Wales dismissed her as she had gone against his orders and taken Princess Charlotte to visit her grandfather, George III.

Martha, Dowager Countess of Elgin died in Richmond House in 1810 and is buried in St Mary the Virgin’s Church in Twickenham. Her gravestone is on the floor just inside the Church doors but sadly 200 years of worshippers’ feet have rendered it illegible.

The only tangible legacy we have of Lady Elgin is a book she wrote called

“Physick and cookery of various kinds” which is the property of the National Library of Scotland.

Her son Thomas Bruce, the 7th Earl of Elgin, married the richest heiress in Scotland, Mary Nisbet. Elgin was appointed the Ambassador Extraordinaire to the Ottoman Empire; during the time they were in that region his wife’s charm and her considerable wealth enabled him to remove and ship to England the classical marbles of the Parthenon in Athens, known as the Elgin Marbles.

It was Mary who introduced the smallpox vaccine (using the cowpox virus – vaccinia – as opposed to the earlier smallpox virus – variola – linked to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu) to the Middle East. Martha’s chaplain was the father of Dr Jenner, who developed the vaccine, and it was Martha who sent a supply to Mary to be given to her grandchildren. (The term *vaccine* comes from Jenner’s use of cow pox – the latin for “cow” being vacca.).

Later Mary embarked on a passionate affair with Elgin’s closest friend, Robert Ferguson, which then gave rise to the most scandalous divorce trial that London had

ever seen. The Earl of Elgin was given custody of his children but did not manage to get control of Mary’s considerable fortune, which he needed to pay off his enormous debts. The scandalous divorce must have been very distressing for Martha and may be why she left London to live in the relative quiet of Twickenham.

Following the divorce Mary later married Robert Ferguson, who was a cousin of the Berry sisters.

As a boy Elgin had suffered from migraines and was treated throughout his life with mercury given both internally and externally (given with sugar or honey or as a blue ointment with balsam). This caused so much blistering on his nose that eventually part of his nose was amputated. Mercury poisoning was also the cause of death of his son and heir, Bruce, who suffered from colds and asthma – he died a year before his father.

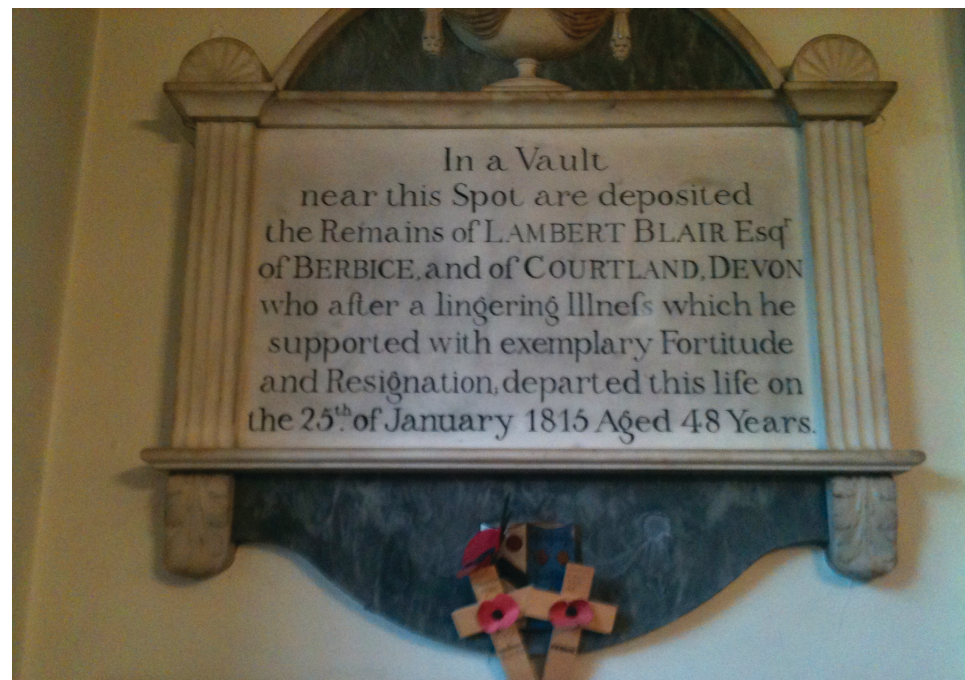
To offset his debts, Elgin in 1816, sold the Marbles to the British Government for £35,000. Poor Lord Elgin had felt that he had done the right thing by saving the Marbles from destruction, but died a bitter man, in debt.

Sir Claude and Lady Champion de Crespigny

Sir Claude and Lady Champion de Crespigny were residents in Richmond House in 1812. The Champion de Crespigny family were Huguenot refugees from Normandy, France who came to England during the reign of King William. Sir Claude (created baronet in 1805) married Mary when she was only 16.

She distinguished herself in the literary world and produced a book addressed to her only child, William, entitled “Letters to an only Son”, a novel called “The Pavilion”, and was the acknowledged author of *A Monody to the Memory of the Right Honourable the Lord Collingwood*. Lady Champion de Crespigny died in Richmond House on July 20th, 1812.

Lambert Blair



Lambert Blair died in Richmond House. A plaque on the east wall of the north aisle of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, the Parish Church of Twickenham, reads: “*Lambert Blair of Berbice and of Courtland, Devon, who, after a lingering illness which he supported with exemplary Fortitude and Resignation, departed this life on the 25th of January, 1815. Aged 48 years.*”

These words leave one unprepared for the discovery that Lambert Blair was, by profession, a slave owner on a very grand scale. He and his brother James left Newry in Ireland in the early 1780s and set up an Agency on Saint Eustatia in the West Indies, primarily for the purchase of slaves. By the turn of the century, when

the British took Demerara from the Dutch (at which Sir Edward Blakeney was present q.v.), they had made enough money to buy up land and set up plantations in Demerara and Berbice (British Guiana, now Guyana). His account books show that he traded in coffee and cotton, as well as slaves.

A glimpse of his opulent lifestyle in Berbice is given by the account [31] by Dr George Pinkhard, an army surgeon, who visited Blair in 1796:

We have lately made a party from the fort, and spent two most pleasant days—one at the governor’s—the other with Mr. Blair, a rich planter, residing at a short distance down the coast on the opposite shore of the river... To speak of the sumptuous day we had at Mr.

Blair's were to throw an air of doubt upon my former notes regarding the paucity of fresh provisions in these colonies. But let it be remembered that individuals of large estate may find the means of procuring a most ample supply, for their own table, although the colony may not furnish an overplus to send to the public market; and, indeed, at Berbische fresh animal food is provided for the troops...

Mr. Blair is one of the most opulent planters in these colonies, and, not disliking the good things of life himself, he has assembled them at his place of residence in sufficient supply to enable him to treat his friends with the most sumptuous liberality. He is generous and social, and the riches of his table are dispensed with all the bounty of his nature. Instead of a plain cottage just rising from the wild woods of an infant settlement, we might have fancied ourselves feasting in one of the hospitable mansions of old England, nay, in some chartered hall, even, of voluptuous London itself.

The house is a compact dwelling, neatly built of plain wood, offering in its exterior nothing to attract the stranger's eye, nor to bespeak the many luxuries within. It stands on the border of the sea, open to the wide ocean. Before it is an extensive and flat beach of firm sand, forming a pleasant ride, or walk at the side of the water. The estate is quite in its infancy, being recently formed out of the rude forest, and indeed only now breaking into cultivation. In great part of it the young plants of cotton are just shooting from the soil between the remaining stumps of trees lately destroyed. Yet notwithstanding the infant state of this hospitable home, it offers more of the good things of life, than I had seen at any other place since leaving England. Having no market in the colony, each planter's abode must necessarily furnish all within itself. No aid can be had from the butcher's, or the baker's, none from the green-grocer's, or poulterer's, the pastry-

cook's, or confectioner's, No such persons are here known, and hence the whole of the entertainment must be the immediate production of the estate: every necessary, every comfort, and every luxury that is given, or enjoyed, must be found in the house or upon the plantation, yet in such plenty were they served at this prolific home, that one might have fancied a Covent-garden, or a Leadenhall market to have been near. From all we had previously seen in the colonies, it had been Wild to have conjectured that so complete a collection could have been assembled.

A large and very handsome boat was sent for our conveyance, having an awning at the stern to protect us from the sun; and we were rowed across the mouth of the river by eight of the finest slaves of the estate, who pulled us on with surprising speed. At the landing place another party of slaves were in attendance with horses in readiness to conduct us to the house. The sun was extremely powerful, but we had a pleasant ride about a mile and a half through fields of cotton and of plantains; the negroes running at the horses sides, according to the custom of the country, as fast as we chose to ride.

Hock and Seltzer water were presented immediately on our arrival, and the time until dinner was most gratefully occupied in the perusal of a packet of newspapers, just arrived from England: than which perhaps a greater treat could not have been offered us. For dinner we had excellent soup, with boiled fish, stewed fish, and fish in pie—also turtle, and crabs, most exquisitely dressed, and forming two uncommonly rich and high-seasoned dishes. We had likewise a side of lamb, a fine goose, a large well-flavored ham, and a variety of other good things. Pies, tarts, and a well compounded trifle followed, amidst a complete course of sweets. The cook was quite a proficient, and did every justice to the feast, the whole dinner being well dressed, and as well

served. We had afterwards pines, shaddocks, melons, water-lemons, and multitudes of other fruits. Nor were the fluids of the banquet less amply administered. Hock, Claret, Madeira, and Port wines were in liberal use. We had also Seltzer and Spa waters, likewise bottled small beer, ale, and porter, with brandy, rum, Hollands, noyeau, and other liqueurs—all in supply sufficient for a lord mayor's feast.

After our good eating and drinking we took a walk about the plantation, and found every corner of it equally plenteous as the table and the cellar. Such a store of living stock, both large and small, I had not seen upon any estate since my arrival in the Western world. Here were large herds of cows, oxen, sheep, and goats; droves of hogs, horses, and mules; flocks of geese, turkeys, ducks, Guinea fowls, and chickens. A more gratifying assemblage of domestic plenty could scarcely be found in any country. Among the stock I should not omit to mention a pen of living turtles kept in readiness for the table: whole droves of crabs were also running about near the door; and the neighbouring sea is at all times made tributary to the board. Several hundreds of negroes employed at work, or moving from place to place, improved the variety of the scene; while they added essentially to the value of the home—for, like the cattle, these are always included in calculating the stock of the estate. Together with the multitude of domestic productions at this all, supplying abode were likewise some of the more rare and curious specimens—such as the small lion, monkey and the large powys, or wild turkey of the woods; also the trumpeter, the fly-catcher, and several other uncommon birds. Our walk was highly gratifying, and offered much to excite, as well as to interest our contemplations. We extended it to the sea beach, and found the sand flat and firm as a bowling green, and of a dark brown colour, whence it was neither liable to be blown into the eyes, nor to offend them by

its brightness. A cool and constant sea-breeze adds to the many advantages of this situation: it is always free and pure, there being nothing to impede or contaminate it between the house and the ocean. After it grew dark a rubber was proposed as the amusement of the evening—but cards had no power to attract the majority of us from the dear unfinished Times and Chronicle. We slept in hammocks according to the common mode of the country, and a most excellent and convenient mode it is, for a very large party may be thus accommodated in a small house, it being only necessary to hang up as many hammocks as there are persons. Neither beds, sheets, nor blankets are required, for the hammock includes them all, and serves as bedstead, mattress, and coverlet into the bargain.

A second visit is described in Vol III, Letter IV

I have again been one of a party across the river, to visit our princely neighbour Mr. Blair, who in this remote corner of the globe, where others find it difficult to procure the common provisions of the table, would seem to have assembled an inexhaustible supply of all the good things of life. It was a birth-day festival, and perhaps a more choice and sumptuous repast could not have been found, even in the proud city of London. The dinner table exhibited a happy combination of English taste, and Irish hospitality. It was served in the style of Europe, and displayed a profusion of the best and richest viands, without any of the more common dishes of the country, such as Moscow duck, Guinea-fowl, kid, and the like. Amidst a crowded variety of other covers we had a large green turtle, with a great variety of the best European vegetables, and, to crown the feast, a complete course of sweets, consisting of no less than four-and-twenty dishes. The fruits were endemic, and such as

London with all its riches cannot produce. The drinking part of the feast was such as I have described to you before. At no other house in the colony are such entertainments given. A circumstance, which, together with the paucity of our ordinary supply, and indeed the difficulty of procuring any fresh provisions for our table, makes such a gala-day quite an object of notice. To you, who have daily feasting before you, it can offer nothing remarkable. You will not be surprized when I tell you that the generous donor experiences the honorable reward of luxury, by feeling, in his remotest extremities, the pungency of his dishes.[32]

In 1809 Lambert Blair returned to England and married Jane Letitia Stopford, leaving his estates to be managed by a relation. His elegant house, Courtland, mentioned in his memorial tablet, is still

Williamza Damer

Following the death of Lambert Blair (1815), Richmond House became the property of Williamza Damer, the widow of the Hon. Lionel Damer, MP for Peterborough. Lionel Damer was the fourth son of Joseph Damer, Lord Milton, later the 1st Earl of Dorchester. Williamza was the daughter of William Janssen, the brother of Sir Stephen Theodore Janssen who had originally lived in Richmond House while he was Lord Mayor of London (1754/5). William and Stephen's father, Sir Theodore Janssen, was a founder member of the Bank of England as well as a director of the South Sea Company and East India Company. Williamza was always referred to as "the heiress".

in existence on the banks of the River Exe near Exeter and is now used as a wedding venue. In his Will [33] he left his estates in the West Indies to his nephew James Blair Jnr who, after emancipation in 1834, received £83,530 as compensation from the British Government for his 1,598 slaves. He thus claimed for more slaves and received more money than any other slave-owner in the British Empire.

One needs to remember that Lambert Blair's neighbours will have enjoyed the fruits of his slaves' labours, namely coffee, sugar and cotton; and some of their homes will have been built as a result of their investment in the South Sea Company which dealt in slavery, so his business concerns and his black servant will have been quite acceptable.

The Damer family seat was Milton Abbey (which is now a school). The adjacent town spoilt Joseph Damer's dream of rural living so he demolished it, built a new village, Milton Abbas, and relocated all the villagers there. The Damer London home was in Park Lane and when it was eventually sold and demolished the hotel that took its place became the Dorchester Hotel, named after the family.

Williamza's cousin, Henrietta Moore, the daughter of Sir Stephen, had married Lorenzo Moore and it is reported that Williamza moved to Twickenham to be near her cousin. She apparently admired her cousin's home, Riverside House, adjacent to Orleans House, so pulled down Richmond House and built the second Rich-

mond House in a similar fashion. She was also a neighbour of her sister-in-law, the sculptress Anne Seymour Damer, the lady to whom Horace Walpole left Strawberry Hill House.

Williamza Damer died in 1825, leaving a considerable fortune and several lands and properties [33], but Richmond House she left specifically to her God-daughter, Williamza Budgen (née Moore), the daughter of her close friend and cousin, Henrietta. She also left Trust funds for both Williamza Budgen and any offspring she might have on condition that "she shall not be subject to the control debts or

engagements of her said present or any future husband but shall be for her sole and separate use". This stipulation may have arisen as a consequence of Williamza having been "an heiress" all her life. The Rev. Calvert Moore, Williamza Budgen's brother, was left a house in London as well as land and tenements, part freehold and part copyhold, in Twickenham. These may have included the westward portion of Eel Pie Island, now a nature reserve, as Williamza Damer, in common with other residents of Richmond House, is recorded in 1818 as paying rates for it.

Williamza Budgen, née Moore

Williamza Moore, who inherited Richmond House from her God-mother, Williamza Damer, in 1825, married John Robert Budgen in Twickenham in 1823. Her father was Colonel Lorenzo Moore of the Battleaxe Guards in Dublin, the equivalent of the Yeomen of the Guard at the Tower of London. Her grandfather was Sir Stephen Theodore Janssen who had lived in Richmond House in 1754 during his time as Lord Mayor of London, when the Tracy-Kecks were the owners.

John Budgen was a Captain in the Rifle Brigade and served in the Peninsula War, where he was injured twice, as well as the Battle of Waterloo. After he retired he became a J.P. and was Deputy Lieutenant for Surrey. He was also responsible for family estates in Ireland.

This may be a suitable point to think about the reason why Richmond House appeared to have so many inhabitants. Twickenham was a village and its position beside the Thames attracted the nobility as well as writers and artists. Many of the houses were the second homes of the well-off, within easy reach of London. For men with government posts, connections with Court or business interests in town a London house was essential.

They probably also owned a house in the country with a landed estate, but travel to and from a distant Estate could be very time consuming. In the summer London was smelly and hot, and at times plague ridden, so Twickenham would have been a refuge, somewhere to leave the family while popping backwards and forwards to London, knowing that they would have a good social life and lots of

friends, while enjoying fresh air. Many of the families were inter-related and a large proportion of them in Richmond House could be traced to Horace Walpole in particular.

The Budgens were not the first people to treat Richmond House as what we would think of nowadays as a “buy to let property”, and it is said that they enlarged Richmond House in 1829 specifically for the benefit of the Dowager Duchess of Roxburghe. They stayed in the property on and off until John Budgen’s death in their home in Jersey in 1866. Williamza also died in Jersey in 1869.

Richmond House was never short of people wanting to stay there, as can be seen in Census Records and Directories such as Kelly’s.

Mary, Dowager Duchess of Roxburghe

Mary, Dowager Duchess of Roxburghe is believed to have lived in Richmond House immediately after it had been rebuilt and extended in 1829. She had been married to William, 4th Duke of Roxburghe, whose seat was at Floors Castle in the Scottish Borders. He died in 1805. A year later in 1806 she married the Hon. John Tollemache, the second son of Louisa, 7th Count-

ess of Dysart, who had inherited the title and estates at Ham House at the age of 76. He died in 1837 in York House and Mary died in Richmond a year later, after a very short illness, leaving no family.

Lady Louth

A Lady Louth is recorded in *The London Gazette* as having given birth to a daughter in Richmond House in July 1836. Research shows that she was Anna Maria *née* Roche, who married her cousin Thomas Oliver Plunkett, 12th Baron Louth, an Irish Peer; her daughter was Augusta Anna Margaret Plunkett. Saint Oliver Plunkett, the last Roman Catholic martyr to be executed in England (in 1681), came from the same family.

Sir Henry Willock

Sir Henry Willock and his family are believed to have lived in Richmond House sometime between 1836 and 1845.

Because of his “*intelligence, knowledge of the language, conciliatory manners, and exemplary conduct, public and private*” Sir Henry had been placed, in 1815, in charge of the British Mission at the Court of Tehran in Persia. While he

was there he built up an art collection of Persian art, four items of which can still be seen at the British Museum. He also had an important collection of coins of ancient and modern Persian dynasties that he gave to the East India House. He was Chairman of the East India Company from 1844-47 and “*an able, upright and honoured member until it ceased*”.

His lasting legacy is the rose he found while he was in Persia - a bright yellow rose which he introduced into England in 1837. It is still on sale today and is known as the Persian Yellow old rose.

His eldest son, Captain Francis Willock, died during the Indian Mutiny in 1857. Sir Henry died a year later in Castelnau House in Mortlake in 1858 “*after a life of usefulness, honour and domestic felicity*” [35]. He is buried in Mortlake Cemetery.

The Hon. Lady Anne Murray

In 1816 Alexander Murray of Broughton married the Hon. Lady Anne Bingham, the daughter of the 2nd Earl of Lucan. Alexander Murray became MP for Kircudbright in Scotland. In 1837 they bought and lived in Orleans House, Twickenham until Alexander’s death in 1845, when the house was sold. Lady Anne Murray then lived in Richmond House until her death in 1850.

George Lenox- Conyngham

According to *Kelly’s Directory* in 1855 George Lenox-Conyngham was living in Richmond House. His main occupation was as Chief Clerk of the Foreign Office. His wife, Elizabeth, was a well known Romantic poetess. In Edward Hertslet’s “*Recollections of the old Foreign Office*” [36] it is written:

“*When a young man, Mr. Lenox Conyngham met with a severe gun accident. He had just got on to the outside of the Cambridge coach, at the Golden Cross Hotel, Charing Cross, intending to go into the country for a day’s shooting, when his gun, which had been loaded and was carelessly left resting against his leg, went off, and the charge entered the upper part of the thigh of his left leg. He was at once removed from off the coach into the hotel, where his leg was amputated near the hip joint. Some days later the surgeons discovered that it had not been cut off quite high enough, and Mr. Conyngham submitted, with wonderful courage, to having another slice taken off, and as this was before the days of anaesthetics, his sufferings must have been very great indeed, considering that he was a very tall, stout, and heavy man. He was very seldom seen with an artificial leg. When in the office, he used to walk, or rather hop, about with a crutch under his left arm and a walking stick in his right hand. When*

the weather was changeable and heavy rains were expected, his sufferings were intense, and I have seen him cry like a child with the pain. At such times he was obliged to take large doses of laudanum to alleviate the suffering, but as soon as the rain actually fell, the intense pain ceased”.

He was also a keen botanist and some of his correspondence can be seen in the Doneraile Papers in the National Library of Ireland. These include letters from Sir William Jackson Hooker (Director of Kew Gardens) concerning objects collected and exported by Foreign Office agents, as well as references to Dr Livingstone. Lenox-Conyngham was also an avid collector of sea shells from around the world.

He married Elizabeth Holmes, daughter of the barrister Robert Holmes, and

they had a son nicknamed “Gino” who apparently died “young and under a cloud” in Rio de Janeiro. It appears he also had an illegitimate child with a lady called Adelaide Theresa Nachtigall.

His daughter Mary married Hayes St Leger, 4th Viscount Doneraile, who died tragically in 1851 having been bitten by his pet fox, which had become rabid. He contracted rabies and it is said that he was smothered with pillows by the housemaids both to spare him suffering and prevent him spreading the disease to others.

After this rather sad, though eventful life, George Lenox-Conyngham died on November 26, 1866.

Alexander Herzen

During the years 1855 – 1865 several different families stayed in the house for various lengths of time.

The first was Alexander Herzen, the Russian writer and political activist, who was there from January – March 1855. It seems that he very rarely stayed long in any one place. He was the illegitimate son of a wealthy member of the Russian nobility who developed a deep sympathy for the peasants and became an advocate of social reform (Lenin pronounced him the father of Russian socialism). His views led him to be arrested and sent into internal exile but after receiving a large inheritance from his father he decided to leave Russia, first

going to Paris, then Geneva and finally arriving in London in 1852 where he remained until 1864, before returning to Geneva. He died in Paris in 1870.

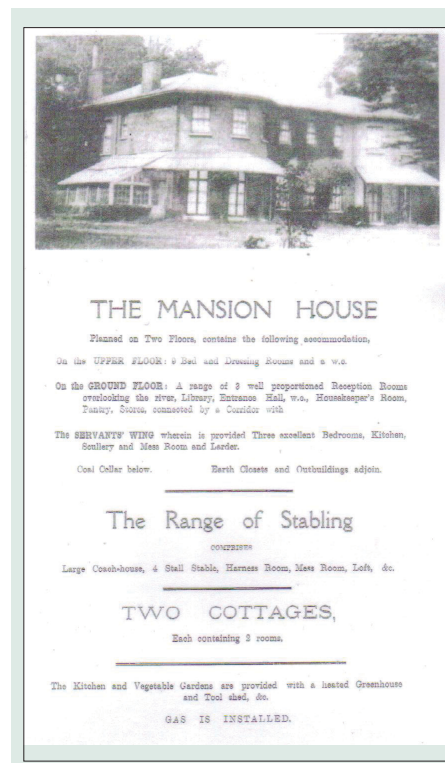
Elizabeth Maule

The widowed Elizabeth Maule is shown in the 1861 Census as living in Richmond House. She had been married to the Hon. William Maule Ramsay (1809-1859) a wealthy Scottish landowner, who had been an attaché in the Embassy in Turkey. His brother was the Hon. Lauderdale Maule, who died of cholera during the Crimean War; the name “Lauderdale” and its links with the Dysart family of Ham House may explain why Elizabeth chose to live in Twickenham to be near a branch of her husband’s family.

The census shows her living in the house as a “Widow and Landed Proprietor”, with her four daughters, a governess, a housekeeper, two Lady’s Maids, a cook and two housemaids – 12 women. (Her two sons had died very young.) There was a butler and his wife in the stables and a gardener in the lodge.

Lord Montague

On 27th June 1863 the York Herald reported “*Alarming fire at Lord Montague’s – About half past four o’clock yesterday morning week a fire broke out at Richmond House, Twickenham, the residence of Lord Montague, originating*



Auction details for sale of Richmond House, 1923 (original kept at Local Studies Library, Richmond)

in the domestic offices adjoining the house. The building, consisting of kitchen, scullery, servants’ hall, with three servants’ bedrooms, with the furniture, servants’ wearing apparel etc. was wholly destroyed. The cook, housemaid, kitchenmaid, and nurse were sleeping in the bedrooms and had a very narrow escape of being burnt to death, saving nothing but what they stood upright in. The building is insured in the Sun Fire-office and the fire is thought to have originated in an overheated flue.”

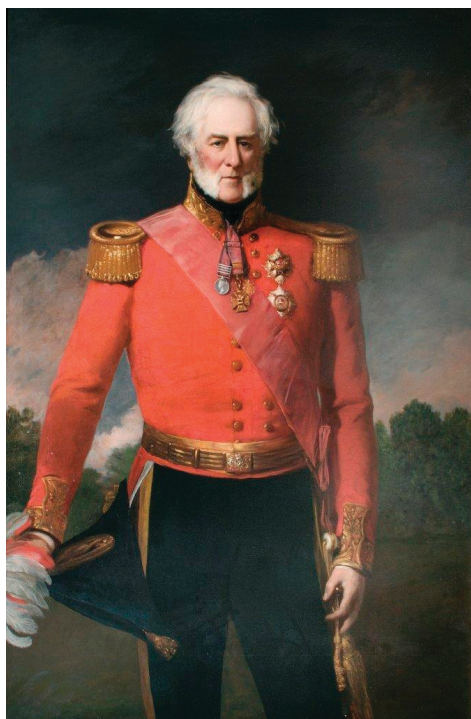
Which Lord Montague this refers to is not made clear. Presumably the servants’ quarters were immediately rebuilt – they are all included in the Auction catalogue of 1923.

Field Marshal Sir Edward Blakeney

One of the most illustrious owners of Richmond House was Field Marshal Sir Edward Blakeney. He was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the fourth son of Colonel William Blakeney, who had fought in the American War of Independence at the Battle of Bunker Hill, and later sat in the Parliament of Ireland..

Edward Blakeney entered the army in 1794, served in Ireland and in 1796 was sent to the West Indies to take Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo from the Dutch. As Lambert Blair (q.v.) was out there during this time, one wonders whether their paths ever crossed. Blakeney was captured and taken prisoner on three separate occasions by privateers and on one occasion kept in irons for nine days. He subsequently served in campaigns in the Baltic, was present at the capture of the city of Copenhagen and fought under the Duke of Wellington during the Peninsula War. He was severely wounded through the thigh at Albuera, and at the siege of Badajoz he was severely injured in the arm. For his service in Portugal he was appointed in 1812 a Knight of the Tower and Sword of Portugal, and he was knighted in 1815.

In 1814 he married Mary, the daughter of Colonel Thomas Gardiner of the East India Company. Her unmarried sister, Louisa, and brother, Thomas George Gardiner (a retired Civil Servant), were both Twickenham residents.



Field Marshal Sir Edward Blakeney (reproduced by kind permission of Fusiliers' Museum, Tower of London)

In 1815 following the Battle of Waterloo, he rejoined the Duke of Wellington and was present at the surrender of Paris. He subsequently commanded the first Brigade in the force sent to Portugal under General Sir William Clinton in 1826. In 1828 he was appointed to the staff in Ireland and in 1832 succeeded Sir Alfred Clarke as Colonel of the Royal Fusiliers. During the long and trying period from

1838 to 1855 (during the potato famine) he filled the post of Commander-in-Chief in Ireland.

In August 1849, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited Dublin. When they arrived at Dublin Railway station they were met by their own carriages. The Queen, Prince Albert, the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal travelled in one carriage, and Prince Alfred and Princess Alice, with the ladies-in-waiting, another. As Commander-in-Chief, Ireland, Sir Edward rode on one side of the Queen's carriage, Prince George of Cambridge on the other, followed by an escort of soldiers.

"At the end of her visit to Dublin her Majesty and the Prince were escorted to the water's edge by a distinguished cortege who accompanied them in the royal special train to Kingstown. Among the distinguished personages who accompanied her Majesty to the steamer's gangway were the Viceroy and his Countess, Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Blakeney, Sir George Grey, the Marquis of Londonderry... Her Majesty then proceeded to take a farewell of the distinguished group around her. In the first place, her Majesty bade a warm and affectionate adieu of the distinguished group around her. In the first place, her Majesty bade a warm and affectionate adieu to the Lady Lieutenant ; she then took Lord Clarendon by the hand and bade him a cordial adieu, and to the venerable and gallant veteran Sir Edward Blakeney she extended a similar favour. But in parting with her princely cousin, Prince George of Cambridge, her Majesty bestowed upon him a less formal and more familiar salute, which made the said Prince George the envied of many, and which was ratified by the cheers of thousands in the vicinity. Amidst the pealing of cannon and the cheers of all, the Queen stepped on board, followed by the Prince, the royal children, and

her suite. The royal yacht at once moved off, and her Majesty, accompanied by the Prince Consort and the children, proceeded aft to the elevated space near the taffrail, where she was in full view of the people, and remained there so long as she could have a distinct view of the features of the people who stood on the pier at which she embarked.

Her Majesty then paced the deck for a little time, and on approaching the pier at the extremity of the lighthouse, where vast numbers of people had congregated, she parted with the two ladies-in-waiting, with whom she had been up to this time in conversation, looked towards the crowd, ran along the deck with the sprightliness of a young girl, and, with the agility of a sailor, ascended the paddle-box, which, as our readers are aware, is a tolerably high one, and was almost at the top of it before she was observed by Prince Albert, who for some time previously had been standing on its summit viewing the surrounding country. Her Majesty on reaching the platform was assisted by Prince Albert, and, taking his arm, she gracefully waved her right hand towards the pier, and in return was greeted by the plaudits of thousands who crowded towards the extremity of the pier."

(from Maitland Mercury and Hunter River Advertiser, NSW, [37]).

He is recorded in Claytons Court Guide to London as staying in Richmond House in 1853, 1860 and 1865, though I'm sure he was there for much longer.

In 1855 he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Chelsea Hospital, and in 1856 was its Governor.

Further honours awaited: He was promoted Field-Marshal in 1862, and became Colonel-in-Chief of the Rifle Brigade in 1865. His wife Mary died in the Chelsea Hospital in 1866, aged 76. Blakeney survived

her by two years, dying in the same hospital on 2 August 1868, and was buried in Twickenham six days later. They had no children.

It was said of him by Dr Mahoney, Inspector General of Hospitals, who had served under him in Portugal and had enjoyed uninterrupted friendship with him for 57 years *"One of the last of a long list of heroes, his strict impartiality and great kindness of heart endeared him to all with whom he was in any way associated: he was beloved by all who knew him, from the youngest officer who sought his advice and the veteran pensioners over whom he ruled, to the many relatives and personal friends who were*

bound to him by his unchanging cordiality and warmth of affection. His memory is cherished, and his worthy deeds are written in the hearts of all" [4].

Many of those who had served with him attended his funeral, the first part of the service of which was read in the chapel of Chelsea Hospital, and the concluding portion in the graveyard of Oak Lane Cemetery in Twickenham.

As they had no children, he passed Richmond House to his niece Jane Mackintosh (née Gardiner), who was married to George Gordon Mackintosh. They were the owners for more than 50 years until Jane died.

Mr and Mrs George Gordon Mackintosh

In 1868 Jane Mackintosh (née Gardiner) inherited Richmond House from her uncle Field Marshal Sir Edward Blakeney. She and her husband, George Mackintosh, moved there from Sion House (2 Sion Row), Orleans Road, Twickenham and remained there until Jane died in 1922.

George Mackintosh served in the Bengal Civil Service and in 1846, after a rapid courtship, married Jane with her father's blessing *"giving her to him with the most perfect confidence of thus securing her happiness"* [38]. He was said to be a respectable highland gentleman who was well spoken of and very handsome. Jane's brother Tom thought she was too young to take such an important step, especially as she was only 17 and was 17 years younger than George.

The Mackintoshes returned from India, where he was a district judge, in 1857, with George on sick leave, and a few years later he retired. He became a magistrate for Invernesshire, Herefordshire and Middlesex and retired from that due to increasing deafness only five years before his death in 1903 at the age of 91. Both he and Jane were involved in many charities and were both loved and respected in the Twickenham community.

The 1891 census shows them living in the house with a butler, cook, lady's maid, housemaid and kitchen maid. There was a coachman in the stables, and a gardener in the gardener's cottage/lodge.

In the book *"Mrs Alford Remembers"* [39] he is described thus: *"he was a dear old man. His wife was a good musician, very fond of playing duets, At the time they were*

there, Richmond House had big gates with a coachman's house on the right hand side and a plantation of small trees. Mrs Mackintosh was extremely indignant about the wall that was put up along her garden and back premises when the new Town Hall was built. Also "Bell Lane was a place of ill repute, down which, as also down Water Lane, we were never allowed to go – not that we ever wanted to!"

In 1881 George and Jane were present at the acting debut of Lily Langtry in the theatre in the Town Hall. Oscar Wilde was also in the audience, his appearance described in a review in *The World* as *"the whiteness of whose cravat, plastron and waistcoat was relieved by a kerchief of sunflower hue, thrust with cunning carelessness into the last-named garment"*. The *Richmond and Twickenham Times*, 26 November, 1881 wrote *"After a too lengthy interval came Mr CM Rae's clever comedietta "A Fair Encounter" in which Mrs Langtry took the part of Lady Clare St John ... This was a truly dainty bit of acting, which would have been more appreciated if given half an hour earlier, before many of the audience had begun to think of starting to catch the last up train to Waterloo"*.

Luckily the Mackintoshes lived only next door to the theatre, because it was *"computed by the police that at least 150 carriages were in waiting at the close of the performance. These extended to beyond The Grotto Hotel, Cross Deep, whilst there was also a long string in the Heath Road. Such an immense number has never before been seen in Twickenham on the occasion of any similar entertainment"*.

Jane continued to live in the house until her death, aged 93, in 1922, a lady of great kindness, with wide knowledge and interests.

When she died in 1922 *"curtains were drawn and shops shut along the route of the cortege"*.

An obituary of Jane in a local newspaper describes her as *"of wide culture and extraordinary memory, an accomplished linguist, had keen interest in politics and current affairs, and was well known and beloved in Twickenham"*.

Both George and Jane were buried in St Mary the Virgin Church in Twickenham, and to the left of the door leading to the vestry there is a brass plate commemorating them.

Joseph Theophilus Mears

Last, but by no means least, the final owner of Richmond House was Joseph Theophilus Mears, though it's unlikely he ever lived there. He was just as colourful a character as those who had preceded him through the centuries.

Mears was a successful business man whose greatest claim to fame was that he was the owner of Stamford Bridge Ath-

letics Ground, where he and his brother founded the Chelsea Football Club in 1905. He acquired the Thames Electric and Motor Launch Co on Eel Pie Island in 1907, and built up a large fleet of passenger launches on the Thames. He also owned a group of cinemas in Richmond as well as a coach company. He was Mayor of Richmond in 1931.

After Mrs Mackintosh's death in 1922 Richmond House was put up for auc-

tion. The Council tried to buy the house for possible use as the new Town Hall and the land for road improvements in the town centre, but were outbid by Joseph Mears who paid £10,100 for the site and must have seen the purchase as an investment opportunity. A year later in 1924, after complicated negotiations, the Council eventually bought the house and grounds from Mears for £11,350. Later a decision was made to use York House as the next Town Hall, so sadly Richmond House was demolished in

1927 and the land along King Street sold off to a property developer. Following a petition by the residents of the Borough it was decided to build a public bath house and swimming pool on the rest of the site and this was opened in May 1935 in time for George V's Silver Jubilee. Later that year Joseph Mears died and was buried in Richmond Cemetery, leaving an estimated fortune of £30million.

Envoi

Very few people nowadays have ever heard of Richmond House, which is sad as it was a house the equal of its more famous neighbours, and it deserves to be remembered. The inhabitants throughout the centuries have all played their part in the history of our country and in many cases their ancestral homes are still here to be visited. Their portraits can be seen hanging on walls in the National Portrait Gallery and various stately homes throughout the country, the Elgin Marbles can be admired in the British Museum, a few lucky collectors own the rare Battersea Enamel boxes, gardeners can appreciate the Persian Yellow rose, fans can support Chelsea Football Club, and even the Duchess of Cambridge and her Middleton ancestors can claim to have a link with the life of Richmond House.

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My first thanks must go to the Twickenham Museum and its website, because without their list of inhabitants of Richmond House I wouldn't have known where to start my research. Archivists have been extremely patient and helpful at the Local Studies Collection at the Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames, Orleans House Gallery, the Public Record Office at Kew, the London Metropolitan Archives, Hertfordshire Archives, Westminster Abbey and Fusiliers Museum.

Special mention must go to the Archivist at Weston Park in Shropshire who pointed me towards Sally Goodsir, who in turn was extremely generous in sharing with me her extensive research on the paintings in Richmond House (awaiting publication). I am grateful to all of them for giving me permission to use their material in this booklet.

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Sue Hamilton-Miller

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