

**GARRETTS OF LEISTON**  
**and**  
**GARRETTS AT FRAMLINGHAM COLLEGE or *Origins of Garrett House***

***The Leiston Company, Works and Museum***

In 1778 Richard Garrett I left the family business in Woodbridge and joined a man called William Cracey at his forge in Leiston on land which later became the site of Leiston Works. The same year he married a Leiston girl called Elizabeth Newson. Four years later, on the death of William Cracey, Richard acquired the premises from his heirs by bargain and sale and went into business for himself. This was the beginning of Richard Garrett and Sons. The works was one of the first to specialise in agricultural machinery and the business passed from generation to generation.

One of Richard's early ancestors, Harmon Garrett, a gunsmith in Wickham Market. emigrated to New England in 1636, hoping to make his fortune. After trying settlement in three different places he returned to Wickham Market by 1655 when he is known to have been employed on the restoration of the church bells. This branch of the family worked the smithy at Wickham Market, while a great grandson of Harmon, moved to Ufford. From there the family set up in business making edge tools in Woodbridge. It is said that their scythes and sickles were of such a high standard that the Garrett mark was sometimes forged.

Prosperity fell upon Leiston Works when they were under the direction of Richard Garrett III, (1807-1866), the founder's grandson. He took managerial control of the company at age 19 and expanded it from 60 employees to 600 in 32 years. Richard was brought up in Leiston with his two brothers, Balls (1810-1880) and Newson (1813-1893). It was their generation that witnessed the triumphs of industry, but as was often the custom then, there was no place for the younger brothers in the family business. Newson departed for London where he set up as a pawnbroker and silversmith, supported by John Dunnell, the father in law of both himself and his older brother Richard. Encouraged by Richard he returned to Suffolk in 1839 and bought the coal and coke business which he later transformed into Snape Maltings. Balls (unfortunately named thus from his mother's maiden name) became the proprietor of the Medway Iron Works at Maidstone.



The Leiston works expanded rapidly and gained in prosperity under the management of Richard Garrett III. The production included various types of agricultural tools and machinery such as seed drills, chaff cutters, horse hoes and threshing machines for which they were famous all over England. After the invention of steam power, they became known particularly for the 'portable' engine (drawn by horses, not moving under its own steam) and later traction engines and road making equipment such as the steam roller. In 1851 Richard Garrett and Sons exhibited at the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace. To honour the occasion 300 employees embarked from Slaughden Quay on two of Garrett's schooners, the Margaret and the Jane. A steam tug towed them up the Thames to Horseferry Wharf, Millbank, from where the men walked to the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, returning at night to sleep on board. Orders taken at the exhibition for their new, lighter portable engine far exceeded expectation. A new building at Leiston called the Long Shop was erected in 1852 for the mass production of the engines on an early assembly line principle. By the 1870s ninety per cent of production was exported to central and eastern Europe and the colonies.

Richard and his brother Newson were responsible for many improvements in their home towns of Leiston and Aldeburgh. There was a natural rivalry between the two brothers, agitated by their quick tempers. Often they would fall out and peace would only be restored by the quiet perseverance of their wives, themselves sisters. They were however responsible for bringing clean water and gas to the towns, and for together holding the licence for shipping at Slaughden. Newson built houses using bricks from his own brickworks and Richard built houses for his workmen and a works institute where the men could better themselves educationally. Despite having little education themselves Richard sent his two younger sons to Rugby and Newson sent his four sons to good public schools and, despite at first expressing horror, encouraged his daughters in their thirst for knowledge. Elizabeth, his second daughter, became the first woman to qualify as a doctor in Britain in 1865 despite prejudiced opposition. In 1872 she opened the first hospital for women, later renamed Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital. She was the first woman to be elected to a school board and was elected the first Lady Mayor in Britain, of Aldeburgh, in 1908. She also supported the campaign for the right for women to vote. Her

younger sister, Millicent Garrett Fawcett was also a leading suffragist in the movement for the emancipation of women and was one of the founders of Newnham College Cambridge.

Richard Garrett III died in 1866 and was succeeded first by his eldest son Richard IV and in 1884 by his youngest son, Frank senior. The business flourished until the end of World War One when for various reasons it ran into difficulties. In 1932 the receivers were called in and the company was bought by Beyer Peacock of Manchester. Following the Second World War during which, amongst other things, the company made munitions, a diverse number of products were made by Garretts, culminating in machines for making cardboard boxes. In 1976 Beyer Peacock were bought by NCI Holdings Ltd. of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, who sold it on to NICOL in 1979. They in their wisdom put the Leiston company once more into receivership in 1980, soon after its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 1978.

In the 1960's the manufacturing activity at Garretts had moved from the original site to the more modern one nearer the railway station and the company then made plans to redevelop the town site with housing. Attention was drawn by the Suffolk Preservation Society to the significance of the Long Shop as an important example of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century engineering workshop design and construction, and in 1976 a group of enthusiastic local people, supported by the top management of Richard Garrett Engineering Works Ltd met and agreed that conversion of the Long Shop to a museum seemed the most obvious and natural use.

The Long Shop Museum was opened by Sir Joshua Rowley, then Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, on 28 April 1984. The Museum reflects the history of the company and the Garrett family and contains agricultural implements, steam engines, tools, pictures, documents and exhibits illustrating local history and power through the ages. During the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year over 13,500 visitors passed through its doors. The Museum is regarded as one of the most important industrial museums in the country and is supported by grants from Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Leiston Town Council but is mainly manned by volunteers. It has received Heritage Lottery Fund grants enabling it to build the Garrett Room, a useful education centre and meeting area, to



restore the ancient well and water tower, and to restore the works locomotive *Sirapite*. On 27 March 2010, the restored *Sirapite* was introduced to the public at an Open Day. It was built in 1906 by Aveling & Porter and its four-year restoration was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other donors. *Sirapite* is a hybrid shunting engine, a cross between a traction engine which runs on the road and a locomotive which runs on rails. It was bought in 1929 to replace Suffolk Punch horses, to transport goods and materials between the factory and the railway station, and was used in Leiston until 1966. It has been restored to full working order and runs on a short piece of rail in the car park. Other steam engines on show in the Museum include Princess Marina, built in 1916, Consuelo Allen, a 10-ton 1923 road-roller, and the only surviving example of the Garrett Suffolk Punch ploughing tractor known as the Joker, built in 1919. Each year the end of the Museum's season is celebrated by a "Final Fling" day when other owners bring their engines to join in the fun. In October 2009 Kingsley Curtis brought his 1923 3 NHP 6-ton Aveling and Porter Tractor named Old Peculiar and Trevor Wrench came with his 1919 7 NHP Clayton and Shuttleworth engine named Rambler.

In the lobby outside the workshop is an enormous Union Flag on the wall which belonged to 4th Bn Suffolk Regiment and was hoisted in the 'Japs' POW Camp on 16 August 1945.

Inside are the original Richard Garrett and Sons boardroom table made in the 1890's and 8 chairs brought from Manchester to Leiston in 1976 by Beyer Peacock

### **The Garretts at Framlingham**

In 1862 a group of prominent Suffolk gentlemen formed a committee to set up a college for middle class boys in Suffolk, in memory of Prince Albert who had died the previous December. The site chosen was Framlingham. No public money was made available and Richard Garrett III was appointed chief fundraiser for the venture. One of his sons in law, the Rev F. A. Johnson, was secretary to the Founders and author of the promotional pamphlet encouraging support. The architect appointed to design the building, Frederick Peck (1828-1875) of Furnival's Inn, London, Architect and Civil Engineer, married the youngest daughter of Richard Garrett. Richard and Abraham Garrett, his second cousin, were founding Members of the Corporation.

Members of the family who contributed £500 each towards the appeal included Richard and Abraham Garrett. Richard Garrett & Sons, the company, donated the Lodge and Entrance Gates estimated at £500. Mrs Richard Garrett paid "for the erection of the Nave of the Chapel sufficient for Divine Service" (first used on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1867).

Five members of the Garrett family were governors in the first 60 years of the college; Richard Garrett III, his youngest son, Frank Garrett Senior JP, DL, his grandson Col. Sir Frank Garrett KCB, JP, DL, Newson's youngest son, George Garrett, J.P, who was appointed member of the Corporation 1887, and his daughter Elizabeth's husband, James Skelton Anderson.

There was no ceremony of any sort on the opening of the College on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1865 in the presence of the headmaster and Richard Garrett. It took in 145 boys who "presented themselves", to be followed a week later by another one hundred and twenty three, all boarders and all but twenty five from Suffolk.

John Booth in his "First Sixty Years" of the College published in 1925 said: "In all the preliminary labours, Richard Garrett was untiring, and in addition to conducting a heavy correspondence he never ceased to advocate the aims of the school in speeches at meetings and in communications to the press. In February 1865 before the opening, he wrote :

'It has been erected from the designs of the most approved among a number of competitive architects at a cost which, together with the furniture and fittings, will amount to at least twenty five thousand pounds. Its situation in the immediate neighbourhood of the old town of Framlingham is healthful, pleasant and picturesque and invested with great historic interest. Its grounds are fifteen acres in extent and every precaution that science can suggest has been taken to render the building, if possible, fire proof, or in case of such a calamity as fire to furnish the means of speedily extinguishing it.'

John Booth (*ibid*) says: "The rooms were cheered in 1907 by the gift by G H Garrett of ten photogravure reproductions of famous pictures and a further gift of pictures received in 1918 when thirteen Medici prints in colours including eight historical portraits were included"

There was an Appeal in 1886 to fund £3,000 of debt. Donors included:

Abraham Garrett	£100
Frank Garrett Senior	£100
Mrs F Peck	£100

There was further funding of £5,000 for an Annual Scholarship and donors included:

Mrs Newson Garrett	£200
Frank Garrett Senior	100 guineas
G H Garrett	£50

Booth expounds: "G H Garrett proposed the subscriptions were invested in the name of the Charity Commissioners Official Trustee and the interest be applied to founding an entrance scholarship of about £20 a year, tenable at the Framlingham Albert Memorial College for three years; such scholarship to be offered annually and to be called the Queen Victoria Scholarship."

On his retirement as Headmaster in 1913, the Revd Dr O D Inskip said,  
"I desire to take this opportunity of giving expression, in the most emphatic way possible, to the indebtedness of the school to the efforts made on its behalf, and the keen interest taken in it, by the Garrett family. Two distinguished members of that family have at different times, not so many years ago, distributed the prizes: I refer to Mrs. Garrett Anderson, whose late husband was a prominent member of the governing body, and Mrs Fawcett. Mr Frank Garrett for fourteen years was chairman of the governing body, and he was succeeded by his cousin, Mr. George Garrett. No one knows better than I do the amount of work that Mr. Frank Garrett and Mr. George Garrett have done in the interest of the School as chairmen of the governing body. I wish to express my personal thanks to both of them for the manner in which they have at all times supported me in my aims and plans for what I considered the advancement of the School. My relations of all the members of the governing body have always been of the most pleasant and the most delightful description."

George Garrett, Chairman of Governors, then handed Mrs Inskip a gold bracelet studded with turquoise and diamonds and to the Headmaster a silver cup bearing inscription and School arms on retirement of Dr. Inskip on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1913.

The connection between the family and the school continued until 1988. Col. Sir Frank Garrett was a governor until 1949. His daughter Phyllis's husband, Dr. Daniel Craig was school medical officer from after the Second World War until 1967; their two older sons, Frank and Ian were pupils there, as were Frank's four children, the last leaving in 1988.

This ends a synopsis of some of the contributions of the Garrett family to the Albert Memorial College which greatly earned the giving of their name to one of the founder four Houses.

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The following is a family tree of the Garrett family members who attended the College and showing the connection with the Craig family through marriage.

**CRAIG/GARRETT FAMILY (Dates shown are years at Framlingham)**

