

**THE RETURN OF SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT,
7TH BARONET & LADY MARGARET TO COLEORTON &
THE RE-BUILDING OF THE OLD MANOR HOUSE**



BY SAMUEL T STEWART – MARCH 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks to Ashby de la Zouch museum for allowing access to, and use of *certain* material researched from the John Crocker (local historian) Coleorton Beaumont archives catalogued for the museum by John MacDonald the Coleorton Heritage Warden.

Further material and photographs appertaining to the subjects represented would be welcomed by the author.

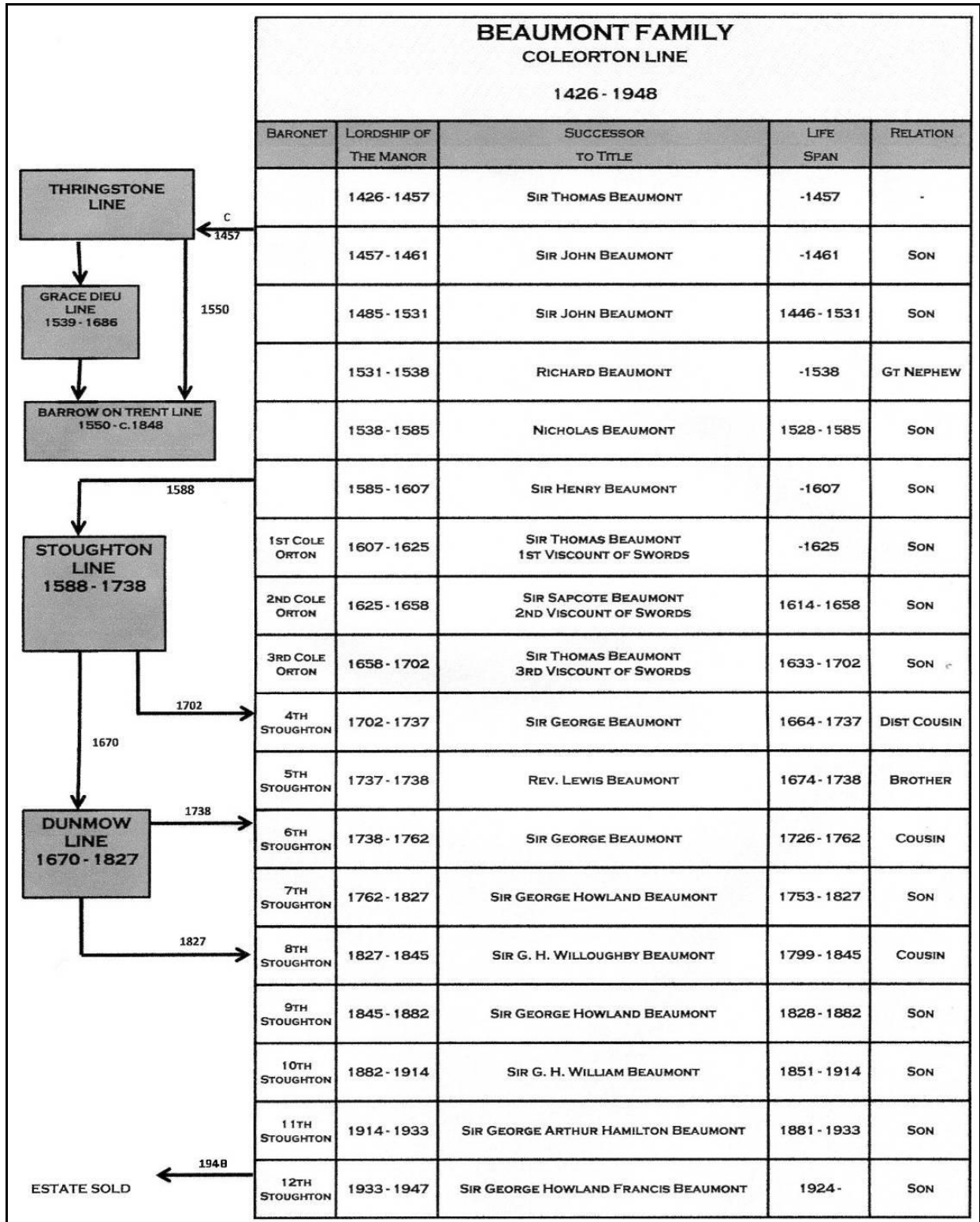
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THE COLEORTON BEAUMONTS' FAMILY LINE



A HISTORY OF THE BEAUMONTS' PRIOR TO SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT, 7TH BARONET AND HIS WIFE LADY MARGARET'S MOVE TO COLEORTON

A detailed record of the development of the village of Coleorton from the Domesday survey in 1085 up to 1948 is included in both chart and text form on the author's website which is entitled "THE EVOLUTION OF COLEORTON". Therefore, reference can be made to that book for the period prior to where this story commences.

Unfortunately, the Beaumont Archives have been variously lost, stolen, or destroyed, and what remains is scattered and incomplete. It is known that an extensive archive existed at Coleorton Hall before the death of the 9th Baronet (1882), after which the hall was leased when the 10th Baronet abandoned his wife. The 11th Baronet only lived at the hall for nine years before his death in 1933, after which the property was leased and eventually purchased by the National Coal Board in 1948. The N.C.B. archive contained relevant documents only as far as their ownership or lease of property was concerned, and detailed examination of these papers suggested that the bulk of the 19th century Beaumont archive had been lost prior to 1948. The bulk of the paperwork relating to Estate Management between 1850 and 1933, held at the "Ginn Stables" Estate Office was burnt in 1933, and the Ashby Solicitors cleared out most of their Beaumont documentation following the Waste Paper Drive during the war in 1943. However, many years of diligent research by various people interested in Coleorton history and the Beaumonts' has revealed sufficient information to furnish the reader with a good understanding of the history over a long period of time.

It was felt by the author that the reader should be appraised at the start of this study of the events leading up to Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet's move to Coleorton from his Dunmow, Essex estate.

By the end of the 16th century, Overtone Manor (part of what eventually became Coleorton) had grown to more than 1400 acres, of which only 100 acres was woodland. Productive land was divided into 400 acres of arable land, 600 acres of pasture and around 300 acres of waste land. This manor had twenty substantial dwelling houses, all with gardens and crofts, which would have housed the working population of the manorial estate.

The will of **Richard Beaumont**, who died in 1538, lists the inventory of particular rooms in his manor house. The rooms included are:-

Two bedrooms – the Red Chamber and the Green Chamber, one of which was over the hall. The parlour and the kitchen are also referred to. This would suggest a modest manor house, which had at least five main rooms, which at the time of the will were either empty or were occupied by other members of the family. Manor houses of the Tudor period vary significantly from very large and elaborate properties, to much more modest properties depending on the wealth held by the lord of the manor. The main sources of wealth in the Coleorton area were coal and agriculture, and there is evidence that during the 16th century, significant development and progress was taking place in local coal mining. The Beaumonts' who were lords of the manor at this time, would have benefited, either directly or indirectly from these developments, although it appears that Richard Beaumont had not devoted his attention to developing coal mining on his land. It was Richard's son Nicholas who really started to develop the potential of the Coleorton coal fields. Nicholas Beaumont's son and heir, Sir Henry Beaumont was lord of the manor from 1585 to 1607 and in an inquisition of his estate, on his death in 1607, the manor house described is significantly grander than the house described in 1573, suggesting either a re-build, or significant additions had taken place between these two dates. The 1607 hall is described as being of stud and plaster, and rough cast brick construction. The house included a "best dining chamber, rooms under the hall, bed chambers and dressing rooms, cellars and sollers (lofts?)", with probably

other rooms on an upper floor. Outside there was an inner courtyard with a communal well, with houses on the east and west sides enclosed "towards the street with a stone wall". Old farm buildings ran down towards the highway, next to the manse was a two story stable, and next to that a barn with its own yard. Also associated with the main building were the Brew House, Dairy House, Chambers, and Malt House. New building work had been going on, since reference is made to "the new building of freestone". Adjacent to the manor buildings were the closes, or enclosed fields, called Netherfield, Cawbeck and the Carre, each with coalmines in them. Coalmines were also mentioned in Gelsmoor and the Outwoods.

The manor prospered under Sir Henry's son, Sir Thomas Beaumont, who was lord of the manor of Coleorton from 1607 to 1625. The Beaumont family had been intricately involved with the coal industry in Leicestershire and the neighbouring counties of Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire, with the coal mines in Coleorton being a significant proportion of the coal mined in the area. John Nichols History of Leicestershire refers to Sir Thomas Beaumont inhabiting a "beautiful and stately mansion house", which would have been expected of one who was a Member of Parliament for Leicestershire, High Sheriff of Leicestershire, and in 1620 had been created Viscount Beaumont of Swords in the Irish peerage. It is reasonable to assume that Sir Thomas would have inherited a substantial property.

When Sir Thomas died in 1625, the title and manor passed to his son, Sir Sapcote Beaumont who was loyal to King Charles I. It is reported that during the Civil Wars, Sir Sapcote fortified the manor house at Coleorton and it was established as a Royalist garrison. Unfortunately for Sir Sapcote, the manor house was taken by the Parliamentary forces in 1644 and utilised by the Earl of Stamford and Lord Grey of Groby as the Parliamentary Headquarters for the area. There were frequent skirmishes between the Parliamentary forces at Coleorton and the Royalist forces at Ashby Castle, some two miles away. Heavy ordnance was held at Coleorton and was primarily used to fire cannon balls at Ashby Castle. It is said that when the Cromwellian armourers ran out of ammunition they stripped the lead from St. Mary's church roof to make cannon-balls. Following the Kings successful taking of Leicester, he commanded Lord Loughborough (Henry Hastings), to burn down Coleorton Hall as retribution for the considerable harassment the garrison had inflicted against Ashby Castle. This command must have been only half heartedly carried out as the manor house was later reoccupied by the Parliamentary forces after they retook Leicester in 1645.

In 1658, Sir Thomas Beaumont succeeded his father, and it appears that at this point in time he was residing in Whitwick, it would therefore seem likely that the manor house at Coleorton was not used by the Beaumonts following the Civil Wars; almost certainly as a result of the damage the Civil Wars had inflicted. However, when Sir Thomas Beaumont died in 1702 he was living in Coleorton, so it is reasonable to assume that he had either rebuilt, or repaired, the manor house at Coleorton. There are no records of the house Sir Thomas was residing in at his death, but pictures of what was left of it nearly one hundred years later indicate that it was on a scale of the house that was destroyed during the Civil Wars.

The Leicestershire historian John Nichols records at the end of the 18th century that the Beaumont family had occupied the estate at Coleorton since 1531 (not called Coleorton at that time), but that Viscount Sir Thomas was the last Beaumont to reside in Coleorton. He had died without issue in 1702 and the estate passed to a distant cousin, Sir George Beaumont, the 4th Baronet of Stoughton, Leicestershire. The estate passed from him to his brother, the Reverend Sir Lewis Beaumont, the 5th Baronet, and then in 1738 to his cousin Sir George Beaumont of Dunmow, Essex, the 6th Baronet of Stoughton, and all within the space of 36 years. The new lords of the manor did not reside in Coleorton, but leased the estate and manor house to various tenants, apparently taking little interest in their Coleorton heritage for approximately 100 years. Under the successive tenants, the old house deteriorated and was clearly of little significance at the end of the 18th century. Nichols refers to the old house as "*there is still remaining a stone turret of the old building at the east corner of the present house, which gives no idea of former magnificence, but the rest, though strong and in stone, is more plain and modern*". It is likely that

“the stone turret of the old building” refers to the fortifications that were added by Sir Sapcote Beaumont, and it appears that Sir Thomas Beaumont had rebuilt the house in stone.

So, we have seen that the existing manor-house on the site at the time of Sir George Howland Beaumont’s return to Coleorton had been neglected, as no Beaumont had lived in it since the death of the 3rd Viscount, Sir Thomas Beaumont of Coleorton in 1702. The estate had therefore been left in the hands of agents to manage. The manor-house was thought to have been re-built by Sir Thomas Beaumont 3rd Viscount of Swords between 1683 and 1702, and he was living in it when he died. The present hall is at least the third that has stood on the high ground alongside St. Mary’s Church, looking across the valley in which lies Coleorton village, over to the rugged grandeur of Charnwood Forest.

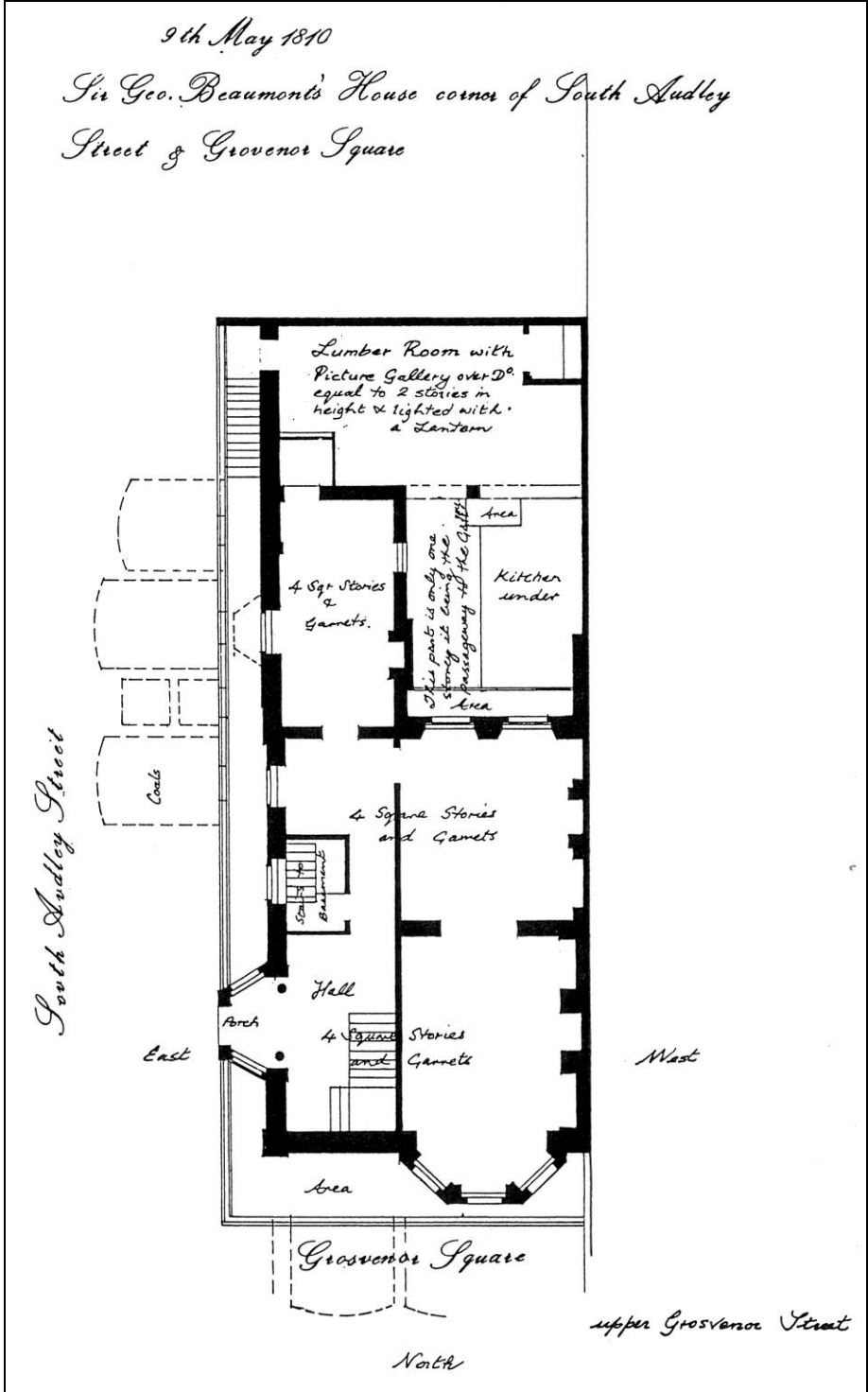
Sir George Beaumont, 6th Baronet, had strengthened his ties to his Dunmow, Essex roots, by marrying into a respected established local family, the Howlands of Stonehall. His bride Rachel was the youngest of the eight children of Mr. Charles Howland of Stonehall. Two years after their marriage, Rachel presented her husband with an heir, who took his father’s name and that of her own family, namely Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet. His father Sir George died in 1762, leaving behind his nine year old son as heir.

Beaumont was educated at Eton College, which he entered at the young age of eleven where his talent for painting was recognized, and he was tutored in the art of drawing and painting by the landscape painter Alexander Cozens. At New College, Oxford he matriculated on May 4th 1772. He was a member of the “Malchair Circuit” at Oxford and played in Oldfield Bowles amateur theatre at North Aston.

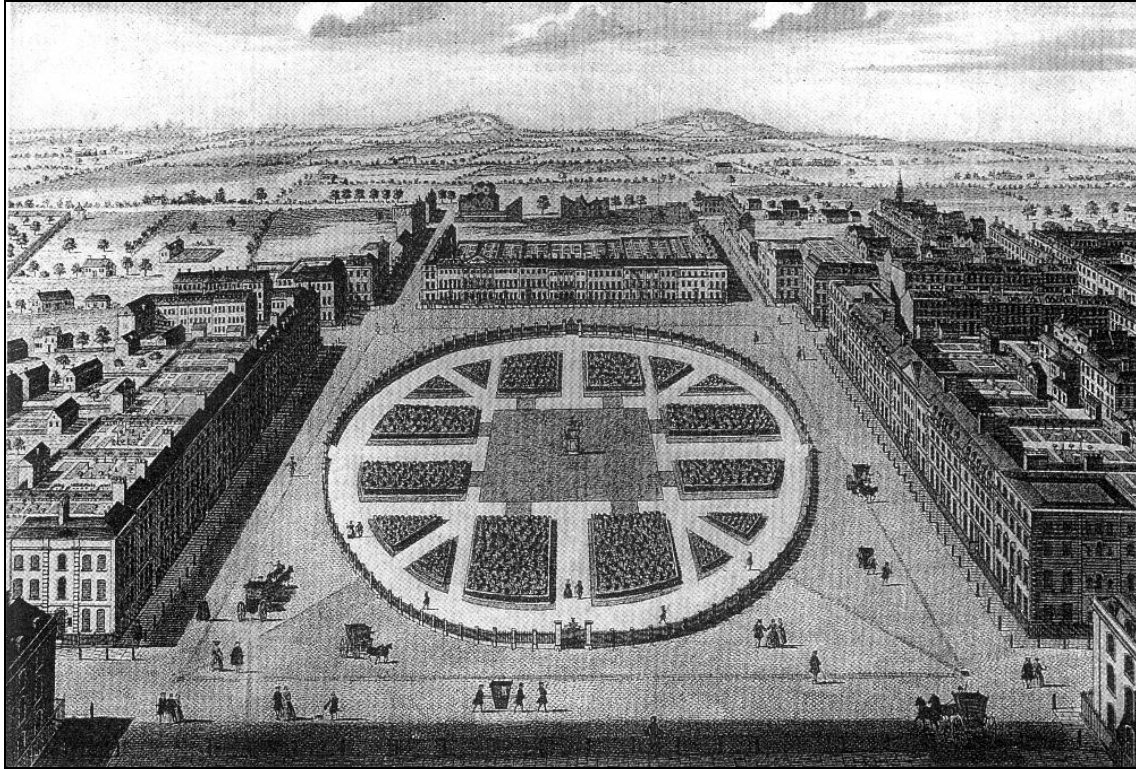
Sir George married Margaret Willes (1756-1829) of Astrop Manor in 1778, whom he had met at a theatrical production at North Aston. She was the daughter and heiress of John Willes of Astrop M.P. By this time, Sir George had developed into a well known and respected amateur landscape painter, resulting in him belatedly going on the “Grand Tour” in 1781 for three years, together with his wife and fellow artist and friend Thomas Hearne. The Grand Tour was seen as something which properly completed a gentleman’s education.

In 1785, Lady Margaret had inherited the lease of 34 Grosvenor Square, which provided the Beaumont’s with an alternative to the more mundane property of Dunmow and enabled them to develop a more diverse social circle of talented and influential friends. A picture gallery was added to the house in 1792 to accommodate their growing art collection, and following some criticism of his earlier works, such as a “View of Keswick”, 1799, he became a regular exhibitor at the Royal Academy up till 1825. He eventually became accepted as the leading amateur painter of the day.

The “National Gallery”, founded in 1826, owes its foundations to the 7th Baronet, and as he was not a rich man by any means, his collection of paintings, many of which were given to the Nation is even more impressive.



Sir George and Lady Margaret's London House which shows the picture gallery added in 1792

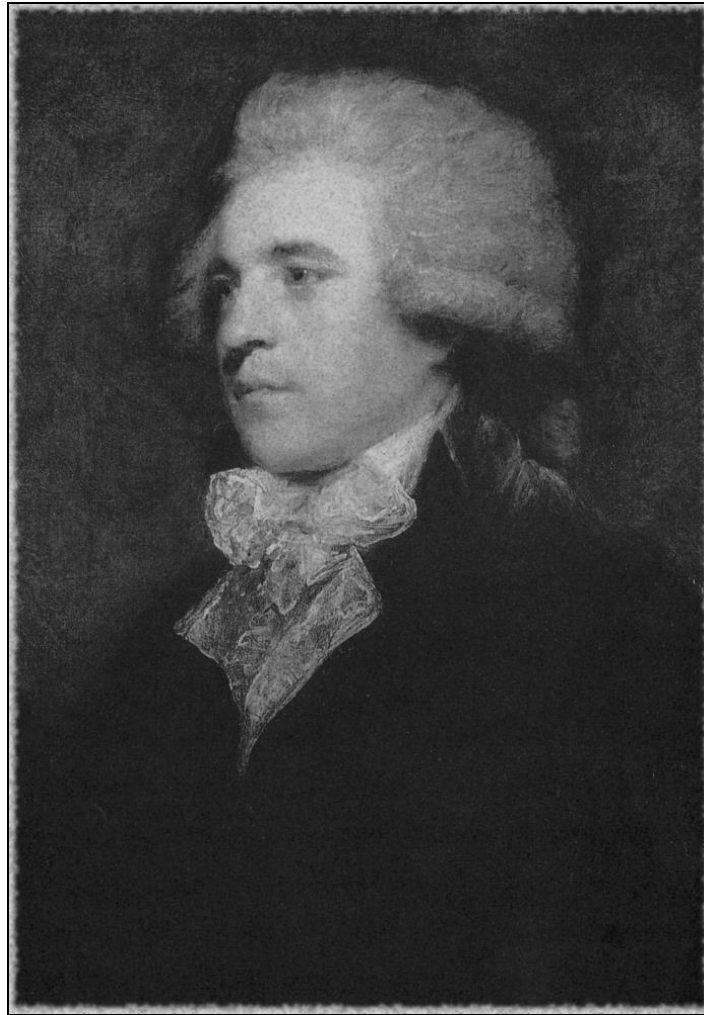


**An engraving by Sutton Nichols c.1731. of Grovenor Square.
The Beaumont's house is shown in the bottom LH corner**

We should not underestimate the role Lady Margaret played in the 7th Baronet's life, as she too had her influence on contemporary England as well as being his wife and helpmate. Henry Crabb Robinson, a diarist of her day, wrote of her – “*She is a gentlewoman of great sweetness and dignity. I should think among the most interesting persons in the country*”. It is on record that she was described by Mary Hartley to William Gilpin (landscape painter) as “*a young woman with some genius and a prodigious eagerness for knowledge and information*” who “*was always learning something*” but “*not neglect of her toilet*” (general body care).



Lady Margaret Beaumont by Joshua Reynolds 1780



**Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet,
by Joshua Reynolds 1778**

In 1790, Sir George was elected to Parliament as a Tory member representing Bere Alston in Devon, but by 1796 he had left Parliament, in order to pursue his love of poetry and fine arts.

In the late 1700's, Sir George still thought of himself as the squire of Dunmow, more than of Coleorton, however, about this time, several things combined to turn his thoughts towards his Leicestershire property. To begin with, he had just discovered the justice of his earlier suspicions about his agent at Coleorton. The Boulbbees had lived comfortably for many years on the profits of their dishonest stewardship, residing in his master's house and working his master's coal mines. In 1798, Sir George brought a successful Chancery lawsuit against the son, Joseph Boulbbe junior, and successor of his late steward Joseph Boulbbe senior, who had been systematically swindling him during his management of Beaumont's coal mines in Coleorton and the locality, which were leased from Sir George. The whole matter was not finally settled until 1805 and as part of the settlement Sir George received compensation of £15,000.

THE BOULTBEES AND THE CHANCERY LAWSUIT BROUGHT AGAINST THE FATHER AND SON BY THE 7TH BARONET

The most outstanding colliery owner and manager in the area after 1760 was undoubtedly Joseph Boulton of Coleorton, whose family had been closely associated with the Beaumont's of Coleorton since the early years of the century. One branch of the family continued to occupy Stordon Grange between Osgathorpe and Griffydham, and a history of Stordon Grange is included on the author's website.

In 1757, Joseph Boulton succeeded Gervase Yarwood as **Sir George Beaumont's** Steward / Land Agent, and the following is only a synopsis of their rather unfortunate relationship:-

Both Joseph Boulton Snr. and Jnr. referred to below, accumulated a fortune leasing mines from the Beaumont's. They were named after Joseph Boulton of Griffydham (grandfather and great grandfather respectively). He accumulated a large fortune, and bequeathed a good estate to each of his sons.

Joseph Boulton's connection with the Beaumont family and the old Coleorton Hall, is a story whose ramifications continued long after his death, indeed into the next century and also including his only son Joseph. It begins in 1757 when Joseph Senior was appointed as land agent to the Beaumont family estate in Leicestershire by Sir George Beaumont, 6th Baronet. In 1760, Joseph was granted a 21 year lease of a Beaumont colliery (**Paddock Colliery – see following article**), farm and woods.

This lease, a large parchment document, has survived in the Boulton family possession. In the same year, he leased Coleorton Hall from Sir George, despite it not being occupied since 1702, and not in a state of good repair. In 1762, Sir George died, leaving as heir, his only surviving son Sir George Howland Beaumont (7th Baronet of Stoughton), then aged nine, who lived with his mother at their other family home at Dunmow in Essex.

The former lessee of the colliery had neglected it, the pit shaft was decayed and the mine water-logged. Joseph installed a Newcomen engine to pump out the water, and carried out other work also at his own expense (**The Newcomen atmospheric steam engine, which had been developed in 1705, helped to revolutionise the mining industry overnight, and provided an immediate solution to drainage and ventilation problems**). Joseph Boulton's rent was fixed at £140 per year with output set at 10,000 loads of coal annually. He also took over a second Beaumont colliery at £50 per year rent, but this colliery was said to be worth £1,000 a year. It was known as the "Newbold Field Colliery".

The local mines were, however, producing too much coal for the available market. Joseph leased one from Earl Ferrers, and in effect, closed it down, supplying the market with approximately 13,400 loads of coal annually altogether (about 33,600 tons). His mining operations required capital to run them, and in 1771 he was loaned £10,000 by Sir Charles Sedley, who had initially borrowed it from Drummond's Bank.

By 1777, Sir Charles had repaid the Bank, so we must assume that Joseph had repaid him. Joseph's financial transactions are quite astonishing, even today. In 1776, Thomas Noel, 2nd Lord Wentworth, raised a loan of £15,000 from Joseph and a further £5,000 a year later. In contemporary terms, these were enormous sums.

By 1782 or 1783, Boulton, without authority, removed the Newcomen engine from the colliery described above, and erected an engine in "Coleorton Field" at some distance from the former colliery, and began to work this colliery as well as the other one.

Sir George Beaumont was travelling abroad at the time the 21 year lease was due for renewal on Paddock Colliery and didn't return till 1784. Being informed of Boulton's application to renew the lease, and also learning of Boulton's establishment of a new colliery on Coleorton Field refused the application.

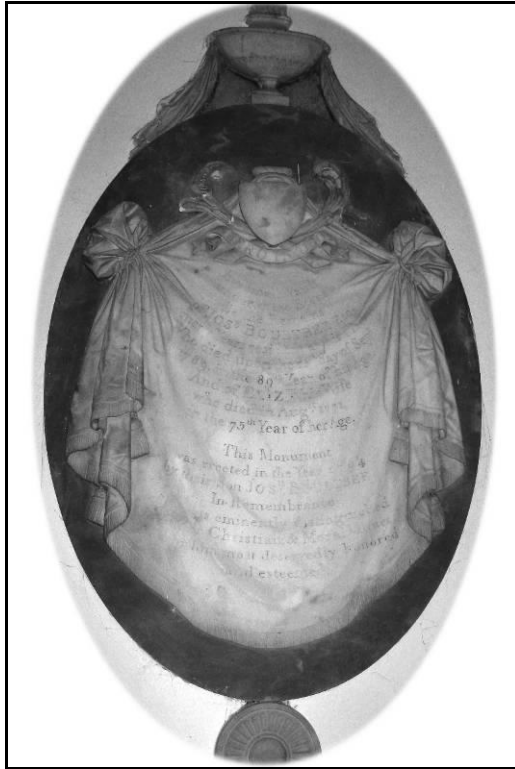
By 1784, the Beaumont lease of the mines, etc., had been renewed, though after prolonged negotiations with the Beaumont family lawyer regarding the large difference between the permitted number of coal loads to be extracted and the actual number. The difference was attributed by Joseph to the difficulty of separating extractions from adjoining Beaumont and Boulton coal seams. In 1789, Joseph Senior died, and his only son Joseph took over the Stewardship, having been associated with his father in the management of the estate and collieries. We shall now deal with Joseph the younger's career out of its proper sequence, and only here in so far as it relates to the continuation of the Beaumont connection.

Matters went on as before until 1791 when Sir George, whose interests were primarily artistic and political, visited his Leicestershire estate, probably for the first time. The reason was, that a new canal nearby, facilitating new markets for his coal, would be profitable to him. The state of the Hall must have been a shock for Sir George as it was in ruins, little was left of its park, and the whole estate was in a distressing condition. Subsequent inspections by a surveyor he employed, revealed further irregularities; timber had been sold off from the Beaumont woods, and brick making had used clay from deposits on the estate.

Sir George was then faced with leaving things as they were which provided him with an income of £2,000 per annum, or resorting to law for compensation. In 1793, Joseph was summoned from Bath to give account of his stewardship. However, it was not until 1797 that he was dismissed, and in the following year, legal proceedings for compensation were started by Sir George. The case finally came up in July, 1800, and Joseph was ordered to pay £20,000 as compensation for underpayments. This was not forthcoming, and the case came up again in the Court of Chancery in August, 1802. Joseph appealed unsuccessfully against that part of the verdict being back dated to his father's time, though he was allowed to hand over one of his collieries as part payment. The original compensation was now reduced to some £15,000.

The whole matter was not finally settled until 1805, the year before Joseph's death, when the Lord Chancellor, Lord Eldon, refused him increased wages or legal costs, though he allowed Sir George interest on under payments only from 1798. With reference to wages, part of Joseph's defense was that his salary as steward was only £20 a year, the same as that his father had received for thirty years! These are the facts of this extraordinary story.

In the judicial reviews of Beaumont v Boulton, the following information is given which the writer felt was of interest - Joseph Boulton Jnr. (defendant) stated, that soon after the commencement of the lease, an estate called "Rotten Row", and the Manor of Thringstone, which was adjoining the Plaintiff's (Sir George Beaumont's) estate at that time, was held forth for sale. That estate was supposed to contain valuable mines of coal, which might at a future time, be worked in competition with the Plaintiff's estate. The price demanded was £2,000, though it produced a rent of no more than £10 per annum. The defendant's father (Joseph Boulton Snr.) proposed, that it should be purchased for the Plaintiff's benefit, but that proposal being refused, the defendant's father in 1764, purchased it for his own use for £1,600 from Mr. Busby. He later stated that Rotten Row and the Manor of Thringstone, ought undoubtedly to have been Sir George Beaumont's purchase, and not mine, as his deep coal adjoining to it, can never be got to advantage without it. The area known as "Rotten Row", was at that time part of the parish of Thringstone, but in 1834 became part of the parish of Coleorton.



**Joseph Boulton Snr., Memorial
in St. Mary's Church, Coleorton**

*SPERO IN DEO
In a small Vault
under these Steps
lie the Remains
of JOS^H BOULTBEE Esq^r
many Years resident of this Place.
Who died upon the 25th day of Sep^r
1789. in the 89th Year of his Age.
And of ELIZTH his Wife
who died in Augst 1771.
in the 75th Year of her Age.
This Monument
was erected in the Year 1794
by their Son JOS^H BOULTBEE
In Remembrance
of Parents eminently distinguished
by their Christian & Moral Virtues
and by him most deservedly Honoured
and esteemed.*

Transcript of the Memorial

Joseph Boulton Sn'r married Elizabeth Ward in 1735 at St. Peters, Derby. Elizabeth died in 1771 and Joseph died in 1789 at the age of 88.

ROTTEN ROW

“Rotten Row” and the “Manor of Thringstone”, was purchased by Joseph Boulton Sn'r of Coleorton in 1764 for £1,600 from a Mr. Busby. See the previous article on the Boulton's.

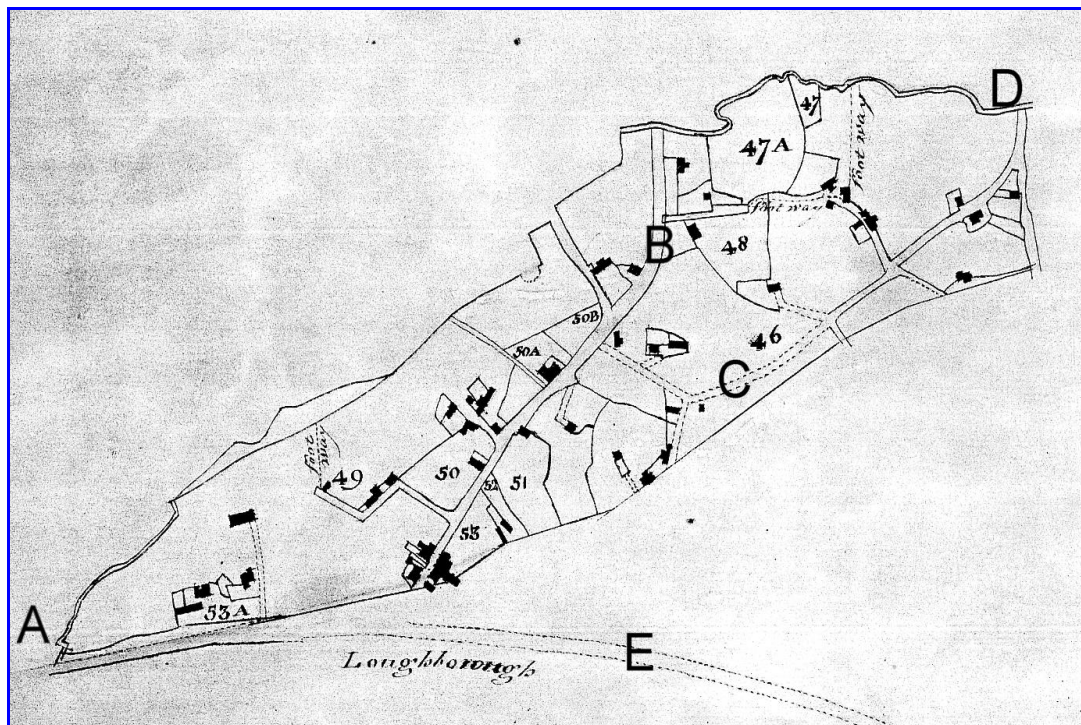
The area of “Rotten Row” was an island of land within Coleorton but was part of Thringstone Parish till 1884, when it then became part of Coleorton Parish.

The area covered by “Rotten Row” is shown on the map below, which is an extract from an enclosure map dated 1807 and has been annotated by the author in order to give the reader an understanding of how it relates to present geography in the area.

KEY

A = Coleorton Fish Pond, **B** = Lower Moor Road, **C** = Stoney Lane, **D** = The Woolrooms, **E** = Loughborough Road.

Rotten Row was a busy area with Pubs, Shops, a Chapel and some light industries like Whetstone / Oil Stone making, (Spar) Bauble manufacturing and Hat making.



FIRST DETAILS OF THE INTENDED MOVE TO COLEORTON BY SIR GEORGE & LADY MARGARET

Leicester Journal – July 9th 1802

A few days ago, Sir George Beaumont and his Lady visited Coleorton after an absence of eleven years, on which occasion an entertainment was ordered for the poor workmen of every description – Mr. Bailey, the agent (*colliery*) and eight landlords provided the bountiful repast, which consisted of 46 large plum puddings, and one plain one – three feet long and 18 inches wide, cooked under a fat sheep roasted whole by which were added, a hundredweight of beef, and upwards of 350 gallons of ale. The day concluded with much conviviality, and to the credit of the party, with the greatest decorum and propriety.

This visit to Coleorton by Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet and his wife Lady Margaret was probably the first time the majority of his tenants learned that it was the intention of Sir George and Lady Margaret to move to Coleorton. What follows gives an insight into how the present Coleorton Hall came to be built and replaced the existing manor house on the same site which resulted in the re-establishment of the Beaumonts at Coleorton for another 125 years.

**THE COLEORTON MANOR HOUSE TWENTY FIVE YEARS PRIOR
TO BEING REBUILT AS COLEORTON HALL**



**Pen and grey wash drawing of Coleorton Manor House by
Sir G.H. Beaumont, 7th Baronet & dated c.1782**



**A water colour of the Manor house by Sir G. H. Beaumont
possibly painted around the same time as the drawing above.**

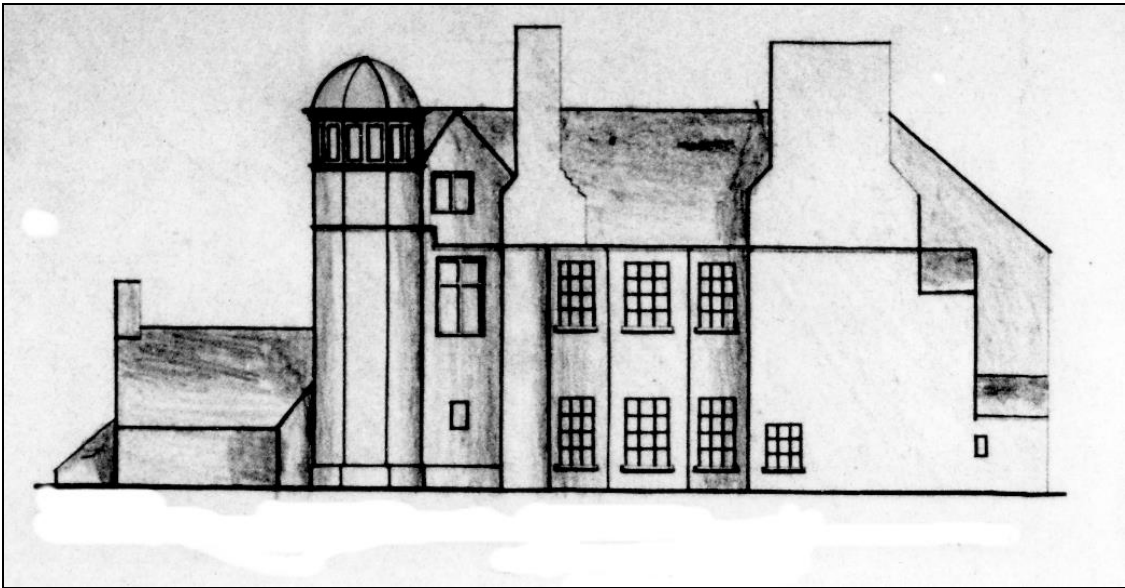
The preceding drawings of the west facing front of the manor house by Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet, paints a great picture of what it was like in 1782. It is presumed that when Sir George was visiting Coleorton to do these various pieces of artwork, prior to the new "Hall Farm" being built, he stayed at "The Bell Inn", which was thought to be a "staging post" on the Ashby-de-la-Zouch to Loughborough turnpike half a mile from the hall and on the west side of Coleorton fishpond. This was owned by him and demolished about 1830. **See "A History of the Bell Inn, Coleorton" on the author's website.**

The pen and grey wash drawing below by Sir George, includes additional farm buildings to the north west of the hall. The reader should note the steps on the outside of the farm out-buildings next to the tree on the left hand side of the picture. These steps actually went up to the grainary, and are defined on the 1803 plan by John Mathews shown later, and marked **S** and **T**. The steps are quite an important feature, as they help to prove the accuracy of both the drawing and the plan. Subsequent to Sir George's 1795 drawing, and prior to 1803, a large enclosed walled service and farm courtyard adjacent to and west of the hall including the kitchen garden, was developed. This also included a row of farm buildings, adjacent to, and north of St. Mary's Church, in addition to those shown in Sir George's drawing. An extract from the 1802 survey plan is shown later with a key appended defining the various buildings. One can assume therefore, that the Beaumonts' had authorized and financed these additions to the original manor house after 1782, possibly in preparation for their return to Coleorton with the expectations that a new extended hall would be built on the same site.

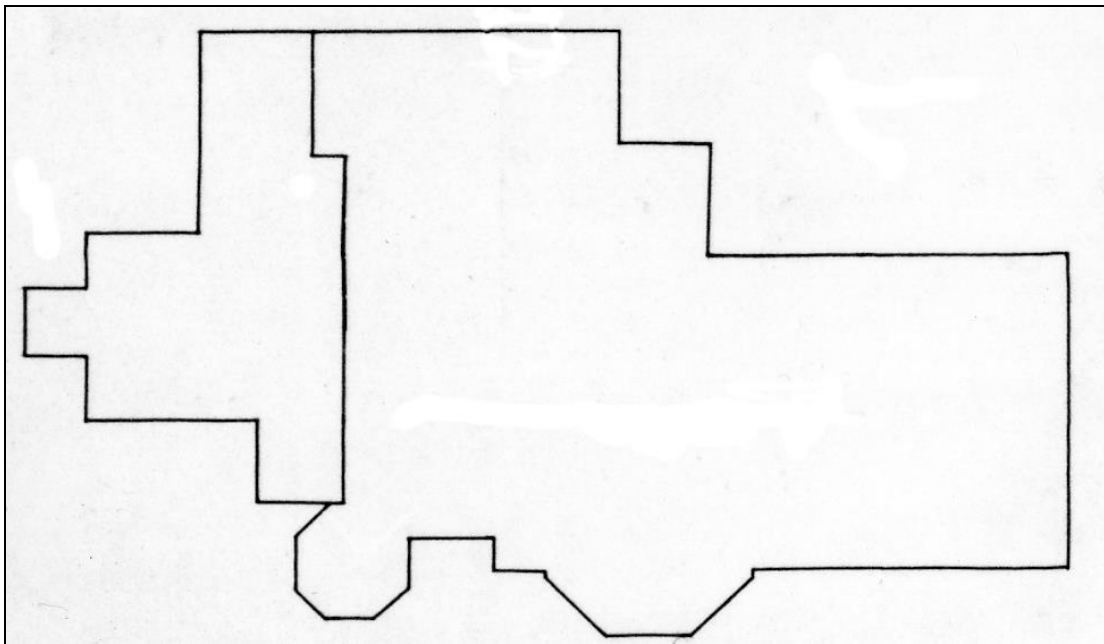


**A pen and grey wash drawing by Sir G. H. Beaumont , 7th Bart.
Estimated date 1795 – west elevation.**

These views of the manor house are taken from plans drawn by John Mathews, a surveyor of Ashby de la Zouch, for Sir George in January 1803. These portray the manor house exactly as it was at that time, and as shown in the preceding painting and drawing by Sir George.



West Facing Front



West Facing Front

**Overall length = Approx 90 feet (27 m)
Overall Depth = Approx 52 feet (16m)**

A letter from John Hodgkinson (Sir George's land agent at the time) sent from Coleorton to George Dance, the eventual architect of the new Coleorton Hall, contained plans drawn by John Mathews of Ashby providing a detailed picture of the layout were included. The letter reads as follows:-

Dear Sir,

Herewith you receive the plan of the premises at Coleorton, and as the east wall of the kitchen is very bad I expect you will be inclined to take that room down and to make the south and east fronts anew.

Here is a stone which will work to anything at an easy expense as you will see by the annexed prices.

I have ordered the "Back Bank" to be opened from which the stone of the church was got – the bricks you have seen, but I think you had better, if you can make it convenient, to see the whole again, if Sir George determines to use it.

I am,

Yr most obt servant

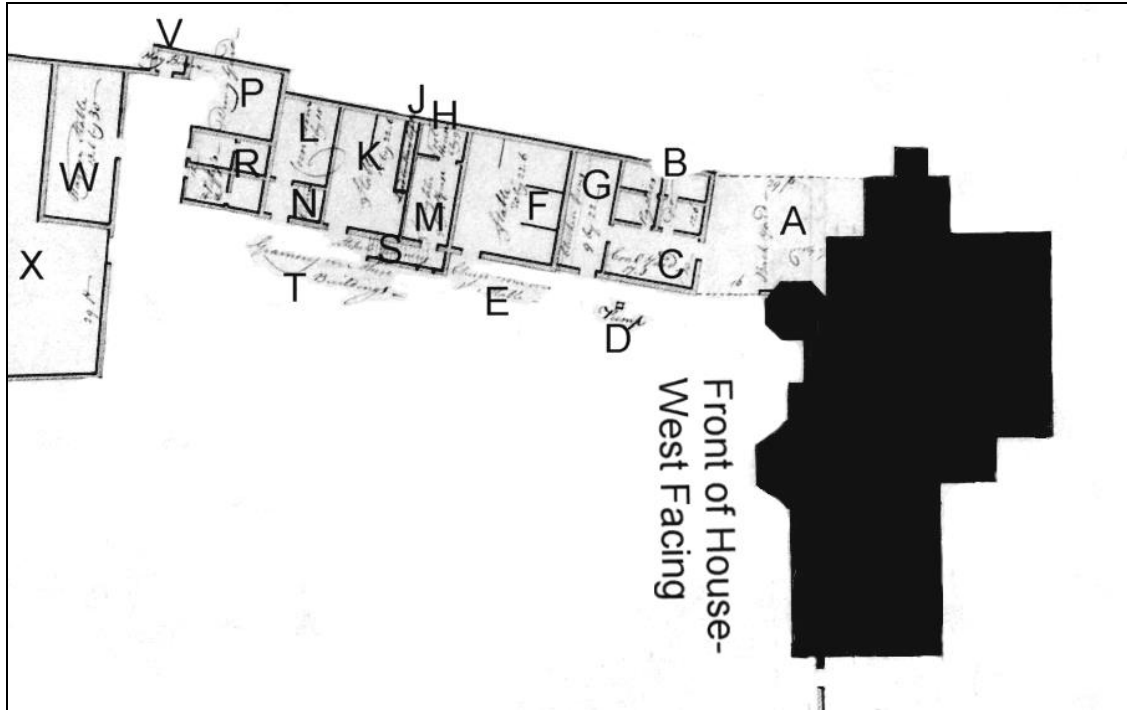
J. Hodgkinson

This house, which was of course much smaller than the current Coleorton Hall included the following rooms:-

A kitchen in the south west corner, a bow parlour in the centre of the west front and a series of utility rooms including a back parlour on the east front. The main bed chambers were on the first floor and the servant's quarters on the second floor. The stone turret apparently housed a bathroom. There was also a back kitchen and a dairy annexed on the north front, but this was a single storey part of the house.

The outbuildings indicate that the property was a self contained unit, with a courtyard surrounded by poultry houses, barns – one which had a dovecote over – and cow sheds on the church side, with stable, pig sties and a slaughter house on the orchard side, which was referred to as "The Greenacres" side. Barns for the farm wagons, the rick yard and wash pit.

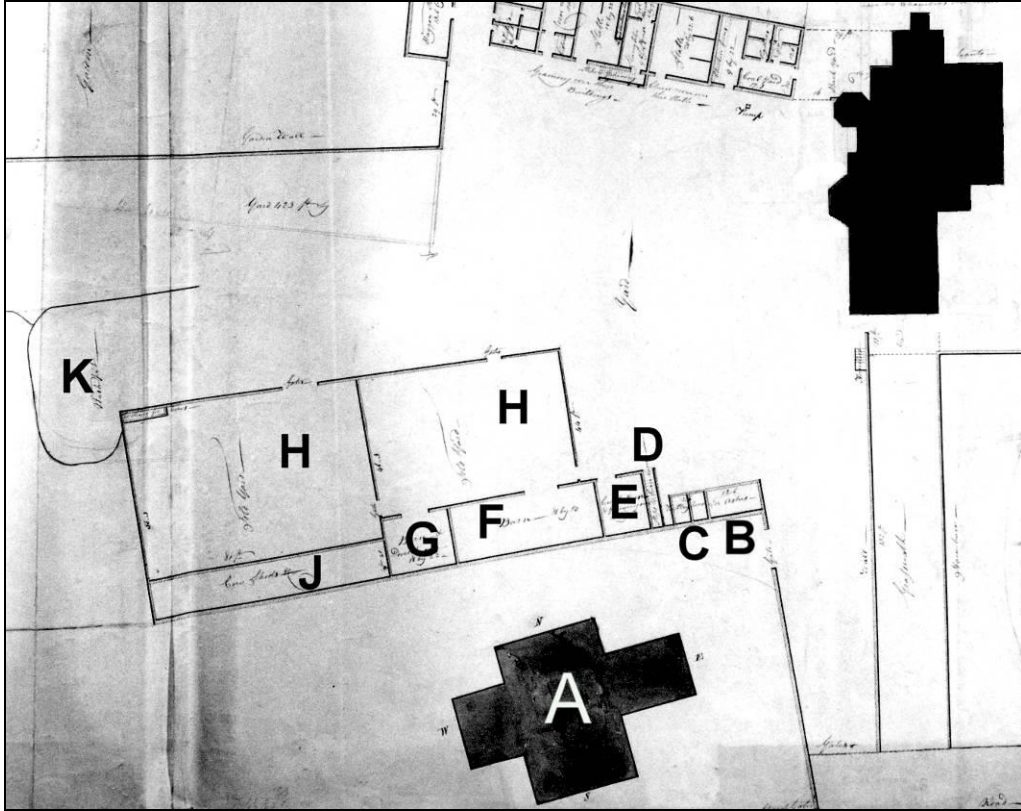
Gardens and hot house completed the layout on the west side. The orchard was external and to the north of the farm buildings shown on the following plan.



The above plan is based on the survey plans drawn by John Mathews in December 1802 and shows the out-buildings adjacent to the northern end of the house as it was then. The steps to the grainery marked **S** can clearly be related to the earlier drawing by Sir George Beaumont.

Key

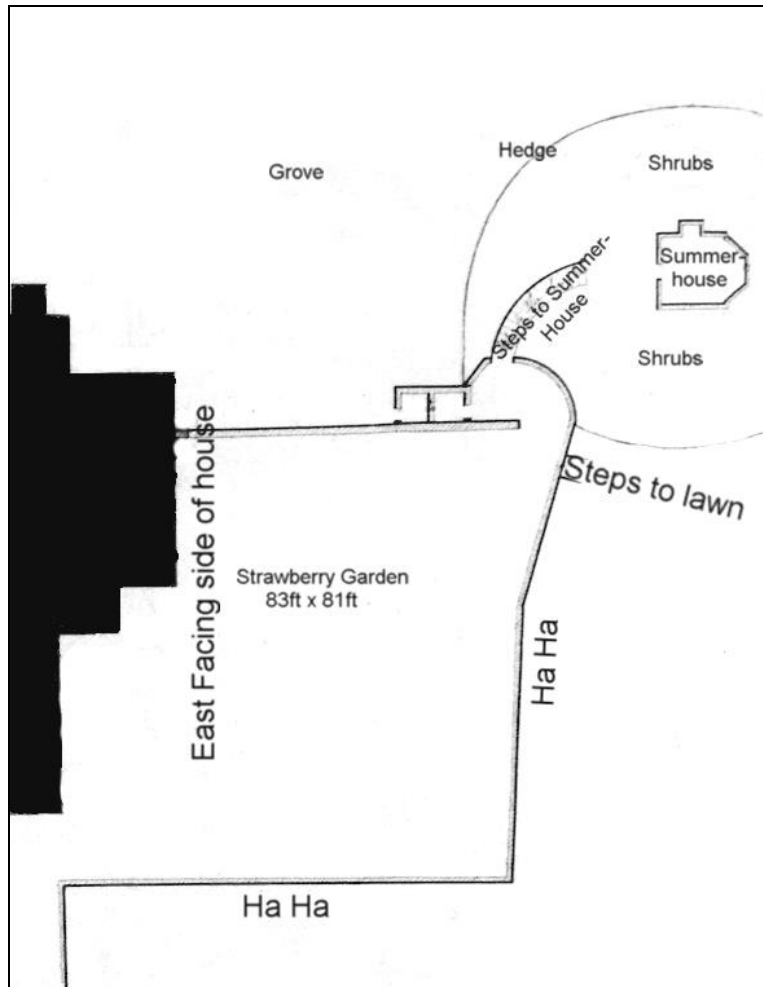
A	Back Yard	S	Steps to Grainery
B	Pigsties	T	Grainery over these buildings
C	Coal Yard	V	Hay Barn
D	Pump	W	Wagon Stable
E	Cheese Room over stables		
X	Kitchen Garden (this was the location of the first Kitchen Garden)		
F	Stables		
G	Chicken Pens		
H	Cool Room		
J	? Hay Loft		
K	Stable		
L	Corn Room		
M	Slaughter House		
N	Cistern		
P	Dung Yard		
R	Pigsties		



The above is based on the plan drawn by John Mathews in 1802/3. It shows the rest of the courtyard and the farm out-buildings adjacent to St. Mary's Church.

Key

- A** St. Mary's Church
- B** Building for ashes
- C** Hay house
- D** Steps to barn rooms
- E** Coach House and grainery
- F** Barn – 18 feet x 50 feet
- G** Barn with dovecote over
- H** Fold yards
- J** Cow sheds
- K** Wash pit



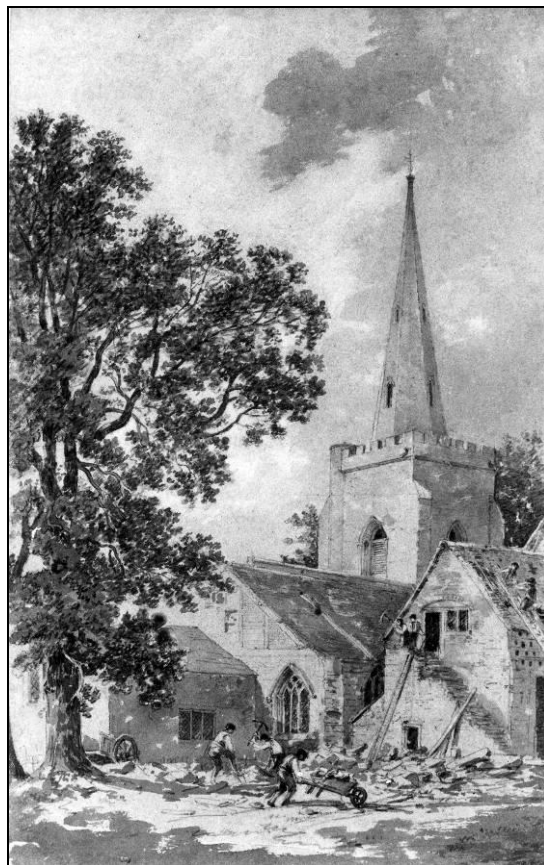
Based again on the 1802 survey plans by John Mathews, the above shows the original strawberry garden on the east side of the existing property which was surrounded by a Ha-Ha on the south and east sides. To the north east was a raised summer house, surrounded by a hedge and shrubs and reached via steps. It over-looked a lawned area.

The following pictures of St. Mary's Church have been included in order to try and provide an added dimension to the relationship between the farm buildings next to the church on John Mathew's 1802 plan. What is clear from the 1794 engraving below, and Sir George's 1812 painting which follows on, is that the church was significantly structurally altered between these dates. Later changes were carried out in 1821 when the parish records show that the spire had been rebuilt and the tower repaired. In 1851 the church was thoroughly restored when the north aisle was also extended. On John Mathews 1802 plan, the farm buildings are shown further away from the church than is shown in Sir George Howland Beaumont's 1812 drawing, where they are right up to the church. The author is of the view that the church drawn in by John Mathews is either not a true representation and it had been extended closer to the farm buildings, or the perspective of the 1812 drawing is deceiving. The steps to the barn room marked D on the John Mathews plan, also appear to be the steps shown on Sir George's 1812 painting, and the buildings for the hay house and the ashes house marked B and C had probably already been knocked down.

In order to truly establish the relationship between the farm buildings and the church and even the extent of the whole enclosed courtyard, some archaeological work would need to be carried out.



An engraving of St. Mary's Church from the south east, by S. Shaw Feb 1794 which shows what is thought to be farm buildings to the north of the church

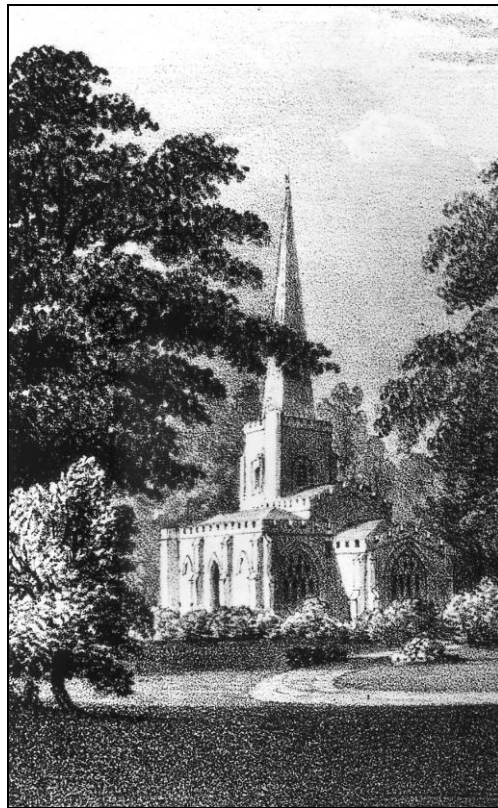


North east elevation

This pen and grey wash drawing by Sir G. H. Beaumont 7th Baronet and dated 1812 shows the demolishing of farm buildings adjacent to the church. The church roof also appears to be under repair. In 1821, the parish records show that the spire had been rebuilt and the tower repaired.



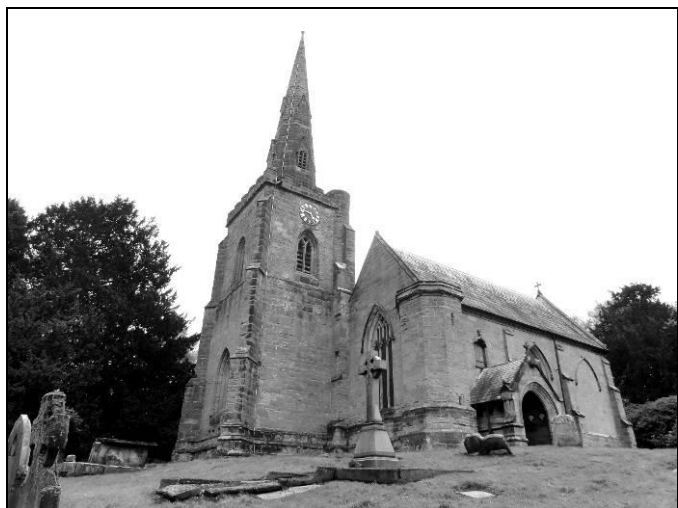
A pencil and grey wash drawing of St. Mary's Church by H.W. Burgess. Thought to be c.1852
In 1852, two new windows were put in the west side of the church for the first anniversary of the 9th Baronet's wedding and the baptism of his son and heir (**Leicester Mercury – June 7th 1851**). This appears to have been the start of the complete restoration of the church, when the north aisle was also extended.



An engraving of St. Mary's church thought to have been done some time after the church had been completely restored in 1855.



Northern (top) and southern elevations of St. Mary's Church in 2015.



South west elevation - 2015

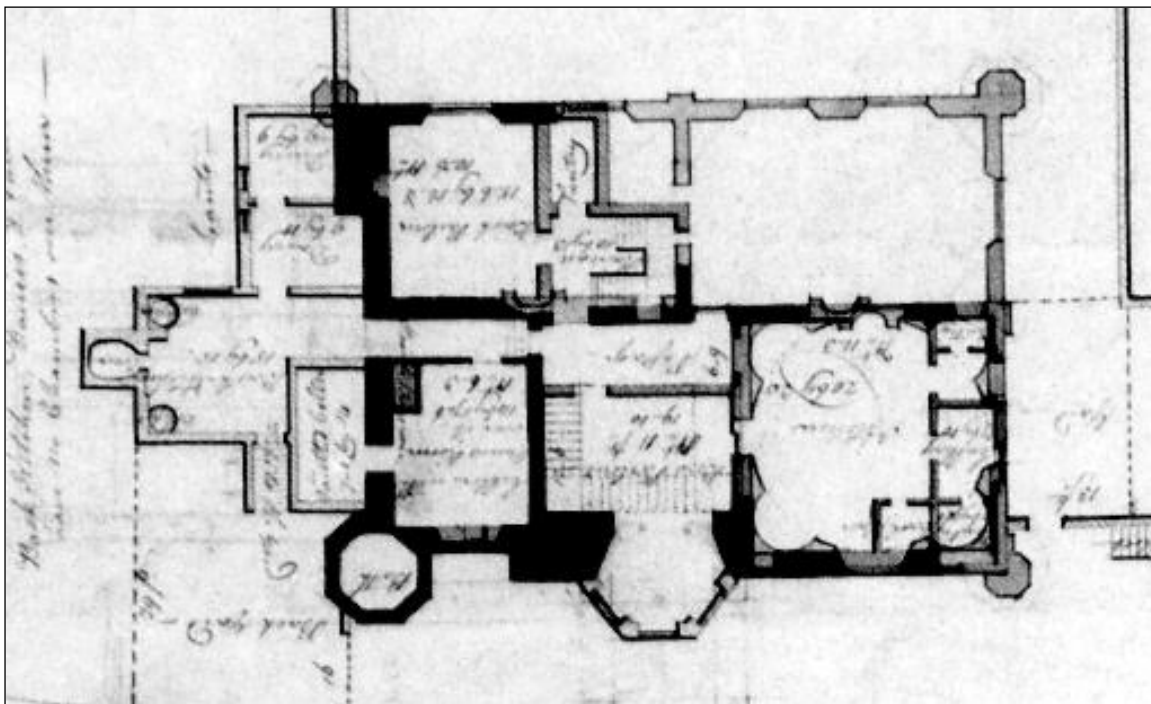
THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND BUILDING OF THE NEW COLEORTON HALL

The author has attempted to simplify the extremely complex background history to the building of the new Coleorton Hall in an attempt to make it more understandable and interesting to the general reader.

George Dance the Younger (1st April 1741- 14th January 1825), was the fifth and youngest son of the architect George Dance the Elder. He had known Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet, for twenty years or so and was eventually, after much conjecture with numerous other advisers including Uvedale Price, invited to design a new house for Sir George and Lady Margaret in the summer of 1802 when he was sixty-one, which was to be situated on the same site as the old one.

Described by C. R. Cockerell as "*the most complete poet-architect of his day*", George Dance the Younger stands out as one of the pioneers of his profession. John Soane, his pupil and friend, saw him as "*one of the most accomplished architects of the English school*" and praised "*the great fertility of invention*" that infused his work (from *Architecture Unshackled: George Dance the Younger 1741-1825.....an exhibition at John Soane's Museum*).

At first, it was intended to incorporate the old house into the new Coleorton Hall, but this didn't materialise. An old friend of Sir George's of some twenty years, Uvedale Price, was invited to advise on the design of the new house. According to Joseph Farington's Diary, 11th July 1802, Dance had already been consulted as to the possibilities of restoring the old house or building a new one to the tune of £8,000. Dance originally proposed to incorporate the old walls of the existing manor house and the first designs were prepared in early 1803.



West facing front of house

The preceding plan, based on the John Mathews survey plan of the existing manor house, shows the modifications to the original house proposed by George Dance Esq, R.A., in 1803, at the time when it was originally intended to incorporate the old house in the new design. The major structural change proposed, was the addition of the room in the top right hand corner, to make a rectangular building. Dance appears to have just over-layed his design on the original Mathews plan. Various people such as Uvedale Price, William Mitford, Farington, Wordsworth, Coleridge etc., etc., were involved in an advisory capacity. There was also a recommendation from Lord Mulgrave for the employment of another architect, William Atkinson. Beaumont considered all options and clearly found it difficult to make a choice. By June 1804, he had almost decided on the addition of rooms to the old house, but a month later changed his mind, much to the consternation of Uvedale Price who wanted him to retain it. This developed over a period of time into quite a complex situation, such that at one point, George Dance confided in Farington on July 19th 1804 – “*That he would rejoice to give £200 to have nothing more to do with it*”.

In August, Dance was once again summoned to Coleorton where he learned that a decision had been reached for a new house to be built on the site of the old one, and before Dance returned to his office, the foundation stone had been laid for the new “Coleorton Hall”. George Dance Esq, R.A. remained as the architect, eventually designing a two storey mansion on Gothic lines.

There is a book, entitled -“Uvedale Price (1747 -1829) Decoding the Picturesque” by C. Watkins & Ben Cowell which was first published in 2012. In chapter 5, sub-heading “*Picturesque Design – Aspects of Coleorton*”, the complexities in arriving at an acceptable design is covered extremely well. If the readers wish to learn more of the complex situation leading up to the final decision on the design of the new hall, then the author recommends that it would be advisable to refer directly to this book.

The first stone of the new house was laid on the 21st day of August 1804 (see the following photograph of the George Dance memorial stone).The house was completed in 1807, and first inhabited by Sir George and Lady Margaret in August 1808. Part of the reputed £100,000 legacy left to Sir George by his uncle George Howland of Stonehall, was used for the re-building. George Dance surmised that they spent some £15,000 on the re-build with a further £5,000 on the furniture.

The following synopsis of the design of Coleorton Hall is taken from Dorothy Strouds book “George Dance Architect 1741-1825”, and the author suggests that the reader makes reference to this book if further information is required .**This is the copyright of the author:-**

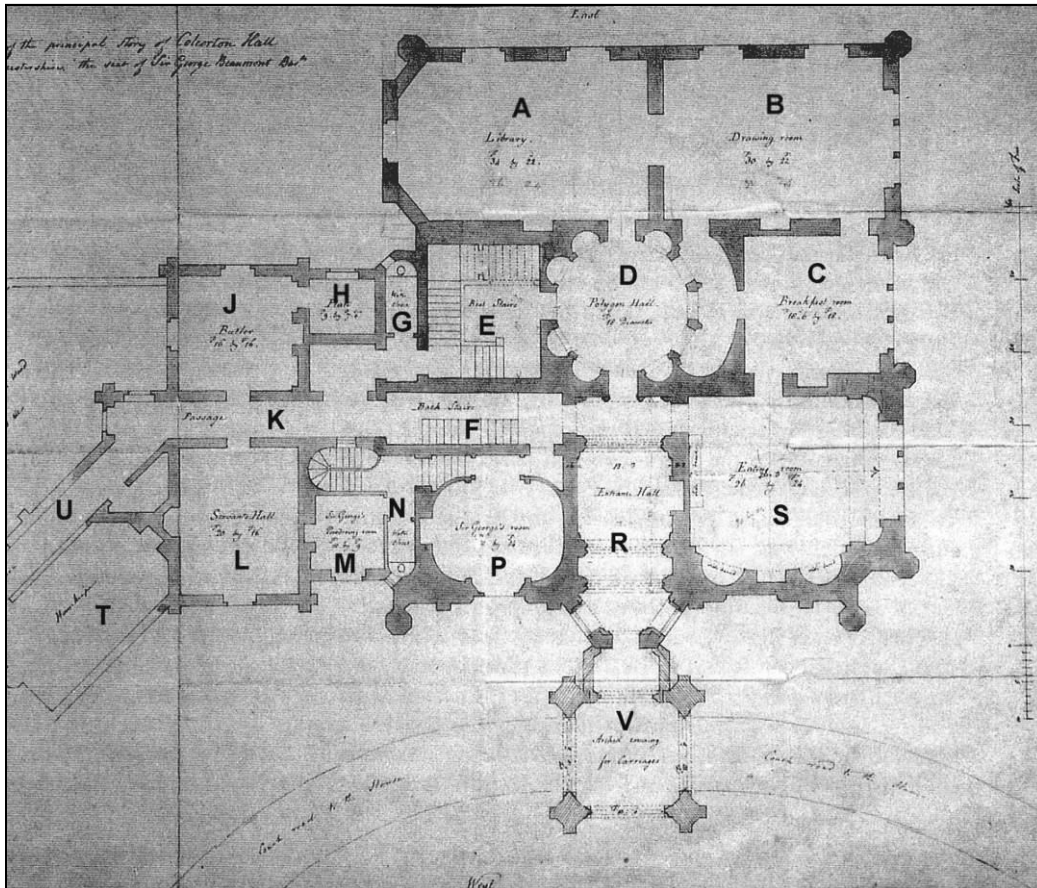
The design chosen for the house which was to rise during the next two years was a remarkable example of Dance’s eclectic approach to architecture, and illustrated clearly those principles which he had held for many years, but had an opportunity to express succinctly during an after-dinner discussion at the Beaumonts’ London home at which Farington was a fellow-guest.

Fortunately Beaumont shared his views, and the architecture of Coleorton Hall became “unshackled” to present a variety of elements assembled in a consciously picturesque manner, and making full use of the lofty site, the well-wooded background (improved with the advice of Uvedale Price), and the spire of the nearby church. The entrance front of the house strikes a gothic note with its windows recessed in pointed arches on either side of a central projecting bay. Flanking this façade are pairs of slender turrets which rise above the roof line to terminate in fanciful caps, which give them an oriental touch reminiscent of Dance’s Guildhall façade built sixteen years earlier. The main entrance to the house is by a buttressed porte-cochere. Gothic gives way to Tudor in the south and east fronts.

From the porte cochere a vestibule leads to the polygonal hall where twelve pointed arches surround an open well rising through the full height of the house. At first floor level there is a gallery with brass and iron ornament railing. The gallery is in turn ringed by arched windows

filled with stained glass, while above is a flat ceiling panel which eventually took the place of a small vault proposed in one of Dance's drawings.

The principle staircase accommodated in a well to the north of the hall (E) is remarkable for its stark character, emphasized by the solid balustrade to the stairs. The same restraint is noticeable in the principal rooms where the intention was to distract as little as possible from Sir George's outstanding collection of paintings, moved from his London house to hang at Coleorton until he offered them in 1822/3 as a nucleus for the founding of the National Gallery.



Front of house faces west
First floor plan by George Dance as it was built.

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| A | Library | M | Sir George's Drawing room |
| B | Drawing Room | N | WC |
| C | Breakfast room | P | Sir George's room |
| D | Polygon Hall | R | Entrance hall |
| E | Best Stairs | S | Dining / Eating room |
| F | Back Stairs | T | House Keeper's |
| G | WC | U | Passage to kitchen |
| H | Plate | V | Porte-Cochere (carriage porch) |
| J | Butler | | |
| K | Passage | | |
| L | Servant's hall | | |

The ground floor plan of Coleorton Hall shown above is as it was completed in 1808 (with permission of Sir John Soane's Museum, London). The 1938 plan shown later includes the details of the rooms which were added over a later period.

THE MEMORIAL TO GEORGE DANCE ESQ., R.A. ARCHITECT

Sir George and Lady Margaret finally moved into their new house on the 12th day of August 1808.

The following was recorded in Joseph Farington's diary on May 30th 1808:-
Dance called having returned from Cole Orton yesterday. He said that he went down in the Telegraph and by travelling all night his legs were swelled "like Mill post". He also suffered from sleeping in the house which was newly painted one night. He was seized with vomiting, such an effect it had upon his stomach. He said, Sir George ought not to go into it till August, but Lady Beaumont persists for end of June or July.



This memorial plaque was originally set on the inner side of the porch parapet, but was re-sited externally.



**GEORGE DANCE WAS AN ACCOMPLISHED ARTIST,
PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF PORTRAITURE**

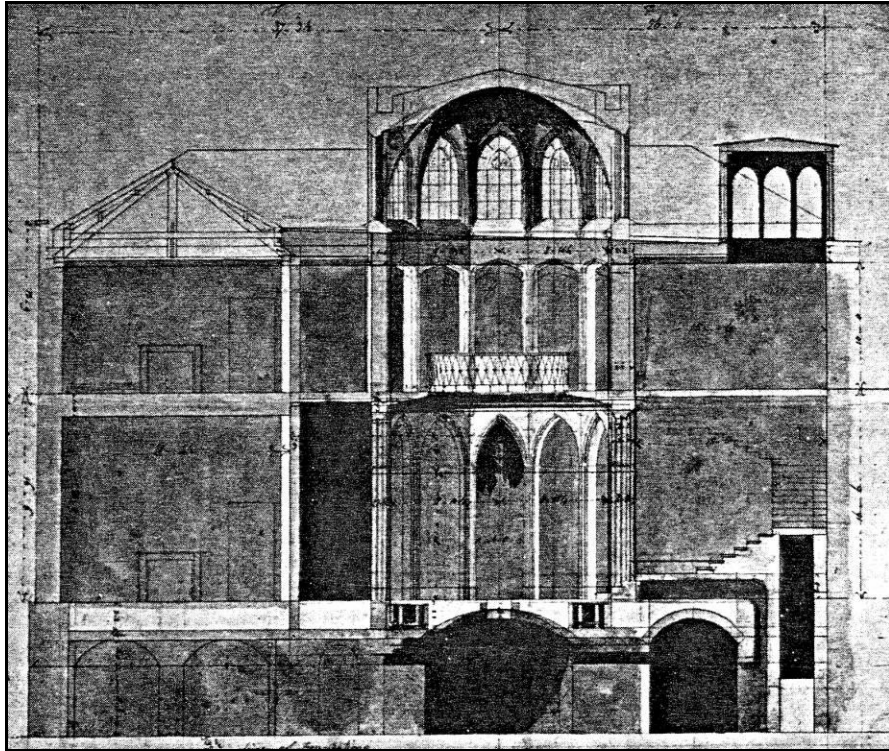


**Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Bart, 1753-1827
Drawn and signed by George Dance in 1807**



George Dance self portrait 1814.

THE POLYGONAL HALL



A drawing by George Dance showing a section through the hall from east to west including the central polygonal hall – 1804



The polygonal Hall gallery and ceiling c.1960

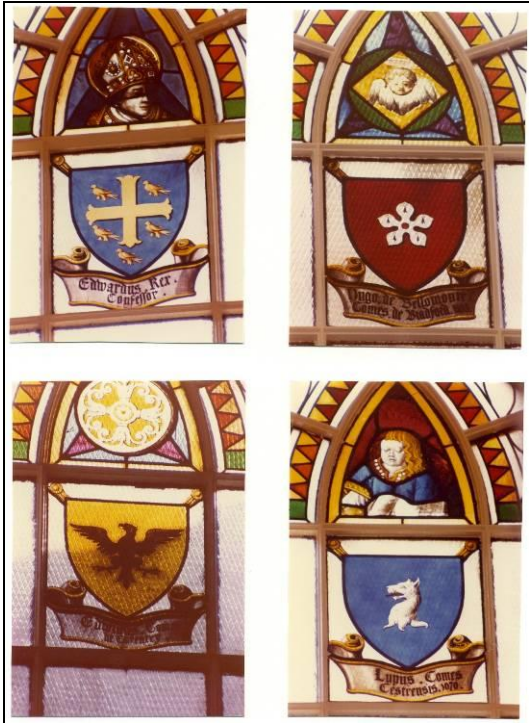


A modern photograph of the Polygonal Hall ceiling

This photograph portrays how the lighting of the complex central polygonal hall changes by the hour as the sun moves around the twelve Gothic arched openings



Gallery 1960
 (note cast copy of "Tondo" on far wall)



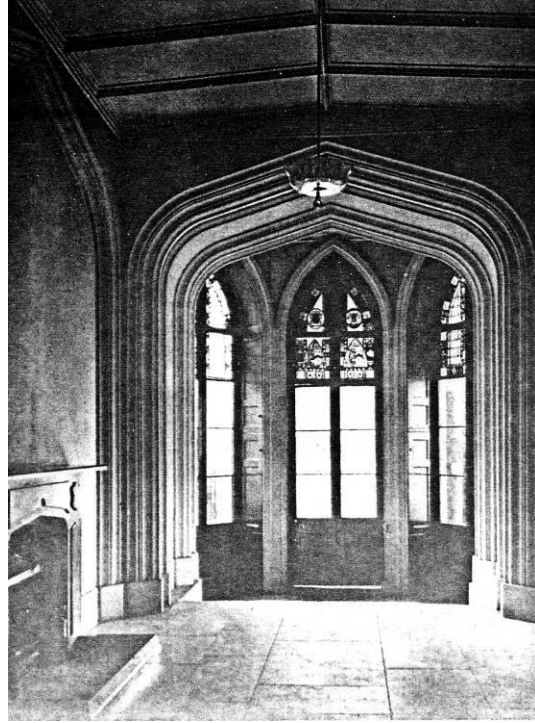
Leaded lights in top windows



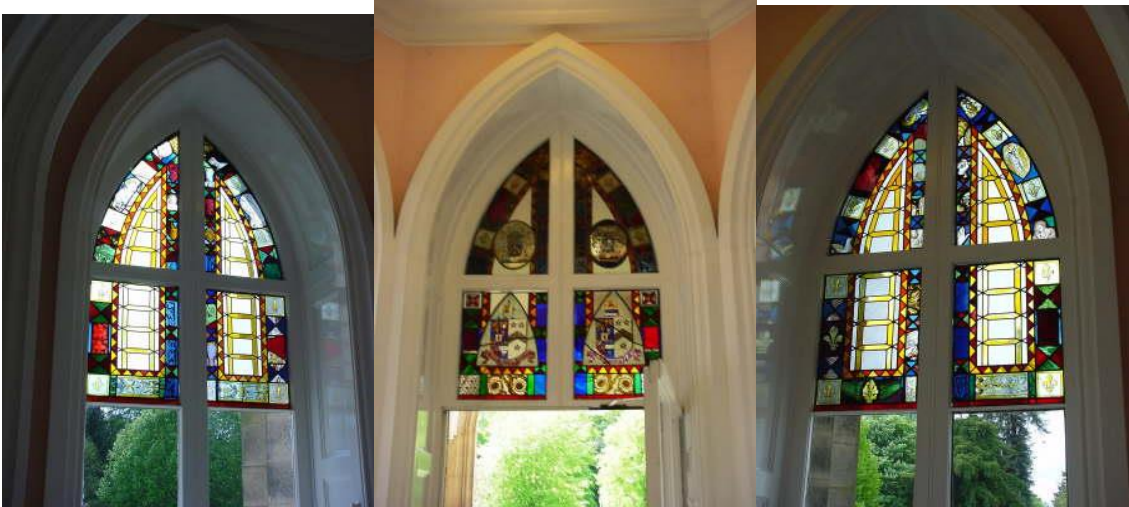
Leaded lights in top windows



Staircase 1960



**The entrance vestibule –
3.15m x 2.72m**



Close up of vestibule windows



The above photograph shows the unfinished “Taddei Tondo” by Michaelangelo (c.1504/5). During a visit to Italy in 1821 this was purchased by Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet, and after being initially hung in his London residence for a time he gave it to the nation and it now hangs in the Royal Academy. It is approx 42 inches in diameter and between 3.0 to 8.0 inches deep and carved in Carra Marble



A cast copy of the “Taddei Tondo” is shown in the earlier photograph of the polygonal hall gallery



South West Elevation
Coleorton Hall drawn by J.P. Neale c.1809 and engraved by J.Scott.



South East Elevation
An old engraving of Coleorton Hall and St. Mary's Church with the hall still as George Dance had designed it from this south easterly aspect (date c.1855).

Perhaps the most striking external features of the rebuilt Coleorton Hall are the tall, slender octagonal "turrets" rising above the roof to decorate the skyline. The turret caps are described by Stroud as "flattened cones, ringed with anthemion cresting, and topped with finials similarly decorated" that give an oriental touch reminiscent of Dance's Guildhall façade of sixteen years earlier.

LANDSCAPING INFORMATION

Following the building of the new hall, the gardens surrounding it needed to be landscaped, bearing in mind that the area was surrounded by a number of coal mines at that time, and clearly the Beaumonts' would have been keen to have them hidden from view.

The formal gardens extended to some 50 acres. The landscape gardener in charge of the work was James Cranston (d. 1835) of King's Acre (Hertfordshire), recommended to the Beaumonts' in May 1803 by Uvedale Price. Price and the Beaumonts' had many literary, theatrical and artistic interests in common and they often met up in London, with Price staying at their house as he didn't have his own property in London. Beaumont had been elected to the "Society of Dilettanti" (a society of noblemen and scholars) in 1784, and one of his fellow members was Uvedale Price. It is known that Uvedale Price advised on the '*picturesque*' treatment of the Hall and its grounds, and correspondence of 1802 and later (Pierpont Morgan Library) indicates that Price may actually have overseen work here. It seems possible that the woodland walks, and perhaps the similarly stone-edged ones through the woodland around Wordsworth's "Winter Garden" were Price's main contribution.

As part of the landscaping around the hall, a new pond was constructed, which became commonly known as "Church Pool", and apparently Uvedale Price had some input into this also. A bridge was built to span the pool at some time, possibly in the early 1800's, and this carried the entrance drive from the main Ashby to Loughborough turnpike road to the front of the hall. Below is a picture of the bridge spanning the pool, which is recorded as being painted by Sir George Beaumont in 1825.



**The Bridge, Coleorton Hall – 1825
By Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet.**



This photograph of the grade II listed single-span ashlar stone bridge, taken in 2015, traversed the pool known as “Church Pool” (marked **F** on the appended 1842 tithe map), and carried the sweeping graveled entrance drive to the hall. This can be compared to the painting by Sir George Beaumont shown on the previous page. Neither the bridge nor the entrance drive which passed over it is now in use as this was replaced by another entrance drive to the west as described later. The grassy hollow in front of the bridge shows where the pool was, but it was much deeper than this of course, however, it still holds water as was the case when this photograph was taken. The pool stretched either side of the bridge.



2015



Winter of 1957

THE GARDEN POOL AND ORIGINAL STONE EDGED GRAVEL PATHWAYS

The following photographs, taken by the author in spring 2015, shows what we will refer to here as the garden pool. It is adjacent to and south west of what was the former Robert Chaplin kitchen garden (see “[Robert Chaplin's Architectural Contributions At Coleorton Hall](#)” on the [author's website](#)), and is marked **J** on the appended 1842 Tithe Map.

The flat area adjacent to the pool, was thought to have been created to provide the Beaumonts' with what at that time would have been a secluded bathing and picnic spot, as the surrounding area would have been heavily wooded at that time.

The original stone steps leading down to the pool remain, but appear to have been capped with modern slabs at some time. They can be observed in the centre of the first photograph to the left rising up from the flat area.

The second photograph also shows in the foreground, a good example of the stone edged graveled footpaths which formed part of the woodland walks around the hall grounds, some of which are depicted as dotted lines on the appended 1882 O/S map.





“THE GROVE”

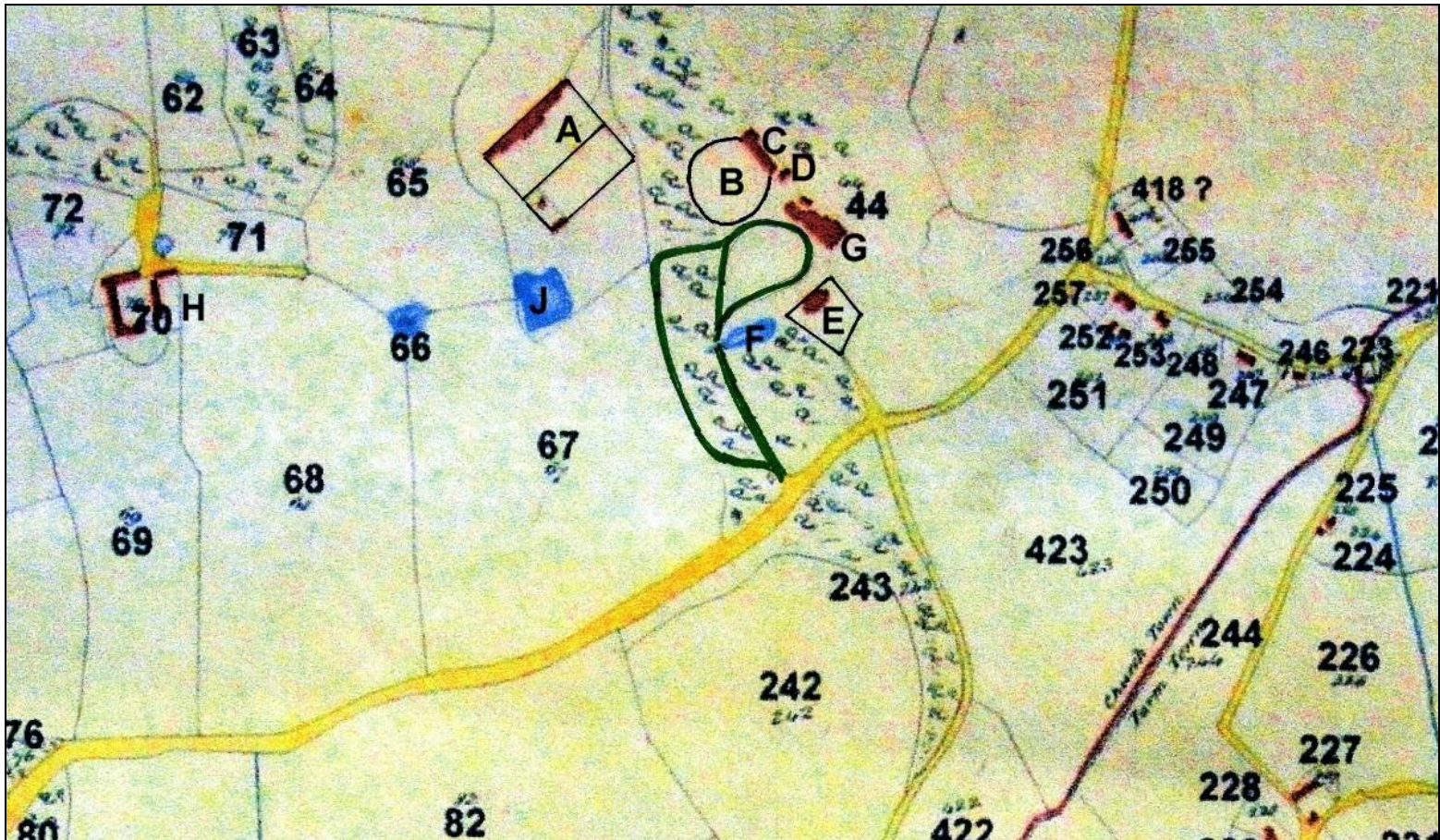
“The Grove” was originally a densely wooded area which was referred to in 18th century parish records. It circled the old Coleorton Hall from its boundary with “Canterbury Park” in the NE in an anti-clockwise arc to the SW, up to the west side of the churchyard where there is an ancient rookery. It extended for approximately 350m north of the hall, and is clearly defined on the following 1882 O/S map. The author walked the area in 2015 which now benefits from thinning out of trees and re-planted areas, which lets in the light and affords magnificent views northwards and eastwards. There is still evidence of stone edged pathways as shown in the previous photographs around the garden pool and Uvedale Price’s possible involvement with the layout of these has already been discussed. The Grove develops into a lobe shaped projection at the northern end, and this was evidently retained by stone terraced walls. The halls own “Home Farm” was built in this area just to the north east of the kitchen garden in the mid 1800’s, and the buildings can be seen on the appended enlargement of the 1882 O/S map. The farm house was demolished in 1953 by the N.C.B. due to subsidence. There is a suggestion that the area was developed as a quarry at some earlier time and subsequently became a quarry garden. Towards the northern end of the grove, a fountain is depicted on the map, and it is possible this was associated with the garden pool shown in the picture below, but this is only conjecture of course. The picture below, entitled “The Grove” was drawn by Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet in 1804. There currently exists a large hollow in the ground in the area of the projecting lobe, and it is likely that this was once the pool shown in the drawing below. It clearly shows men at work together with extensive views (to the north?), and the perspective suggests the ground falls away to the right which is conducive with the current contour of the land. As construction of the new hall started in 1804, then landscaping of the gardens would have also been underway, by the time Sir George did his drawing.



**“The Grove” 1804 - pencil and grey wash drawing
by Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet**

MAPS

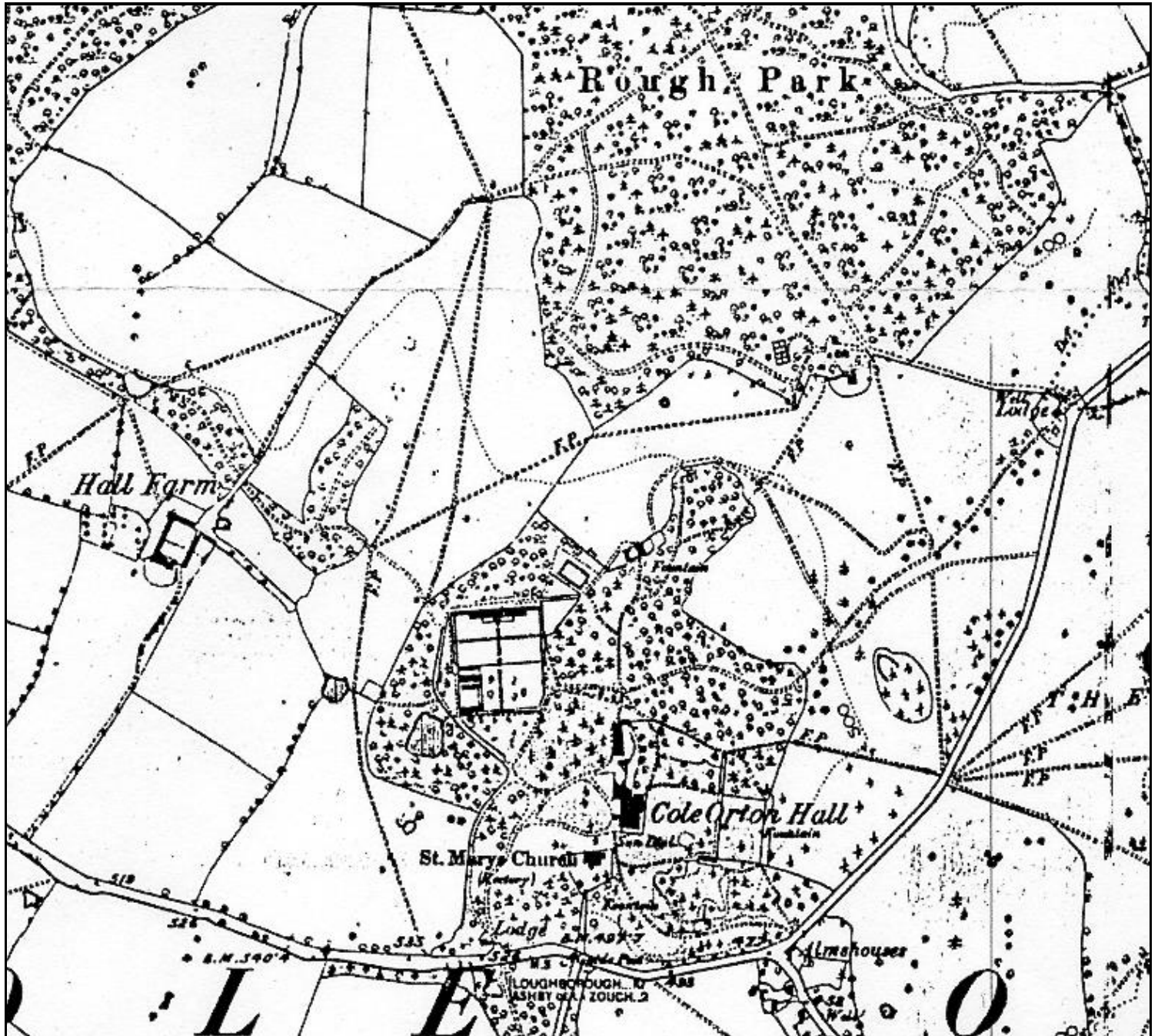
The following extract from the 1842 Coleorton Tithe Map (annotated by the author) has been appended in order to provide the reader with a clearer geographical understanding of specific features around the hall, some of which are mentioned elsewhere in the book.



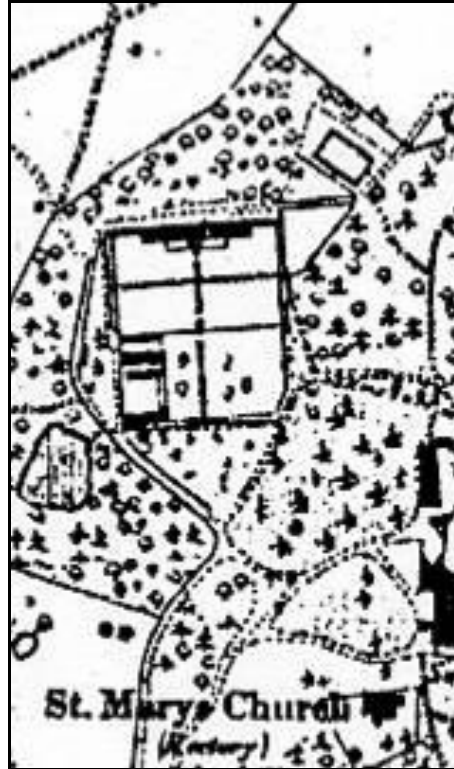
The old entrance drive from Ashby Road is coloured dark green, and passes over the bridge which spanned “Church Pool” marked **F**. It also shows the area of Robert Chaplin’s new kitchen garden marked **A**. Coleorton Hall is marked **G**, and Hall Farm is marked **H**. The latter was accessed by a track from the main Ashby Road between the fields numbered 68 and 69 (shown on the following 1882 O/S map). St. Mary’s Church is marked **E**, Chaplin’s Stable Block is marked **C**. The Brew House / Coachman’s Cottage is marked **D**. The area **B** was the site of the kitchen garden prior to Chaplin’s new kitchen garden marked **A** being built. It later became the pinetum and then in the 1900’s, tennis courts were built on the site. **J** marks the location of the garden pool shown earlier.

The 1842 Tithe Map of Coleorton is useful in that it loosely portrays the stone bridge and drive crossing the pool, but it is thought that by then it had fallen out of use as a change to the road system around the hall had taken place. The map is however **inaccurate** in respect of the geographical orientation of the various features described. The 1882 O/S map on the following page does however show them correctly. It is included to give an appreciation of the approach driveway to the hall, and pathways etc around the hall / grounds and St. Mary’s Parish church.

These as far as the author is aware, were not significantly changed until after the NCB purchased the hall and grounds in 1948 and "The Cedars" private house was then built in 1959 on part of the original site of "Wordsworth's Winter Garden". Certain paths around the original winter garden area are still in evidence and photographs are included in the free to read publication on the author's website entitled "Wordsworth's Winter Garden".



1882 O/S Map



Coleorton Hall's "Home Farm" buildings are shown just to the north east of the garden

Supplementary information – Please refer to the preceding 1882 O/S map.

The area to the east of the Rempstone Road, traditionally known as "The Paddock" in the 19th and 20th centuries, and used for grazing stock in those times, was part of what was once the ancient "Coleorton Common" which in the 18th century would have been an industrial landscape of coal mines and its associated machinery with the remains of a medieval fishpond to the NE of the current Coleorton Fishpond which was established at the beginning of the 19th century probably as part of the re-landscaping of the grounds for the newly built Coleorton Hall, which was first inhabited in 1808. It was likely to have been first created to provide fish for the table at the hall; ice being brought from there in the winter to the ice house in the grounds of the hall, in order to preserve the fish.

This industrial landscape in the area would have been cleaned up to improve the views from the new hall no doubt. Apparently, the old Coleorton Common was recognized as an important horse trading centre in the 17th century, which, from earlier newspaper articles seems to have been a tradition maintained to some degree in later years. This area has sometimes been referred to as "Parkland", which is not strictly true. The only Parkland referred to in 19th century records was Rough Park and smaller areas such as Canterbury Park in the area of Canterbury Lodge. The lodge is shown two thirds of the way up the RH side of the 1882 map and will appear as a separate article on the author's website

The area of "Rough Park" was the site of one of the two ancient medieval deer parks in Coleorton, and is historically important for that reason. The area also contained 15th century coal mines which were excavated and destroyed by the nearby open cast mining operations between 1985 and 1993. Rough Park also included the road built by Sir George Beaumont in the 1830's to avoid the crippling turnpike tolls after he unsuccessfully tried to get them reduced.