

Franks Forages No 31

Lixmount

The portrait of Thomas Williamson-Ramsay states 'of Maxton and Lixmount.' So I have often wondered where or what is or was Lixmount? Well, it was a large house owned by the Williamson-Ramsays in Leith.

Lixmount was built around 1792 by the lawyer George Andrew whose second wife's family was from Lix in Perthshire. From then on the house was occupied by several owners/tenants until its demolition in 1906.



In 1812 the house was acquired by Thomas Williamson, a merchant in Leith. His portrait by Raeburn hangs on the staircase at Charlecote. He was in partnership with Robert Ramsay of Maxton who died in 1814. In 1832 on the death of Mrs Ramsay (the first Archibald, see *forage 4A*) Williamson inherited Maxton in accordance with Ramsay's will and took the name Ramsay added to his own. Thomas died in 1838 and the property passed to his eldest son, George.

The portrait of George (right) by the French artist Charles-Achille d'Hardiviller shows him in the uniform of the Scottish Yeomanry in which he was a lieutenant. Lixmount is in the background. George died in December 1841 aged 50, unmarried so the property passed to his brother Thomas.



Thomas was in Bombay, employed by the East India Co. and he returned in 1842 aged 44, to attend to family matters. (The portrait of Thomas junior, left, also hangs on the staircase at Charlecote and the centrepiece presented to him by the citizens of Bombay stands on the Dining Room table).



From 1843 the house was let to a succession of tenants until Thomas' death in London in 1871 aged 73. Thereafter Lixmount was sold. Thomas also never married and his younger brother, Robert (who did not succeed, although married) died without issue in 1886. The portrait of Robert, above right, is also by d'Hardiviller and he was a captain in the 42nd Foot, the Black Watch. Thomas left his employers and lived a gentleman's life in London living in Queen's Gate. He probably left Lixmount in the hands of agents.

Sir Henry Fairfax, 1st, baronet married Archibald Williamson at Lixmount in 1830 and Mrs. Ramsay died there in 1832. Mary Somerville may also have known the house if she attended her brother Henry's wedding! Hans Christian Andersen stayed



there when he visited Edinburgh in 1847 and the blue plaque shown commemorates the event. It is placed on one of the houses built on the land after demolition. *Frank Storr*

I am indebted to Rosemary Philip and Dr. Hugh Dinwoodie of Leith who have kindly provided information on Lixmount and who are researching the history of the property with a view to publishing the results of their enquiries.