

Abraham and Margaret Colfe Benefactors and protectors of Lewisham

**Abraham was curate and
then Vicar of Lewisham
1604 – 1657**

**Margaret was midwife, nurse,
physician and surgeon to all
rich and poor
Died 1643**

Holy Cross Church
Now the Guildhall
Of
Canterbury City Council

The Westgate



Holy Cross Church
Where Abraham
Was baptised







CITY OF CANTERBURY THE GUILDHALL

THIS WAS FORMERLY THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS,
BUILT IN ABOUT 1380. IT WAS DONATED BY THE CHURCH
COMMISSIONERS TO THE CITIZENS OF CANTERBURY IN 1972.
IT IS NOW USED AS THE COUNCIL CHAMBER FOR
CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL.

IN MEMORIÀ ALMVNDVS
COLPH



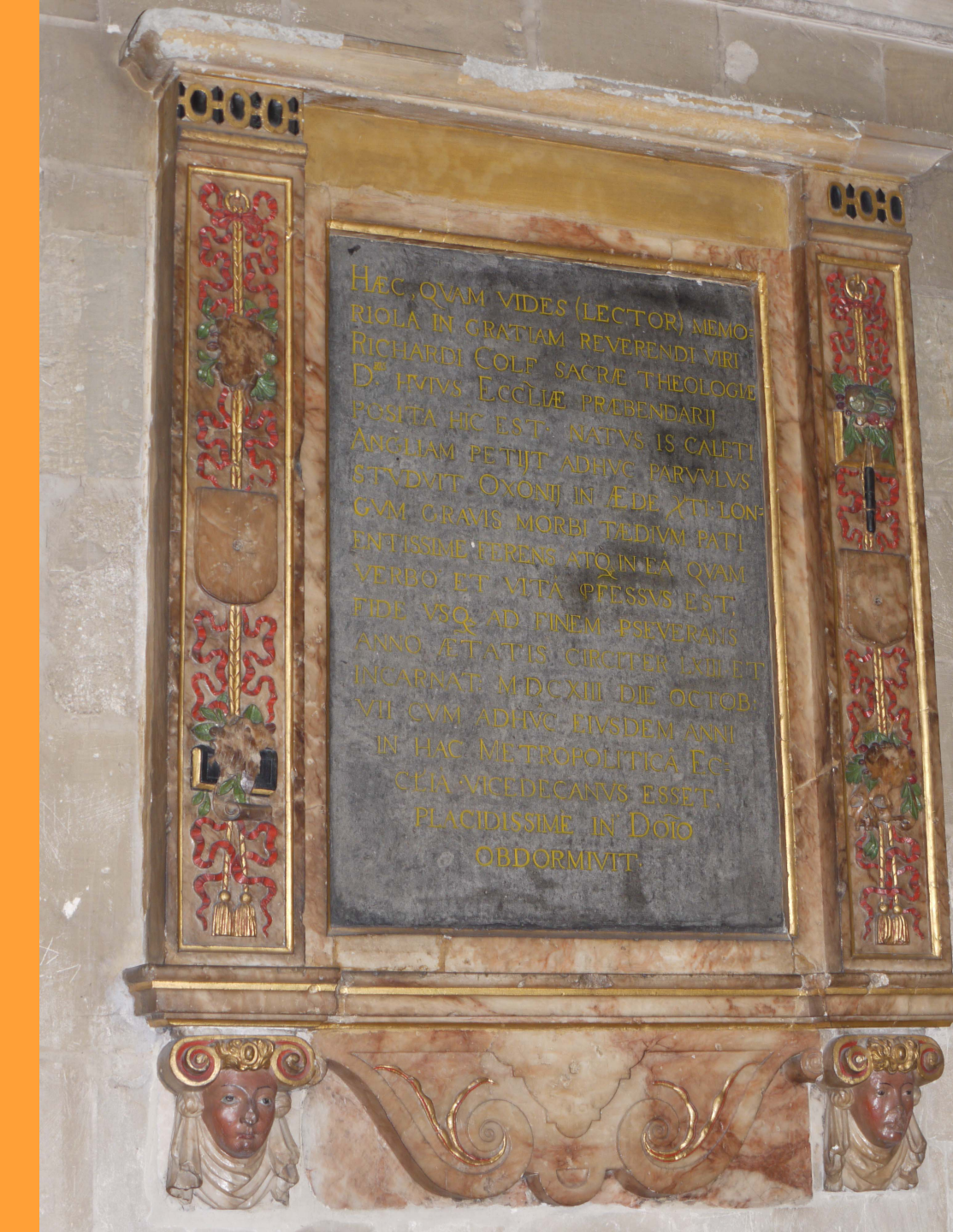
Amandus Colfe
Abraham's
Grandfather
Died 1603

IN SPE REQVIESIMVS,
ET RESVRGEMVS, ❧



Memorial to
Abraham's father
Revd Richard Colfe
In

Canterbury Cathedral.
His father died in 1613.
His mother died either
in 1578 or 1579.
She was his father's first
wife.
His father married twice
more and had 12
children



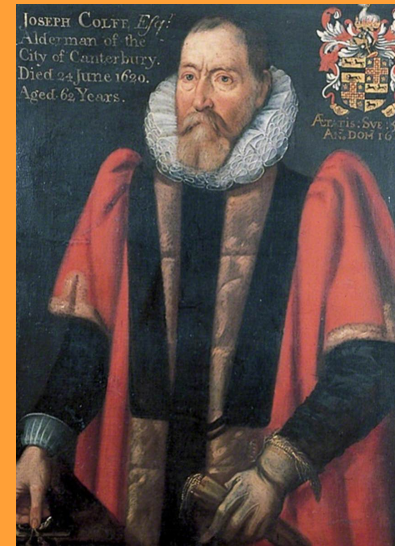
HÆC, QUAM VIDES (LECTOR) MEMO-
RIOLA IN GRATIAM REVERENDI VIRI
RICHARDI COLF SACRE THEOLOGIE
Dⁱ HVIVS ECCLEIÆ PRÆBENDARIJ
POSITA HIC EST. NATVS IS CALETI
ANGLIAM PETIIT ADHVC PARVVLVS
STVDVIT OXONIJ IN AEDE XTERIORE
QVM GRAVIS MORBI TEDIVM PATI
ENTISSIME FERENS ATQUE IN EA QUAM
VERBO ET VITA PRESSVS EST,
FIDE VERO AD FINEM PERSEVERANS
ANNO AETATIS CIRCA TER LXXII ET
INCARNATE MDCCXIII DIE OCTOBER
VII CVM ADHVC EIVSDEM ANNI
IN HAC METROPOLITICAE ECCLES
CIA VICEDECANVS ESSET,
PLACIDISSIME IN DOMINO
OBDORMIVIT

Joseph Colfe



Abraham's uncle Joseph was a prosperous And influential man in Canterbury. He was also a friend of Hadrian de Saravia, the Vicar of Lewisham.

Abraham became Curate to Saravia at Lewisham in 1604 through the influence of his uncle Joseph.



Oil painting in Canterbury City Museum



Abraham Colfe went to
King's School,
Canterbury
Next to the Cathedral





Colfe studied
At Christ Church, Oxford and
graduated in 1599

It was there that he was
arrested in 1601
and locked up in Newgate Prison
for speaking in support of the
Earl of Essex's rebellion against
Queen Elizabeth I.





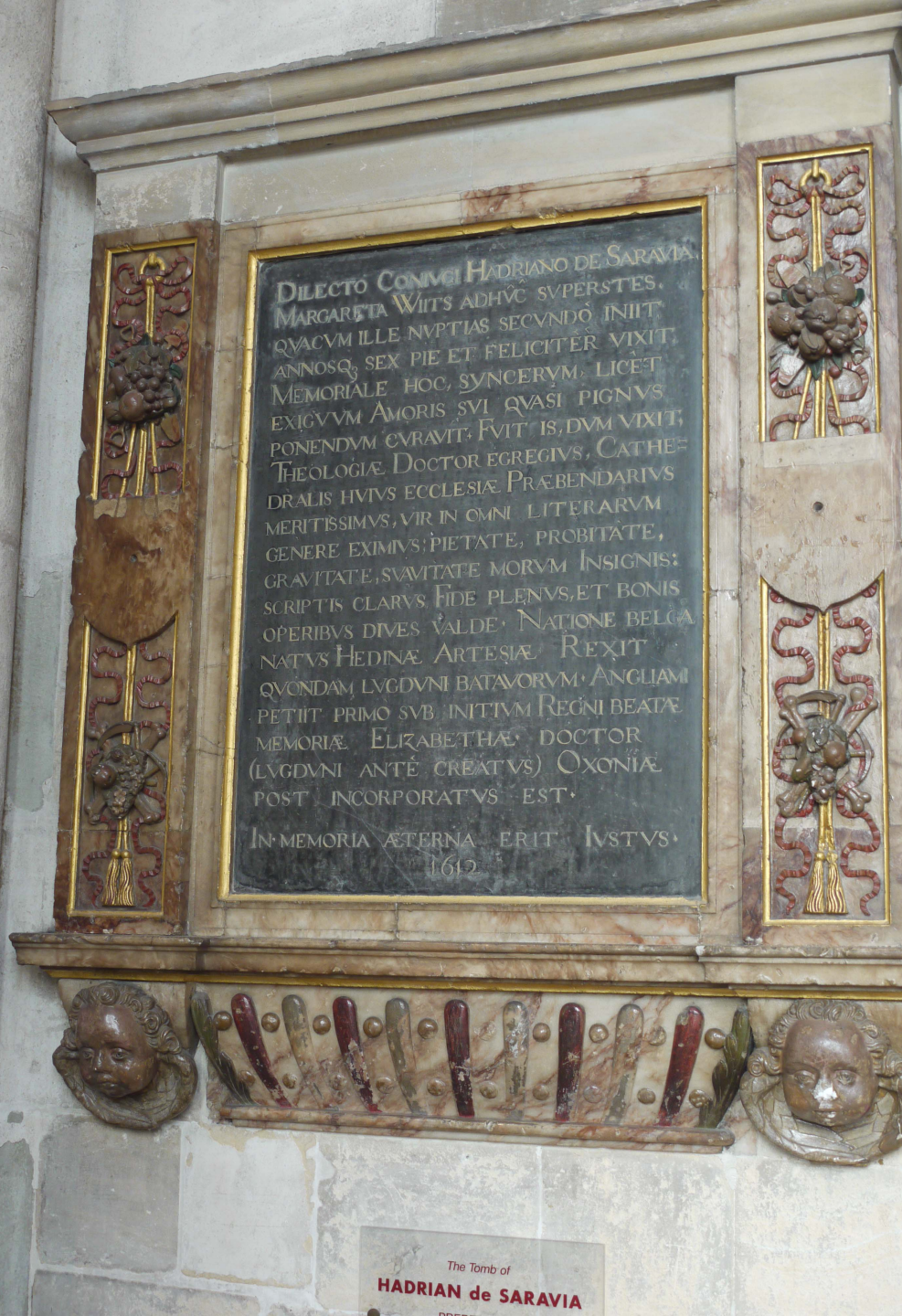
Colfe
studied at
Trinity
College,
Cambridge
and
became a
Master of
Arts in
1603

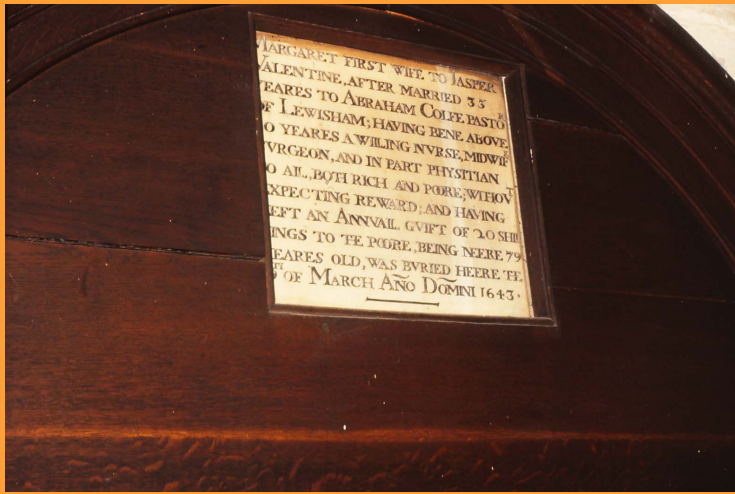
Speed's map
1616

Hadrian de Saravia, a Huguenot from Artois was not only Vicar of Lewisham and Prebendary of Canterbury Cathedral but also a great scholar and one of the translators for the King James Bible. (Book of Genesis)

He probably spent much of his time in Canterbury and left Lewisham Parish in the care of very capable curates.

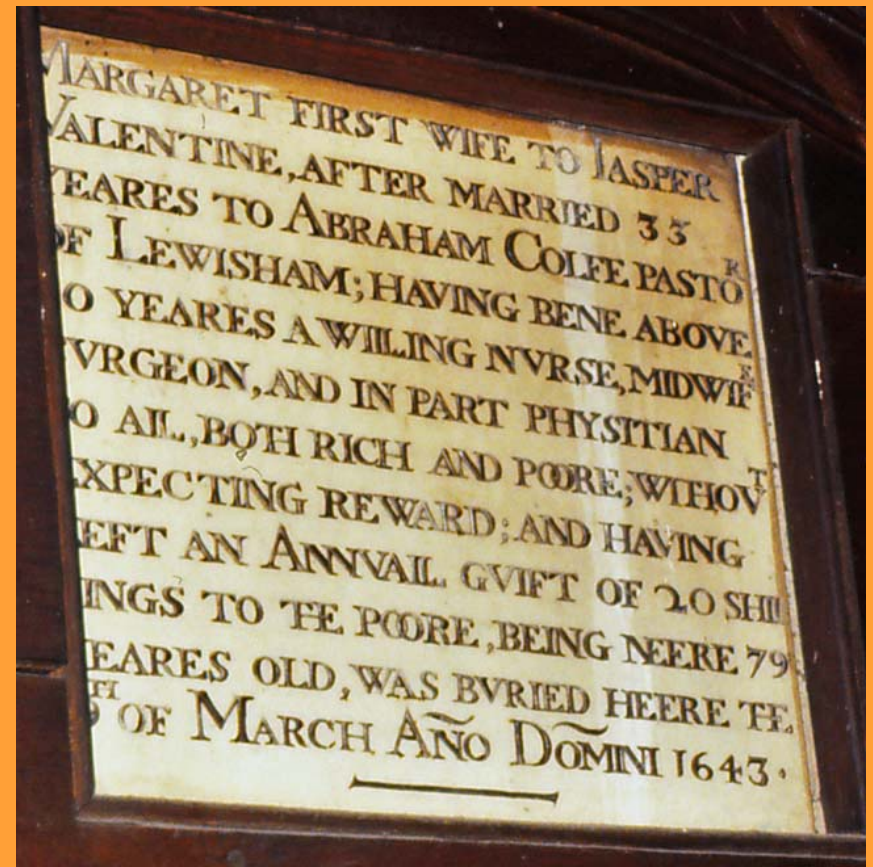
This is his monument in Canterbury Cathedral





Colfe married Margaret, the widow of Jasper Valentine, a Tanner, on 10th January 1611 at St Margaret's Church, Lee. She was the daughter of John Hollard/Holland, a prosperous Lewisham Blacksmith and Constable of the Hundred of Blackheath. Margaret was 16 years older than Abraham. They had no children together but she had children by her first husband

Margaret Colfe was buried at St. Mary's 19th March 1643
Her memorial inscription, written by Abraham, is above the door to the north porch
He also wrote her entry in the burial register



CHORAL now

LILLIE HARRIS

Margaret

SATB unaccompanied
(with solos and divisions)



Stainer & Bell



- (4.) Abrahamus Colfe.
 (5.) Abraham Colfe of Lewsham.
 (6.) Abraham Colfe.

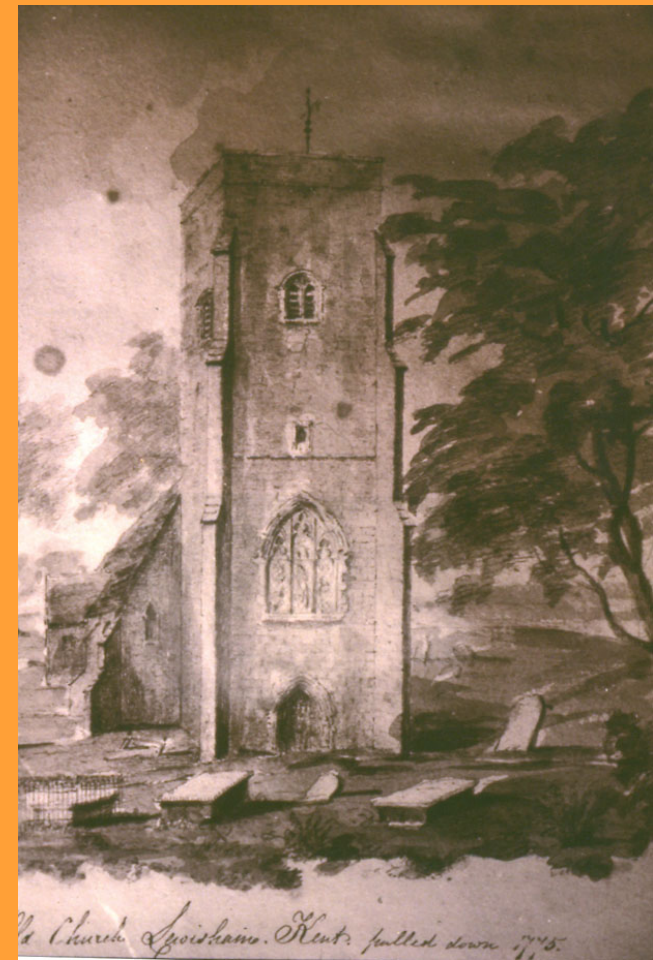


St. Mary's Church
as it would have
looked when Colfe
was Vicar of Lewisham

Colfe was Curate for six years

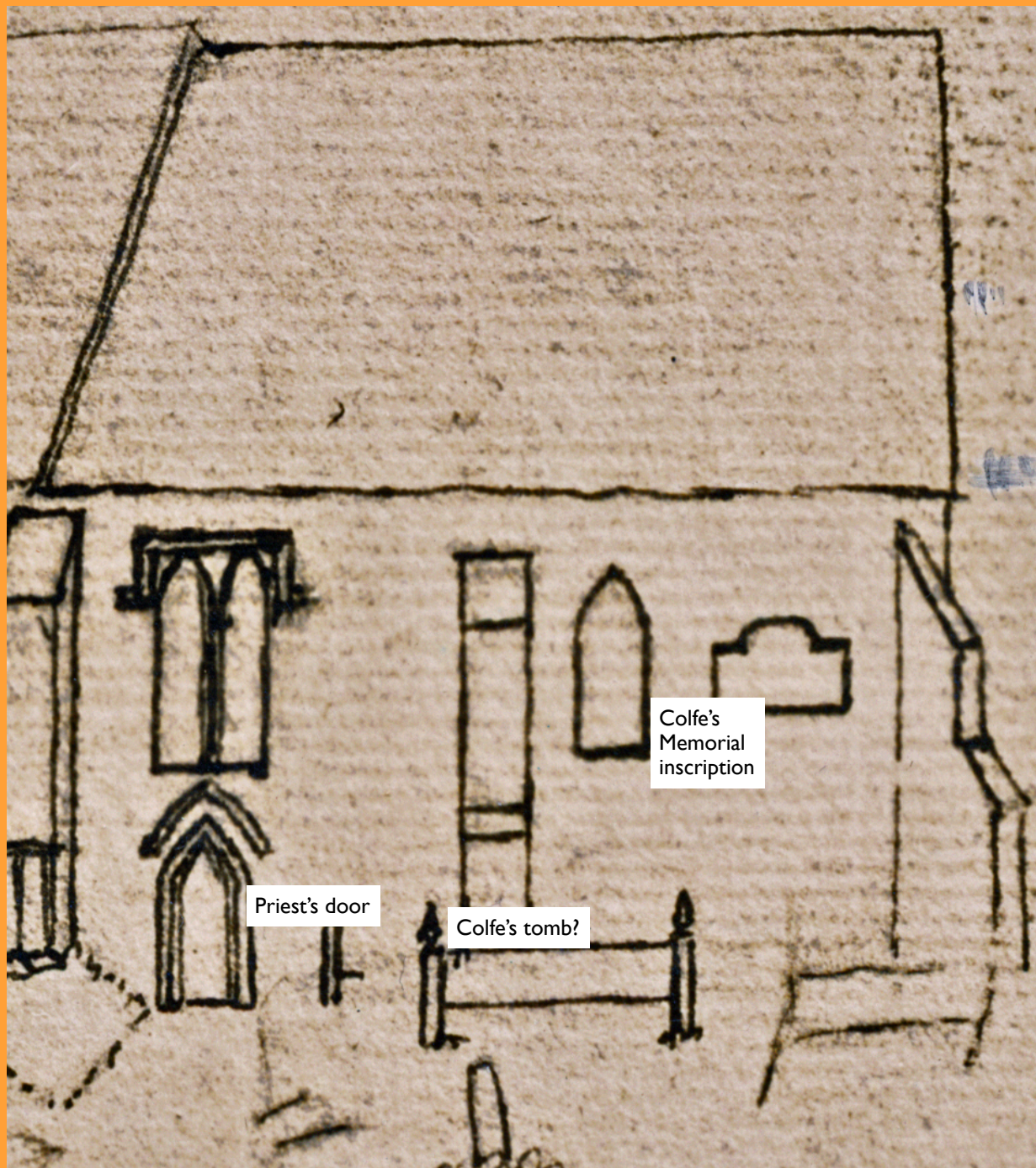
Vicar for 47 years

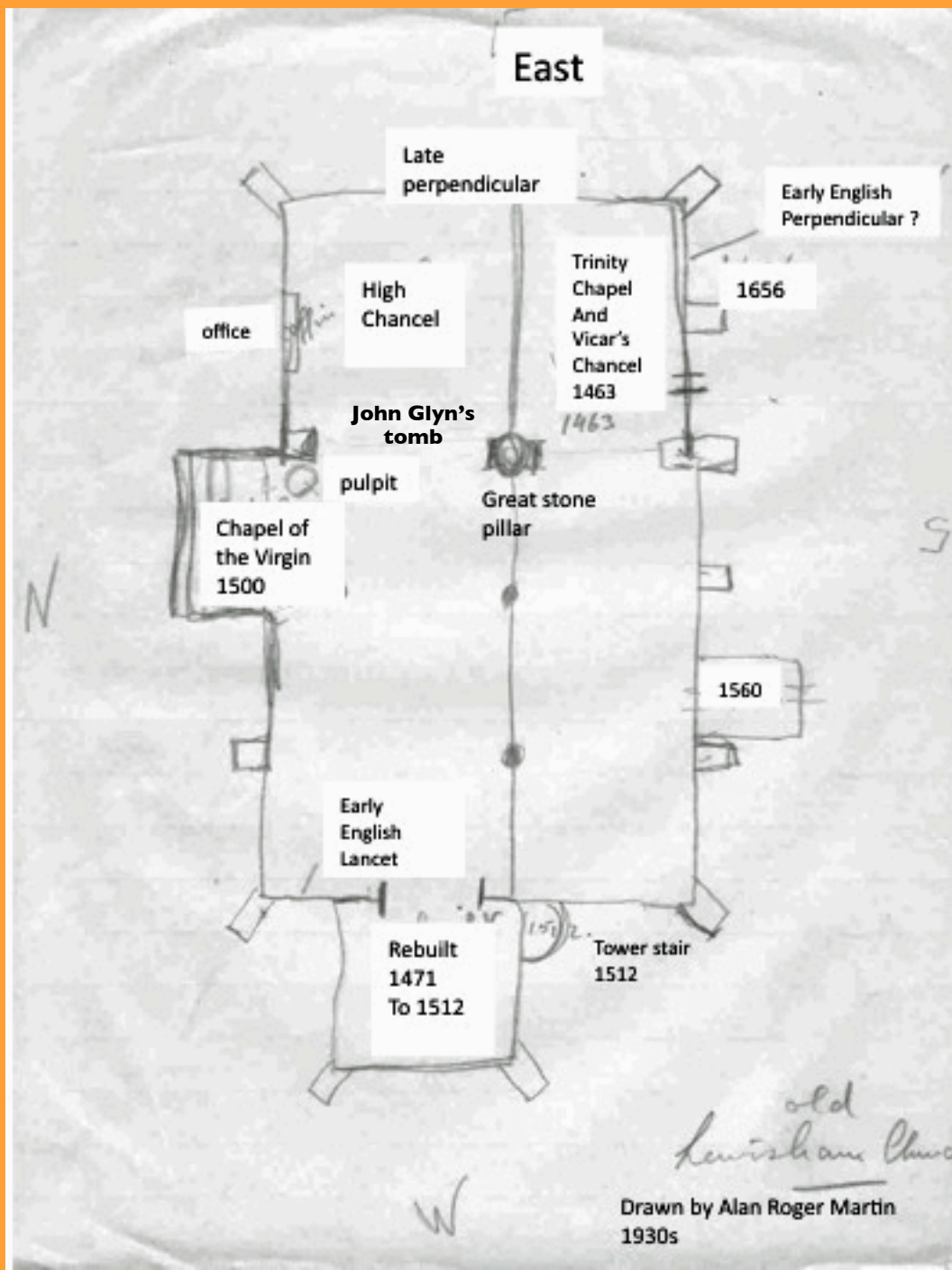
53 years of service to the people
of Lewisham



St. Mary's Church, Lewisham. Kent. pulled down 1745.

The Chancel of St. Mary's In 1764





John Glyn was Curate then
Vicar 1545 – 1568
He left £100 for a school
In Lewisham

‘The entrance was by
a large porch,
descending one step,
and into the church
two steps more...’

J.C. Barrow

Lewisham
 A Terrier of the vicaridge of Lewisham in Kent neere Greenwich, and of the glebe lands, tithes and profits belonging to that vicaridge, taken and given up with due advise by the minister incumbent, churchwardens and other officers, in the first visitation of the most Reverend father in God William Lord Archbishop of Canterbury his Grace Primate and Metropolitan of all England, and in the first yeare of his Translation, and in the yeare of our Sovereign Lord King Charles the first, and in the yeare of our blessed Lord God one thousand six hundred and thirty foure.

Inprimis a large vicaridge house, with eight brick chimneys in it, having eight roomes below, and eight roomes above, and three garrets or lofts over them; with a large garden and orchard fencing it self round about, having in it about one hundred good fruit trees: a large yard, a stable and hay-loft over it, a cow-house, and a large barn of foure bayes adioyned, all tyed over: and a strong and large shed with great posts of oaken timber, of eight bayes long boarded on both sides and thatched, adioyning to the North west end of the barn: and the rest of the fence next the vicaridge lane with strong high pales of sawed oaken boards. The house standeth from the church Northward: it abutteth South east on the Kings highway leading to Bromley, & Westward over against a great brick house belonging to Mr Thomas Hill & his heires: the yard & part of the orchard abutteth west on the vicaridge lane: the orchard lyeth North next to the same mead: the end of the garden lyeth North next to a meadow belonging to Mr Humphry Street: the garden abutteth Eastward upon the little yard and orchard lately purchased by the parishioners of Dunstons in the East in London.

Also there is a parcell of glebe land, that hath time out of mind belonged, and now doth belong to the vicaridge, containing by estimation about threescore and foure acres: namely the three church meads, adioyning to the churchyard and the vicaridge lane that leadeth to Brocklyn, being about eight acres and a half: the vicaridge hill bounding Southward on the bridge-house land, being about twenty acres: also a coppice or glaw of wood being between foure and fife acres, adioyning to the vicaridge hill, and bounding Westward on the bridge-house land, and Northward on the Kings lands. Also two fields lying Eastward under the vicaridge hill being about eighteene acres. Also three meadows lying Eastward from these two fields, and bounding Eastward upon the river, being about thirteene acres.

Also the vicar hath no tith, corne: but he hath all other tith of wood, hay, lambs, and wool, and all other smaller tithes, except hay of the Lordships and the owners of Coltons coppice have the two last falls kept back the tith.

A terrier of the vicaridge of Lewisham in Kent neere Greenwich, and of the glebe lands...taken and given up with due advise by the minister incumbent, churchwardens and other officers, in the first visitation of the most Reverend father in God William Lord Archbishop of Canterbury... in the yeare...one thousand six hundred and thirty foure.

...a large vicaridge house with eight brick chimneys in it, having eight rooms below, and eight rooms above, and three garrets or lofts over them, a large garden and orchard fencing it self round about, having in it about one hundred good fruit trees...



‘A great brick house
belonging to Mr Thomas Hill.’
Lewisham House was
demolished In 1894



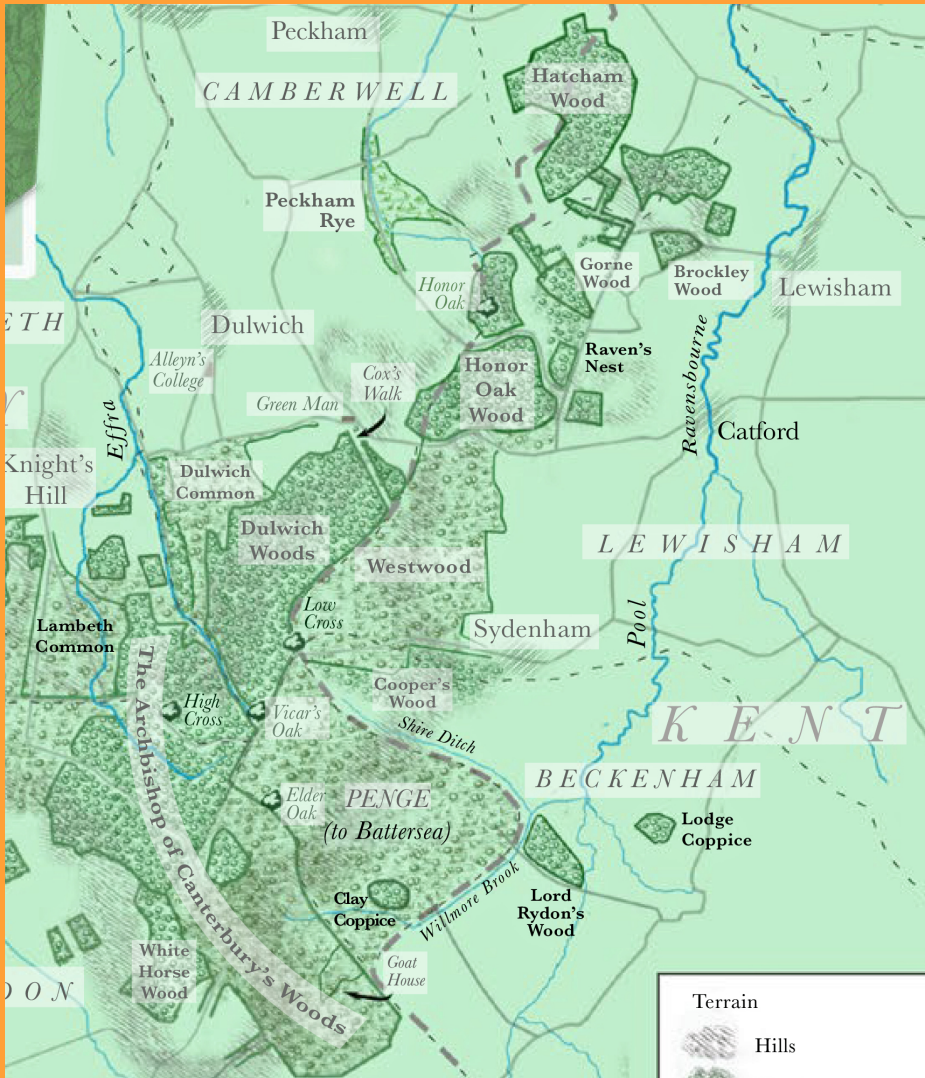
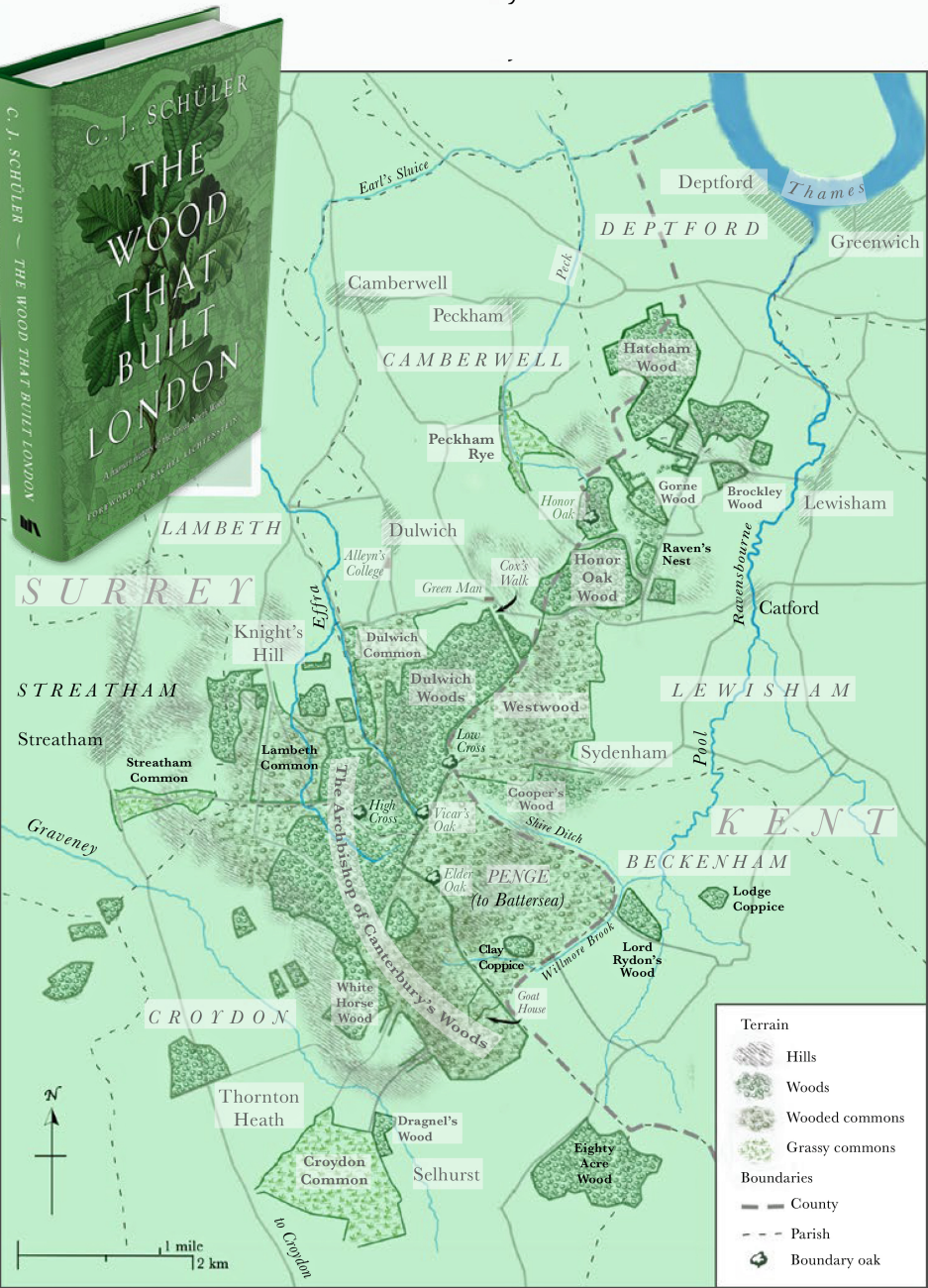
Revd George Stanhope
Built a new vicarage
In 1692/3.
Now Ladywell House.

The long battle
to save
the 500 acres
of woodlands
1605 - 1615

Part of the
woodlands
that Colfe
saved for the
people of
Lewisham
From Henry
Newport,
Robert Raynes
and
Innocent Lanier



THE NORTH WOOD, c.1560–1800



To the right honorable the Lords of the Most Excellent Majesty's honorable private Council.
 The humble petition of the poor distressed inhabitants of Lewisham near Greenwich in Kent.

Whereas three of His Majesty's servants have gotten free the King's most excellent Majesty a lease for 60 years of a
 tilled Westwood common of 500 Decers almost for 200 years, by faire evidence out of the King's own records, and
 unto your Honour by ancient Decree almost for 200 years, by faire evidence out of the King's own records, and
 for 80 years I: yet they have gotten a verdict and judgment against us, and are now still enjoying the same, they
 to attend your Honour's pleasure, who have graciously vouchsafed to hear our cause. And further report shall be made
 to the King's Majesty and the Lords, that a few of the vrs do reap the chief benefit. We the poor who
 named are underwritten, do solemnly protest for our selves and the rest, being neere to the number of a thousand
 forsoaid common is a great benefitt to the whole parish, and a chief stay and maintenance for pasture of cattell, for
 for farming and other used to about 500 poor people; and if it be taken away, it will be neere the utter undoing
 therefore in a sensible feeling of the great poverty and misery, which is ready to fall upon us, if we loose the said
 have bene very earnest to have the defence of our right prosecuted to the uttermost by all honest and law
 And we most humbly desire your Honour to commiserate the lamentable estate of so many poor people,
 respect to iudge of our distressed cause; and we shall be bound continually upon our knees to pray to god for
 honour.

Archibald
 To be read

Thomas Croft

George Edmunds, John + brother
 Joseph Ball

William Dicks
 William Dicks
 John Dicks
 John Dicks

William Blab
 William Blab
 William Blab
 William Blab

William Blab
 William Blab
 William Blab
 William Blab

Thomas Comob

John Fryer
 Tho: Hill

James Langston
 John Langston

Thomas + brother
 John + brother
 John + brother

Pirgaw
 Jacob

Pirgaw
 wife to
 Job

W

Christum Blato

William Haddon

Brian Haddon

modd + smond

John Kalgat
Gunnels Evans

Edmond D. L. D.

Robert D. L.

William M. Mearns

John H. Stale

John H. Stale

Bongamou Eaton

James modnes

John + Lath

Richard D. Greene

Steven + Mitgall

Bondon + smond

John Maynard

John T. Parrot

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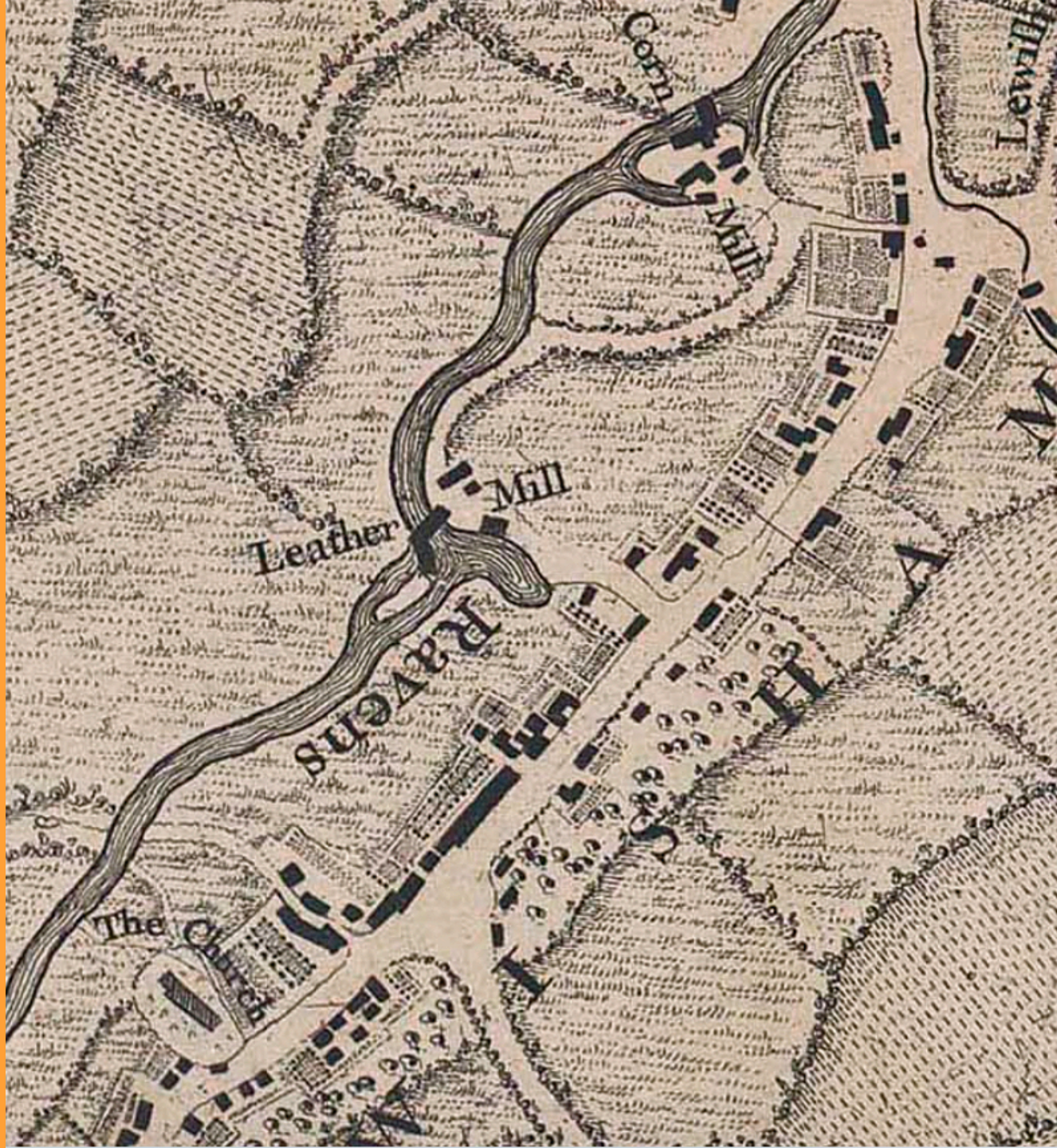
John T. Parrot

John T. Parrot

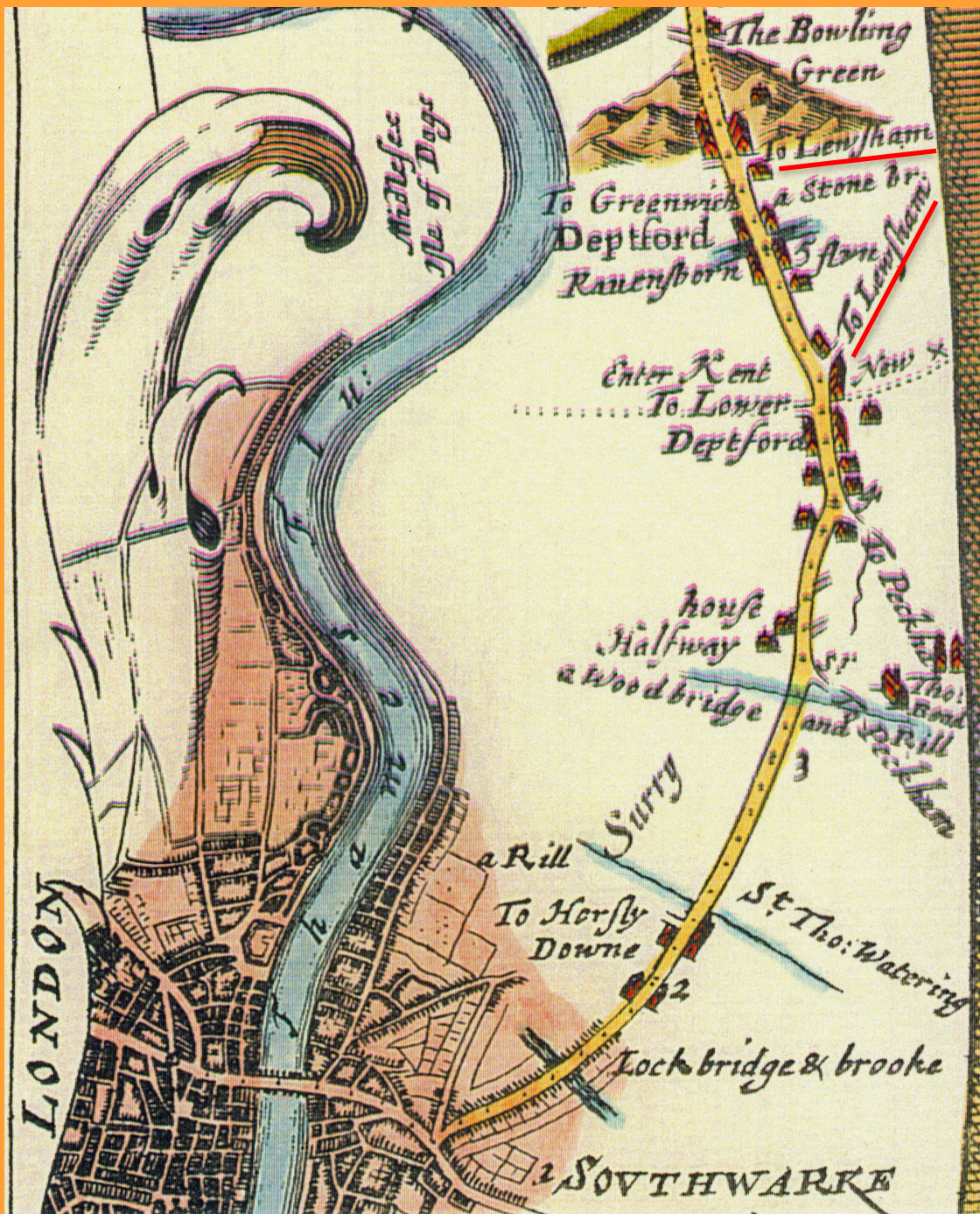
John T. Parrot

John T. Parrot





Leather making in
Lewisham
and the Leathersellers'
Company -
Colfe's bankers
And protectors

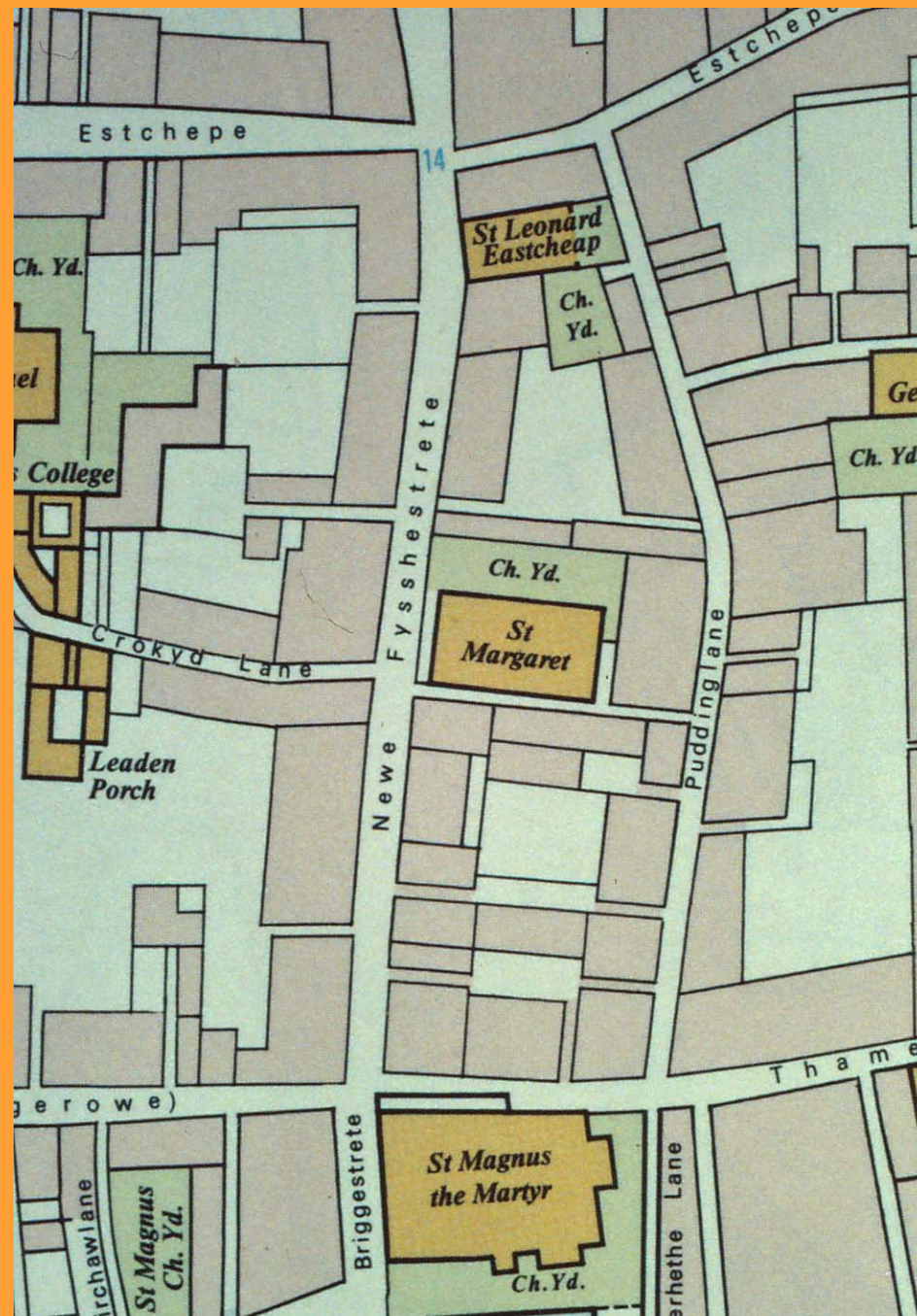




St. Leonard's, Eastcheap



In 1610 Colfe was appointed Rector of St. Leonard's Eastcheap in The City of London. A curate took the services there. St. Leonard's was taken from Colfe in the 1640s. It was burnt down in 1666 and not rebuilt.



LONDINVM FERACISSIMI AN-
GLIAE REGNI METROPOLIS



STILLIARIS) Hæusa, Gothica dictio, conuentum, vel congregationem sonans, mul-
tarum ciuitatum est confederata Societas, cum ob præfata Regibus ac Ducib. benefi-
cia: tum ob securam terra, marique, mercaturæ tractationem, tum denique, ad tra-
quillum Rerumpub. pacem, & ad modicam adolescentium institutionem conferen-
dam, instituta plurimorum Regum, ac Principum, maxime Angliæ, Galliæ, Dantiæ, ac
Magna: Mæcæ, nec non Flandriæ, ac Brabantie: Du cum prælegit, ac immuni-
tatis eorum fuit. Habet ea quatuor Imperia, quatuor quidam vocant, in quibus
ciuitatum negotiatores resident, suasque mercatus exercent. Hæc alterum hinc Londi-
ni, longioris æconomia mæris, habens domum quædam quæ vulgo Strickland, nuncupatur



Tottenham High Cross



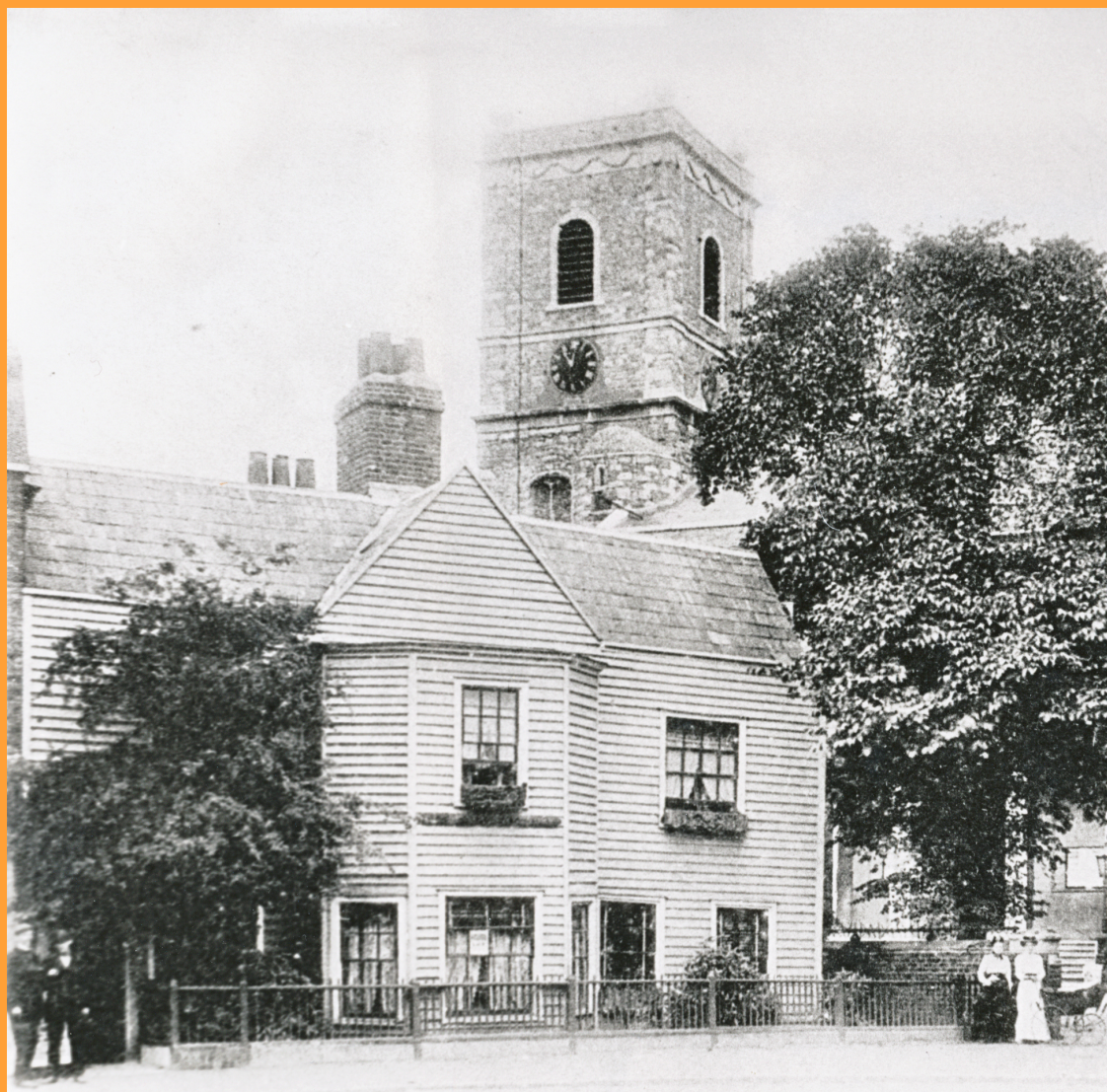
About 1810



King James I

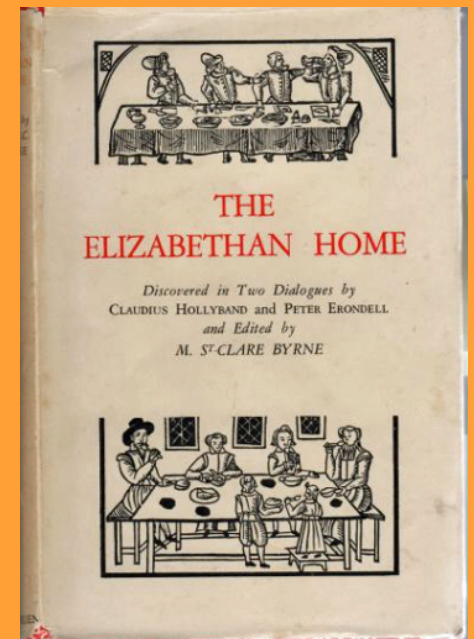


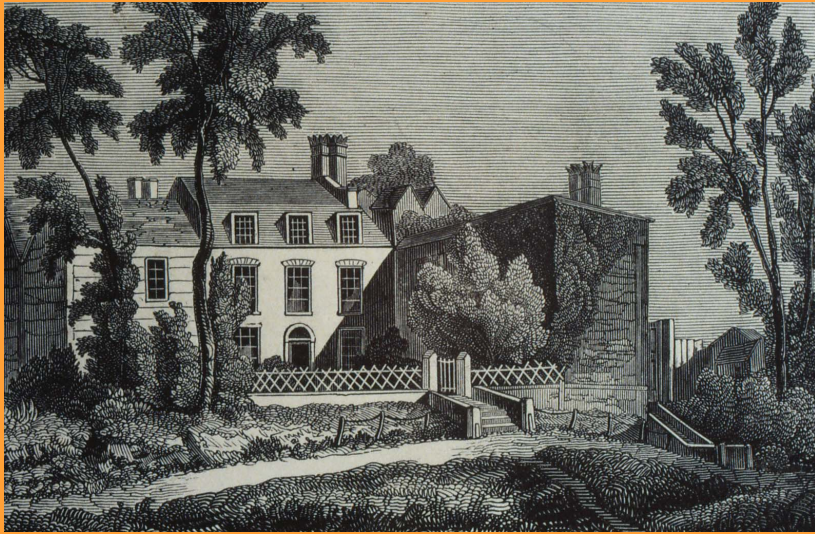
Toda



John Glyn left £100
For a school. Charter
From Queen Elizabeth I
In 1574.

Claudius Hollyband,
a Huguenot refugee, kept
a school in the 1570s, 'At
Lewisham,
hard by the church.'
Could this have been it?





The original buildings of
Colfe's School In Lewisham Hill.
School opened in 1652.
A reading school was opened
in Lewisham High Street



Ejected from his rectory he retired to Windsor, where he kept a private school. Even here he was not permitted to remain in peace. The Committee for advance of money, in November, 1649, hearing that his father and Dr. Stokes, his father-in-law, had some £500 in hand belonging to him, they were called upon to appear, and meantime to detain any sum they owed to him. He is there described as "Matthew Day, junior, delinquent."

How he became known to Mr. Colfe is uncertain. The latter's choice of an ejected Royalist minister gives some indication of the direction in which his own sympathies lay.

The School was opened on 10th June, 1652, and the various parishes concerned soon sent up their quota of Foundation Boys.

The returns of some of the earliest elections have been preserved* and are as follows:—

EAST GREENWICH.

Wee the Inhabitants of East Greenwich whose names are here subscribed at a meeting in our p'ish church the 24th day of Aprell, 1653, have chosen these 10 poore children herunder named to be taught in the Free Schoole at Lewisham for the next yeare insueing and doo appoint the parents of each child to present them at the said schoole on Munday morning next by eight of y^e clock

William Avery
Thom. Cordall
Lewis Merideth
Edward Jones
John Whittney

John Laneere
Lyonell Price
William Banister
Thomas Davison
Francis Charlton

It is the sense of the p'ish that those who are in the p'ish should be preferred before others therefore wee have not chosen Hugh Goulding at this time who was not borne in the p'ish

FAITHFULL TEATE minister of East Greenwich
(and others).

* Add. MS. 10602, British Museum.

ELTHAM 24 April 1653.

At our meeting this afternone we have made choice of these p'sons to present to yo^r schole whome we only find capable viz.

Joseph Till the sonne of Joseph Till deceased
John Browne the sonne of Edward Browne

DEPTFORD.

The youthes chosen by the gentlemen of the vestry of the parish of Deptford free schollars into the School of Lewisham by grant from Mr. Colf the founder thereof chosen at Easter 1656.

Thomas Foster*
Thomas Malory†
Thomas Barnard
Georg Kendall
Joseph East

James Cruchly
Jacob Brandt‡
Theophilus Kendall
Robert Shales§
Mark Palmer||

Subscribed by vs

THOMAS MALORY minister
&c. &c.

WOOLWICH.

Mr. Hakes and y^e Rest of y^e parish of Wolleg haue made choice of 2 scollars

Richard Palmers sonn Butcher Henry
John Hankin Bucher his son John

We of y^e parish of Wolleg can find no more Redy.

WM. HAWKES minister

[undated, but about the same date as the others].

* Deptford Registers, Baptisms, 5 Mar. 1644-5, Thomas s. of Thomas Foster.

† 9 June 1647, Thomas s. of Mr. Thos. Malory, Vicar of Deptford.

‡ 6 Feb. 1644-5 Jacob s. of Mr. Marcus Brandt.

§ 9 July 1646, Robert s. of Henry Shales.

|| 15 Sept. 1641, Marke s. of John and Jane Palmer.

In addition to the above there is a list apparently handed in by the Headmaster, dated 26th May, 1657, and endorsed by Mr. Colfe "Scholars at Gram'ar Schoole," as follows:—

LEWISHAM

James Simons
William Palmer

GREENWICH

John Whitney
Hugh Goulden
Isaac Skilton
William Hill
Swinven Collins
John Reynolds
Robert White
True Hart
Matthew Walker
Thomas Lloyd
Edward Newton
Job Claridge
Thomas Aswell

LEIGH

Thomas Ward*
John White

DEPTFORD

Jacob Brandt
Thomas Barnet
Robert Shales
Jonathan Bilton
John Reyner

The names of them who have left the Schoole since the last election

OF WOOLWICH

John Bowyer
John Palmer
Robert Shorthose

ELTHAM

Joseph Till

DEPTFORD

Thomas Foster

Of those from thence I can have noe account

Benjamin Brewer
Hugh Clemens.

* Lee Registers, Baptisms, 22 Mar. 1645-6 Thomas s. of Thomas Ward.



The school was rebuilt in 1890. The south front was added in 1897



[HOME](#)

[WHY COLFE'S?](#)

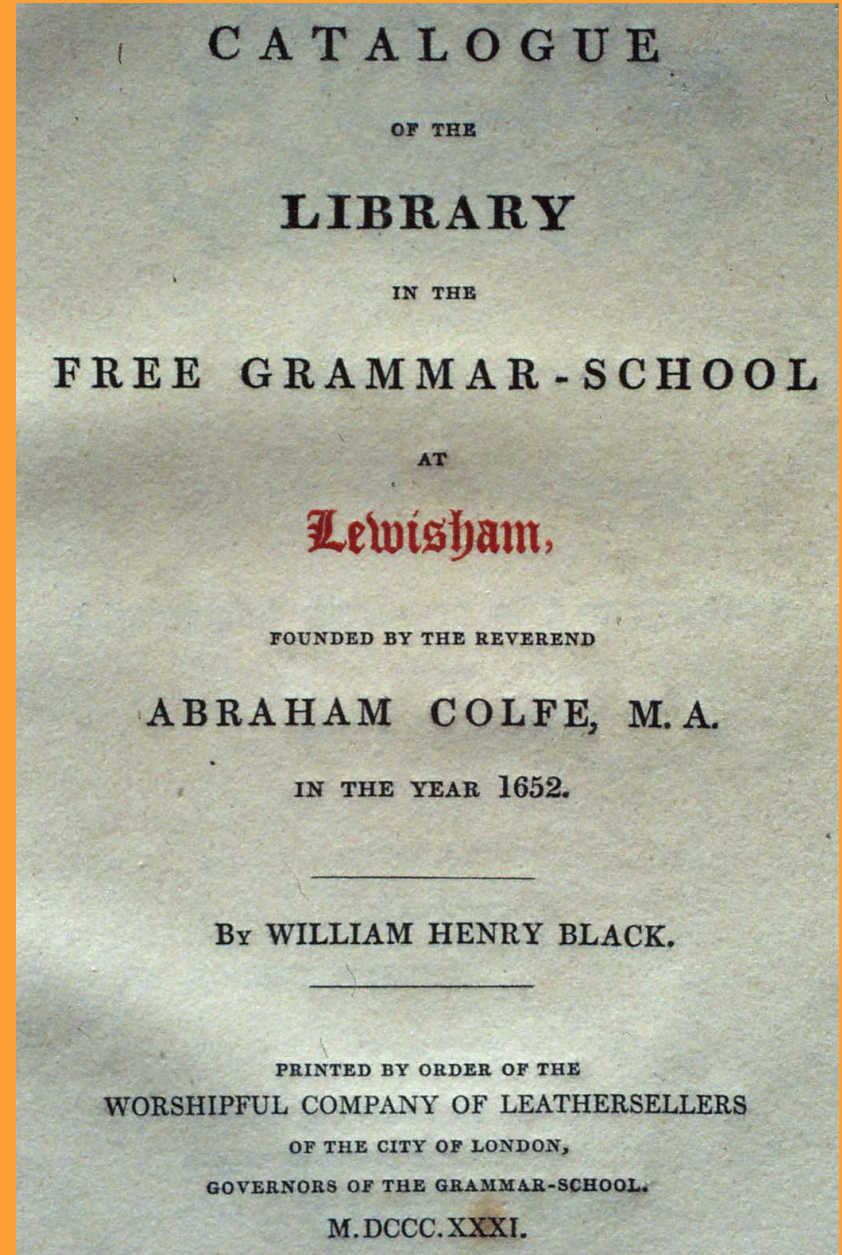
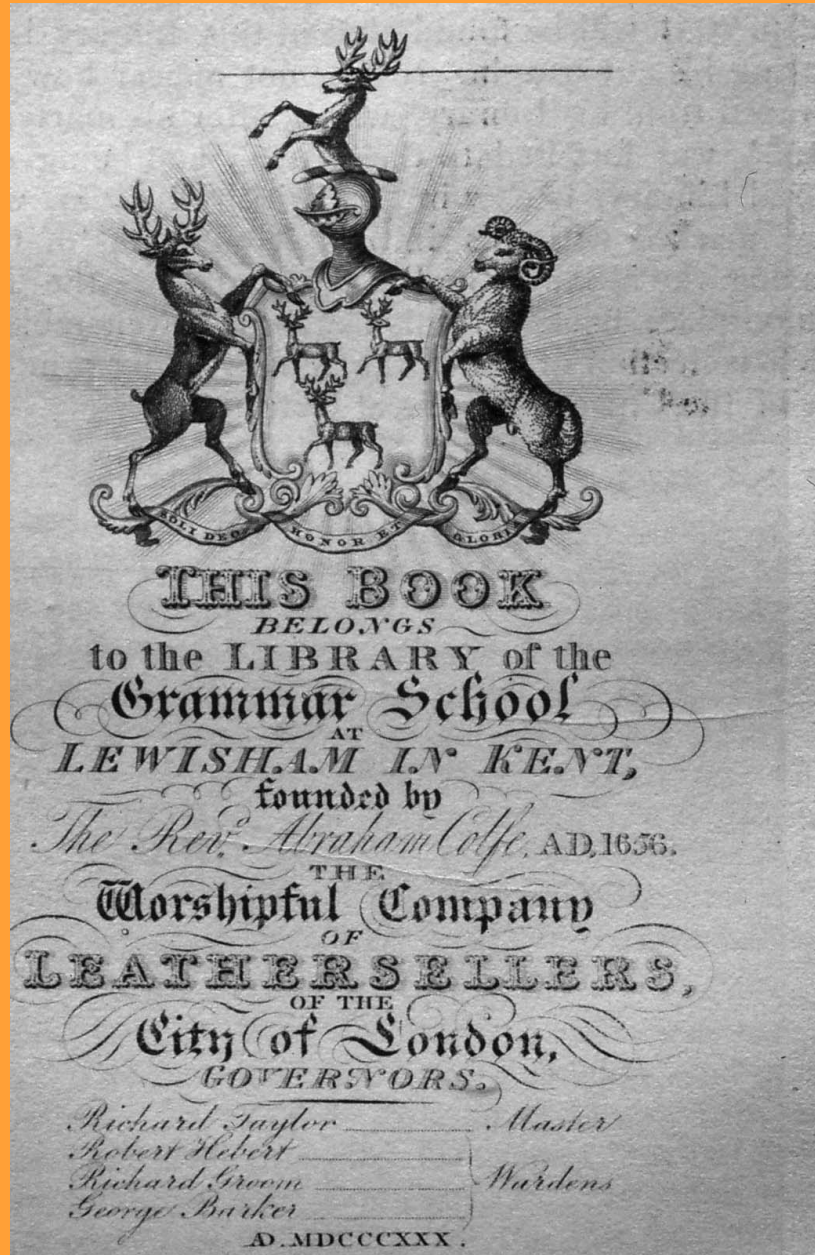
[JUNIOR: 3-11](#)

[SENIOR: 11-16](#)

[SIXTH FORM](#)

[CONTACTS &
LOCATION](#)

Abraham Colfe set up Lewisham's first public library in the school



The Colfe Library, a special collection of over 400 rare books, is housed in climate-controlled bookcases to ensure the best conservation for these ancient volumes – the earliest dating from 1481. The Leathersellers provided the first books for this Library in 1652, when it was located in Lewisham, above the School founded by Abraham Colfe. There is a predominance of books on theology, philosophy and the classical languages of Latin and Greek. Two of the books once belonged to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, famously burnt at the stake in 1555.



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Minor Lord Protector of

[illegible]

His Lord Protector of

the Common wealth of England Scotland and Ireland and the Dominions
Territories thereto belonging To all persons to whom these words shall come
Greeting Know ye that even the fifte and twentieth day of January in the
year of our Lord God English stile One thousand six hundred fifty &
seven before the Judges for & before of Wills and granting Administrations lawfully
authorised the last will and Testament of Abraham Colles late of Newham
in the County of Kent Esq^r deceased was at London in common form & order
which Will is to these words annexed And Administration of all and singular the
goods chattells and debts of the said deceased which may any manner of way concern
him or his said Will was granted and committed to William Dinnert Esq^r &
William Manby Esq^r Executors named in the said will they having first taken
their Oath well and truly to Administer the said goods chattells and debts w^{ch}
according to the true and effect of the same will And to make or cause to be
made a true and correct inventory of all and singular the goods chattells and debts
of the said deceased which have shall or may any way whatsoever come to his said
hand possession or knowledge And also a true and just Account in and concerning
there said Assets w^{ch} they shall assigned or lawfully called to doe w^{ch}
touching which Inventory they were & shall assigned to performe all or before
the last day of March next ensuing Given at London under the Seal of
the Court for & before of Wills and granting Administrations the day & years aforesaid

Arch^d Coll^d Esq^r

Barley

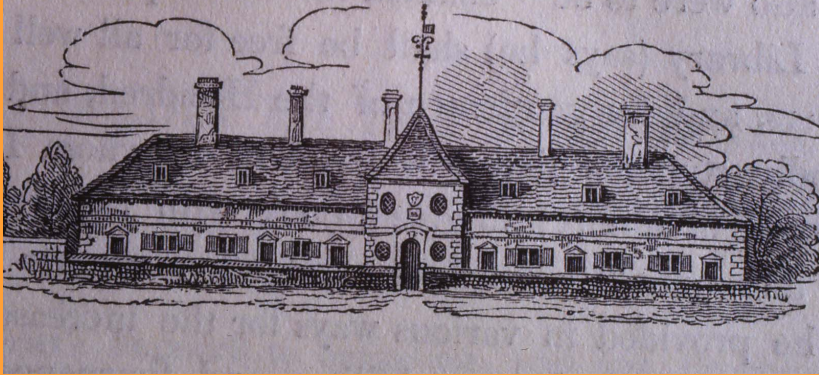
Longmore

In the Name of God, *The Father, The Son, and the Holy Ghost,* Preamble

Amen. I ABRAHAM COLFE, of *Lewisham*, in the County of *Kent*, near *Greenwich*, Minister, and Son of RICHARD COLFE, late Doctor of Divinity, and Prebendary of *Christ Church* in *Canterbury*, being above Seventy-Six Years old, yet in good Health and of sound and perfect Memory (thanks be to the Lord for it) do make, ordain, and declare this to be my last Will and Testament, in Form and Manner following:

FIRST, and before all Things, I commend and commit my Spirit into the Hands of Almighty God and my Lord Jesus Christ, my merciful Creator, and my all sufficient Saviour and Redeemer, wholly relying upon the Merits of his Obedience in his Life and Death for my Justification and Salvation, and trusting through the Blood of his own Sacrifice of himself, once offered upon the Cross, to be accepted as righteous at the last Day, and be presented by him as unblameable to God, both his and my Heavenly Father. My Body I leave unto the Earth, in Assurance of a blessed Resurrection to eternal Life; and I desire my Executors hereafter named, to see it buried in a decent and Christian Manner, in the *Church-Yard* of *Lewisham*, close to the Wall under the little South Window above the Door Eastward, that goeth out of the *Church-Yard* into the Parish of *Lewisham*, to be put into and closed up in a little Vault or Coffin made of Brick or Stone, so large only as will contain my Corpse or Carcase; and my Will is, that a Free Stone of about One Foot broad and square every Way, and Three Feet long, shall be set deep and upright in the Ground over my Carcase, to uphold a strong thick Plank of Oak, which shall be put there all along close by the Wall, between the two Buttresses, for People to sit upon when they resort to the public Church Meetings; and the

The beginning of Colfe's will. He signed his will in the presence of 16 parishioners and relatives in 1656.
He died of the Ague in 1657.



The Colfe Almshouses were built in 1663-5.

In 1664 the Leathersellers were appointed owners and governors of Colfe's charities

The almshouses were renovated in 1905.

Demolished in 1958

The Register Office is on the site

The almshouses
Were for 6 residents.
5 nominated by the
Parish of Lewisham
1 by the Leathersellers'
Company







HERE VNDER LYETH BVRIED THE BODY
OF ABRAHAM COLF, LATE MINISTER OF
THIS PARISH OF LEWISHAM WHO DEPART-
ED THIS LIFE THE FIFT DAY OF DECEMB'
A° D'NI 1657.

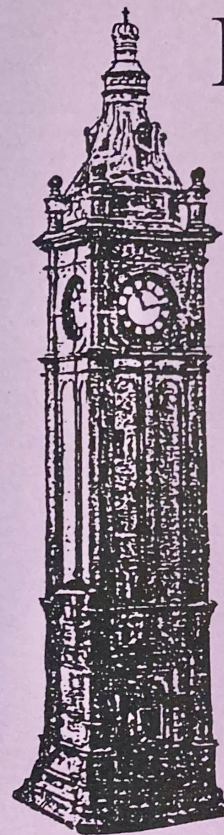
A HISTORY
OF
Colfe's Grammar School
Lewisham

WITH A LIFE OF ITS FOUNDER

BY
LELAND L. DUNCAN, M.V.O., F.S.A.

PRINTED FOR THE GOVERNORS
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OF THE CITY OF LONDON

—
1910



LEWISHAM HISTORY JOURNAL

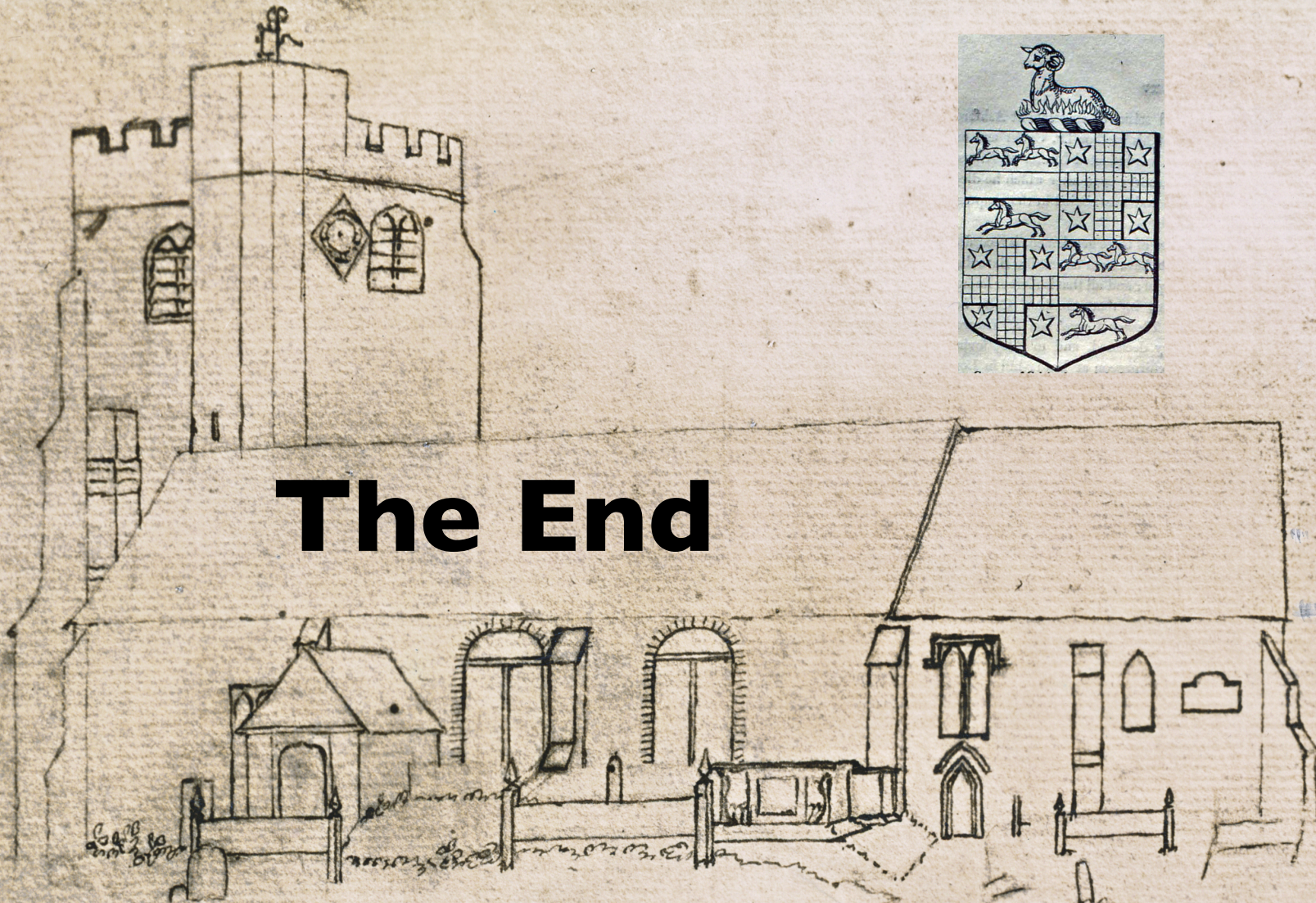
Abraham Colfe

Crofton Park

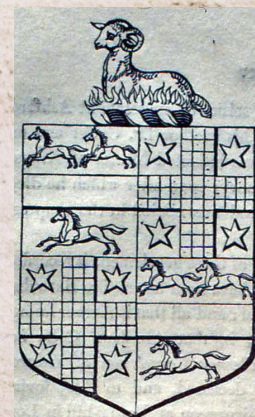
A Family's Story

No. 26
2018

Lewisham Local
History Society



The End



**With thanks to:
Lewisham Heritage
The Leathersellers
John Coulter
Jerrome Farrell**