

The Beginning

At the time of the founding of the College in 1867, much of Eastbourne was comparatively new. Until the 1850s, the town consisted of a number of distinct districts; Old Town, Southbourne (Grove Road area), Meads and Seahouses (Marine Parade). These areas were separated from one another by fields and linked by little more than country lanes.

The Duke of Devonshire, a major landowner, decided to develop the town into a fashionable resort and set about constructing wide roads and large villas to attract the wealthy. It was said at the time, that Eastbourne was built by gentlemen for gentlemen and Dr Charles Hayman, a local doctor, realised that the establishment of a public school could only enhance the town's reputation.

Grand Parade in the 1870s



The Duke and Dr Hayman

In May 1865, Dr Hayman met with over two hundred people in Eastbourne to promote a scheme to establish a public school in the town.



Dr Hayman

By June, a committee was formed and the 7th Duke of Devonshire was contacted to try and secure his support for the project.

The Duke agreed and became the College's first benefactor. With his support and financial assistance, the College began to grow. The current 12th Duke is the College charity's president.



The 7th Duke of Devonshire

Ellesmere Villas



The Revd James Wood (left) was appointed the first headmaster and the College opened in 1867 in Ellesmere Villas, Spencer Road. There were only 15 boys at first but by the following year the number had risen to 39. Wood soon resigned and started another school in the town. With only a handful of staff and boys, the College reopened under the headmastership of the Revd Thompson Podmore.



Ellesmere Villas, Spencer Road



The Revd Wood with the first pupils and staff

The current site

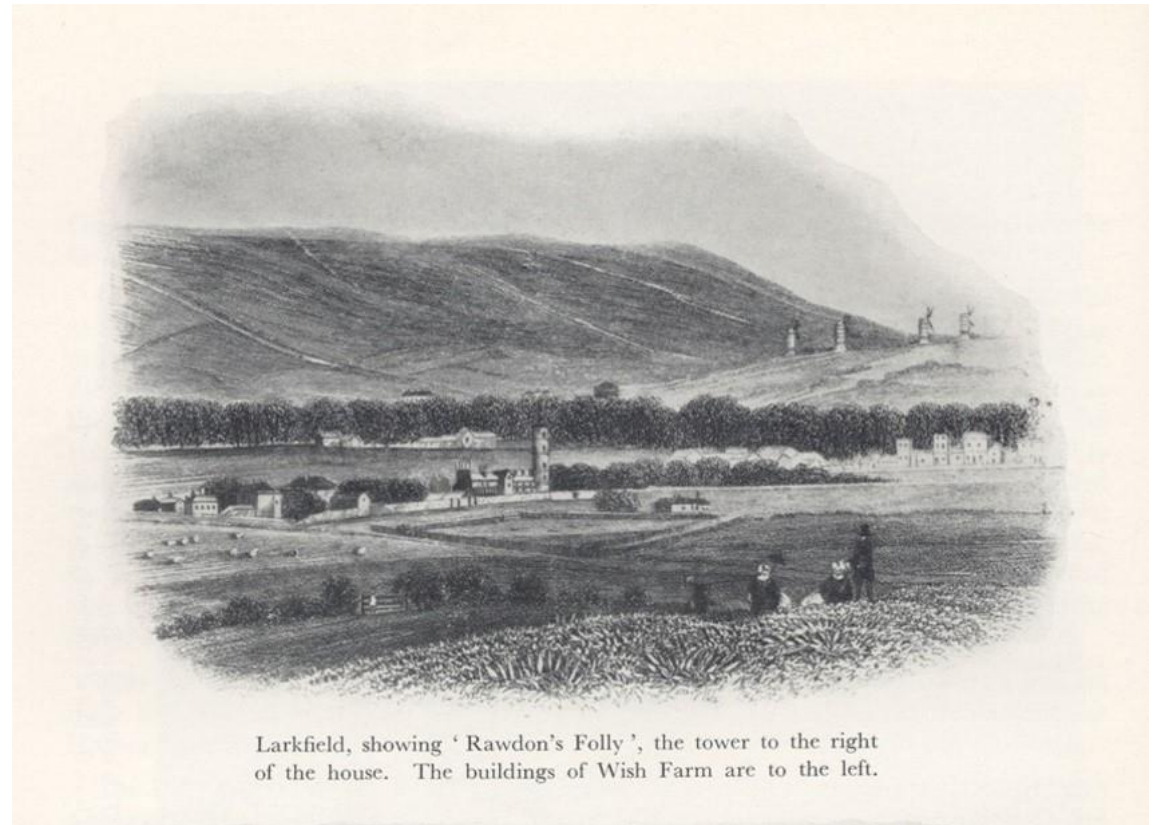
The College moved to its present site in 1870. Ten years previously, the Duke of Devonshire had bought Larkfield, a house then on the outskirts of the town.

Larkfield had been built by a retired naval officer, Charles Rawdon, in the 1830s. The grounds included a triangular swimming pool with a dressing room in the form of a ship and adjacent to the house was a fifty foot tower known locally as Rawdon's Folly.

The Duke offered to build onto the house rooms for the College, rent to be paid to him by the school.

On 30 July 1870, Lady Edward Cavendish laid the foundation stone of the first of the College buildings, now School House.

Larkfield later became absorbed into School House and is now the housemistress's home.



Larkfield

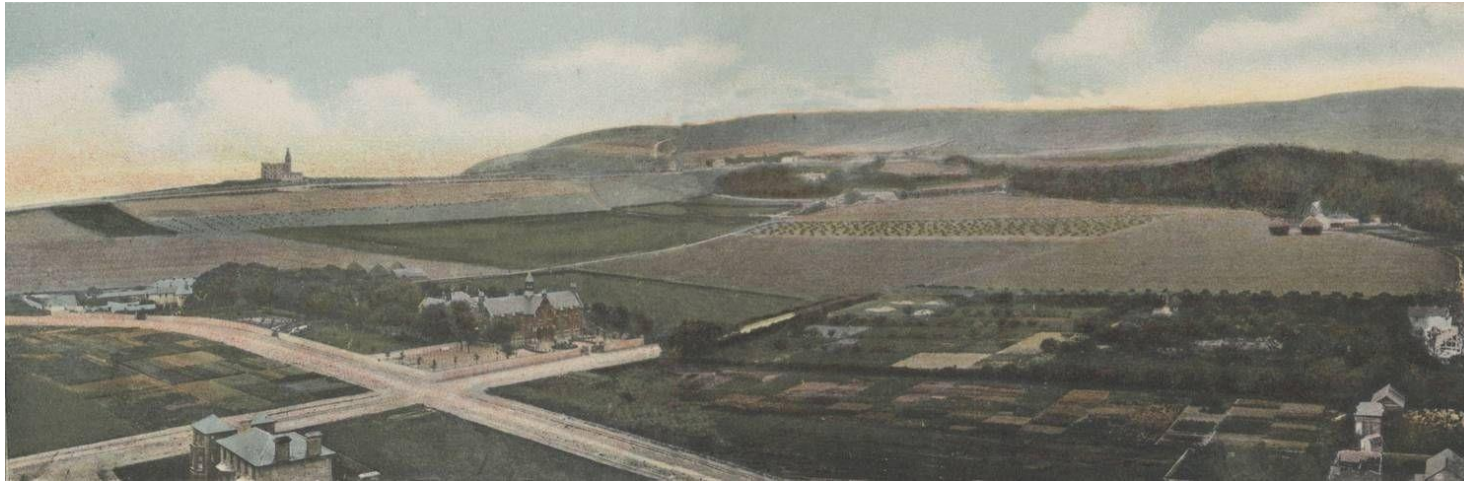


A close-up of the house in the 1880s. The building looks very similar to this today

A later view of Larkfield with School House and the chapel on the right



Open land



A view across the College site c. 1874 looking towards Meads from the tower of St Saviour's Church; the new college buildings are left of centre



Wish Farm (later absorbed by the College)



Eastbourne 1870s – new houses being built

College arms and motto



The original coat of arms was designed by Mark Antony Lower, antiquarian of Lewes, shortly before the College opened in 1867 but altered to its present form in 1922.

It features a Tudor rose in the centre to represent part of the arms of the Gilbert family (the other great landowners in Eastbourne apart from the Duke) and the stag's head which forms part of the Cavendish family's (the Dukes of Devonshire) coat of arms.

The motto *Ex Oriente Salus* has been translated by some as meaning *Safety [or Health] from the East[bourne]* and was suggested by Mr Lower.

The charter granting the College permission to use the coat of arms was granted by the College of Heralds in 1933



Early College buildings



School House, Blackwater Road

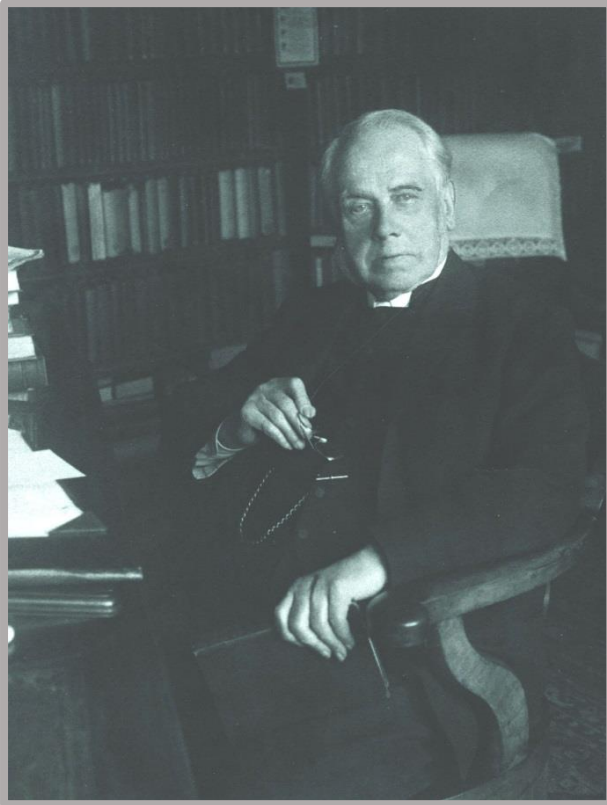
The front is now hidden by a later addition built in 1902. The foundation stone (which was blank) was laid by Lady Edward Cavendish (daughter-in-law of the 7th Duke) in 1870. The bell in the tower was rung for chapel services, lessons and breaks.

The 'New Buildings' were opened in 1877 to accommodate the increasing number of pupils. The building consisted of six classrooms on two floors; it was added to later in the 19th century and is now the Design & Technology Building.

*New Buildings from College Field;
note the bell tower of School House on the right*



The Revd Dr Charles Crowden (Headmaster 1888-95)



Before The Revd Crowden's arrival, pupil numbers had fallen to 60 and the school was in danger of closure. He arrived with 90 boys from his previous school, Cranbrook, to 'steady the ship'.

There was now more money to be spent on expanding the school and Crowden oversaw an ambitious construction project.

Among the new buildings were a new gym, and a chemistry laboratory. The

chapel was also extended.

Perhaps one of the more unusual structures was the octagonal Cavendish Library (right), built adjacent to School House in 1889 - another of Henry Currey's designs. As with the other projects, it was built with the 7th Duke's financial assistance.

