

# The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove

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**B**Y courtesy of Sir Alfred E. Pease, Bart., we have had in our hands a copy of his type-written book on *The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, dated 1907. It is a thick quarto volume opening with an introduction to the Gurney family, with genealogical tables, and then occupied with letters of Joseph Gurney (1757-1830) see xx. 71ff), of Lakenham Grove, or The Grove, Norwich, and Index to his Journals. Sir Alfred Pease has readily given leave for extracts to be taken and we have freely availed of this permission as our readers will soon discover and, we hope, appreciate.

The following are some matters of interest culled from this book.

## Bachelors in Leeds Meeting

Joseph Gurney to his sister, Rachel Barclay, at 108, Cheapside, London, 9th August, 1776 :

“ We got to Leeds ; being first day we accordingly went to meeting with our host Eman<sup>l</sup> Elam, & at the conclusion of it shook hands with numerous F<sup>ds</sup> who gave us numerous invitations to numerous houses. Indeed this place for freedom & hospitality puts me the most in mind of my own native city than any I have been in. Each Friend has connection with the other, & every door is open for the reception of strangers. If I was inclined to account for this amiable sociability in any other way than as it proceeds from goodness of heart, I shou<sup>d</sup> say that the number of old Batchelors promoted it, who, having no Companion to share their solitary hours, are prompted to fly to the Company of Strangers for relief, there being in this meeting but 22 married Couples out of 80 Familys.” (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 5, p. 31.)

The Elam family was a well-known Quaker family of Leeds, from about 1710. (*The Friend* (Lond.), vol. 21 (1881), p. 122.) There is a news-cutting in **D** which describes Emanuel Elam as “ a considerable American merchant in woollen-cloth. He retired from business several years before his death in 1796 with a fortune of near £200,000 . . . His brother Samuel . . . ”

## Samuel Neale

Joseph Gurney to Elizabeth Gurney, “ 24th June, 1783 ” :

“ I left Cork last seventh day after taking leave of many Friends at whose houses I had been entertain<sup>d</sup> with great attention. Sam<sup>l</sup> Neale

lives in a most delightful situation on the side of a hill & has a garden in which he takes great delight, the best stock'd with fruits of all kinds & in the highest perfection, with which he seems to profit—both in body & mind—in mind as it affords him a comfortable retreat & in body as it supplies his table amply with good vegetables, & fruits the most delicious; indeed he seems the most perfect emblem of peace & plenty I think I know. I am sorry to say it is very different with poor Eben<sup>r</sup> Pike. . . .” (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 8, p. 18.)

For Samuel Neale, see vols. ii, vii, x, xiii, xvi, xx.

### Elizabeth Walker

If the following refers to Elizabeth Walker of New York State, it must have been less “fearful” than supposed, as this Friend died in 1827 (not 1821 as given in xvi. 15, xxi. 40).

Joseph Gurney to Jonathan Hutchinson, of Gedney, Lincs, 25 xii. 1824:

“I heard at Needham some fearful news of poor Elizabeth Walker. She had been at Petersburg 2 or 3 days, probably not suffer'd to remain there, and left it in a small unaccommodating vessel. I think to Embden a voyage of about 3 days. But the Vessel had not been heard of for a month, the fear is that it is lost, but I yet hope something may turn up. . . . The ravages of the Floods in that city [presumably, Petersburg] have been dreadful; the Wheelers are safe. In the midst, our Fr<sup>d</sup> Th<sup>s</sup> Shillitoe sat in his lodgings unconscious of the extremity of the case, whilst 3 women were drown'd in the very next house to him.” (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 17, p. 61.)

### Mary Leaver

Joseph Gurney to his mother, from Cardiff, vii. 1776:

“On our way to the Passage we took a meeting which Mary Lever had appointed at Kingsneston. She is an excellent Minister and a most facetious sensible Woman.” (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 5, p. 3.)

### Esther Tuke

Joseph Gurney to his brother, John Gurney, from Sheffield, viii. 1776:

“We went through the works of a Fr<sup>d</sup> whose name is Wyland [Hoyland]. He introduced us to his sister, Easter Took, w<sup>th</sup> whom we spent, in a most agreeable manner, that afternoon, and smook'd a pipe w<sup>th</sup> her in the evening.” (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 5, p. 39.)

### Bachelor Payton

In a long letter from Joseph Gurney to his mother at Robert Barclay's, 108, Cheapside, London, dated viii. 1776, we read:

“At Matlock we soon got acquainted with several, and particularly the brother of Catharine Phillips [née Payton], an old Bachelor, who has many peculiarities, mixed with a number of good qualities. He

attended us all the time & shew'd us all the civilitys in his power." (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 5, p. 54.)

### William Massey

Joseph Gurney, at Spalding, to his wife, 8 x. 1805 :

" I am now under the roof of a kind and wealthy Friend, in a house perfectly neat, with manners in part after the old fashion & in part partaking of the new. For instance I had a most excellent room and bed but no water in it. I went down to wash in a very neat kitchen & in a pewter bason. Thou hast perhaps heard of Will<sup>m</sup> Massey, my present Landlord, son by marriage to Jno. Bateman." (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 11, p. 16.)

### John Kendall of Colchester

Joseph Gurney, at Brentwood, to his wife, year only given, 1814 :

" Our first visit of interest [at Colchester ?] was to John Kendall. He is nearly bed-ridden & not so neat in bed as I wish to see old people, but his faculties were alive & his love peculiarly so. I think he may live some time [he died early in 1815, aged 88 years]. He ask'd me to kiss him which I cou'd not refuse tho' it was not just what I lik'd, though I felt much love to him." (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 11, p. 23.)

### John Taylor, Preacher and Schoolmaster

Joseph Gurney to his wife, from London, 20 v. 1794 :

" I met my f<sup>d</sup> P. Tucket and a very clever man, Taylor of Bristol, who came from the Dissinters into Society. He was a famous (I believe) preacher amongst them and now says a few words amongst us. We had much discourse together & thy Husband's active member was very busy. He seems master of all the Priestlian & other Doctrines even of more modern philosophy. Such a man bearing the simple standard of Quakerism felt therefore like encouragement to me, with whom the art of reasoning has, secretly, too great an influence." (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 11, p. 2.) See vol. xviii. 81.

### Clarkson's Life of Penn

Joseph Gurney, of Norwich, to Priscilla H. Gurney, at 2, Queen's Parade, Bath, 20 ii. 1813 :

" I yesterday called on Uncle Bland. He has had much to do of late in looking over some sheets of Clarkson's Life of William Penn. It seems as if it wou'd be a pleasant and an useful work. Uncle B. has furnished some anecdotes and is a good corrector." (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 13, p. 19.)

### Henry Frederick Smith, Schoolmaster, Darlington

Joseph Gurney to Priscilla H. Gurney, 24 i. 1819 :

" E. Fry has lately been to Blackwell [village near Darlington] with her two boys [probably, John Gurney, b. 1804 & William Storrs, b. 1806] to place them under the care of Fredk. Smith, Jr., who has a promising

school there. Our eldest grandson [Jonathan (1812-1820), son of Jonathan and Hannah (Gurney) Backhouse] goes with them and Hannah seems pleased with the opportunity of bestowing her guardianship to them all. (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 13, p. 257.) See xix. 105, 107, xx. 25.

### John Revoult

Joseph Gurney Bevan, at Hackney, to Joseph Gurney, at Norwich, xii. 1774 :

“ I do not know whether I told thee John Revoult was in Exeter Gaol. His Creditor, it seems, has consented to let him out provided he can pay his fees, for which end he had only about a third of their amount. D. Bell & myself have directed the remainder, about 4 guineas, to be advanced towards the release of our former preceptor.” (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 14, p. 5.) See xix. 25, 28, xx. 82, 86.

### Cupid among Gurneys

Joseph Gurney Bevan to Joseph Gurney, 8 ii. 1775 :

“ The joy on the occasion of Jack’s offer to Katherine will be very general. Everybody loves him, therefore every[one] will be pleased to see their favorite united to a woman of whom either acquaintance or fame must have taught them the excellence. . . . Thy observation of the great influence of Cupid in your family is just. . . . I do not seem inclined to claim my privilege as a Gurney & put in for a share of the little archer’s influence & I think thou may pass at least two or three years more in celibacy without any slight to the power of love.” (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 14, pp. 7, 8.) J. G. B. married in 1776 and J. G. in 1784.

### Accident to Elizabeth Fry’s son John

Emma Gurney, aft. Pease, at Wanstead, to her sister, Hannah C. Backhouse, at Darlington, “ June 20, 1818 ” :

“ Edward Chapman has just called here with an account that John Fry [1804- ] had set fire to a pound of Gunpowder and blown up his face in a terrible manner. His hair was singed and his eyebrows and lashes off, which Astley Cooper says will not grow again. They say that had not the window been open the room would have been blown up where all the children were in bed. Rachel Fry dashed a bason of water into his face which they say was of the greatest use, as it prevented the Gunpowder from shrivelling up the skin. Edward says he is a most curious figure, his face entirely covered, with a slit for his mouth. They are fearful that he is feverish to day.” (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*.)

### “ A Perfect Model of True Hospitality ”

Joseph Gurney, at Waterford, to Elizabeth Gurney, at H. Thrale & Co<sup>s</sup>, Southwark, London :

“ Reach’d the house of Rich<sup>d</sup> Shackleton at Ballitore, where he resides King of a colony of Friends, who are plac’d in & about that delightful

Village, which is situated in a pleasant Valley, well cloath'd with trees & water'd by a lucid brook. The houses are chiefly inhabited by branches of his family & the stile they live in is the most perfect model of true hospitality & primitive simplicity I ever was witness to. 'All Friends & all Strangers find a welcome here, & whilst there remains a place at the board or half a bed in the house, no one is turn'd from the door. The evening we got there, there were so many in the house that even *man & wife* were obliged to be separated to make room for lodging. And the true motherly kindness the excellent woman (R. S.'s wife show'd to all her guests was peculiarly pleasing, as her care of them was accompanied with a chearfulness which remov'd all fear of giving her trouble ; whilst her good husband was alike attentive to every individual but without any of those shackles [!] which frequently make such attention irksome.'" (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 8, p. 8.)

### The Appeal of Joseph Foster, 1814

A letter from Joseph Gurney to his wife, dated from Brick Lane, Spitalfields, London, 5 mo. 24, 1814, gives some account of the appeal of Joseph Foster :

" The Committee on Appeals reported they were ready with their decision on Joseph Foster's business. The appellant had a long wail. He began, however, about 12, spoke an hour and the meeting adjourn'd. We began again this afternoon at 4 and he held out till  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 6. The respondents are to begin their reply tomorrow at 4. . . . The subject is really important, conducted on his part with much ability & temper, & I expect we shall find the respondents not less able than himself. Our J. J. G. has been Clerk to the Committee and an able agent in it. The subject is interesting. The real question is within a nutshell but the branches are very extensive. I am pleas'd to find our Sons interest'd in it and not a little knowing, at least so Henry appeared to me in our walk. The subject, thou knowest, is on what is call'd the Divinity of Christ and a *thin partition* tho' important, I think, divides us.

" Tomorrow morning we are in expectation of the Dutchess of Oldenburghs Company at Devonshire House. This intimation is given to Samuel Gurney thro' Charles Buxton, who has been with her Russian connections." (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 11, p. 24.)

Joseph Foster (c. 1761-1835) lived in state at Bromley Hall (xvi. 10, 13). He was a well-known philanthropist. William Ball has some verses on " Joseph Talwin Foster and his Father, Joseph Foster (of Bromley)" in his *Notices of Kindred and Friends Departed*, 1865. William Ball writes :

" The Father to Christ's cause was bound,  
And fitting was his word,  
' I die a Christian,' when the sound  
Of sudden call he heard ! "

Joseph Foster died suddenly at Dorking.

### J. J. Gurney and E. Fry in Ireland

Joseph Gurney, to Jonathan Hutchinson, of Gedney, Lincs., 29 iii. 1827 :

“ J. J. G. travels in admiration [i.e. wonder] from day to day of his dear sister's powers & self-possession. Their introductions & their views have been peculiar—from Friends to the Secretary of State, and from him to the Vice Regent—from both assured of their utmost protection and giving them facilities to visit all prisons & public Institutions. Marquis Wellesley appointed a private interview with them and his Lady (deem'd very high & a *Roman Catholic*, had Betsy to console her in her sick room, who found her most quiet & humble. . . . They have had their conference with Catholic priests & *Bishops* (if I am right) with the Archbishop of Dublin, *Maghee*, (the writer on the atonement) and many other Divines—with the Judges of the Land on Capital punishment . . . & so countenanc'd altogether that E. Fry was plac'd by the side of the Judge of Assize at his desire when the prisoners were tried. . . . Their way has been studded with many anecdotes [for one see G. K. Lewis's *Elizabeth Fry*, 1909] but one of the most curious is from Londonderry. They arrived at the Hotel there before they were expected, but as soon as known, the Bells of the Cathedral began to ring, & when they went forward to visit the Jail, the Mayor & Corporation huddled on their gowns & follow'd them in all haste. They afterwards dined at the *Bishops*, and the next morning when they were to have a public meeting, the Bishop & his Wife were the persons personally to inspect the preparations for it. The Bishop then advis'd a Meeting in the Dissenters Meetinghouse. It was held in the evening, & the Bishop, his Lady & many others from the palace were perceiv'd by J. J. G. & E. F., seated just before them—seated in a *Dissenters Mt.* house & heard the *Quakers* preach, & two of those *Quakers females*. Some symptom of toleration ! ” (*The Gurneys of Lakenham Grove*, sect. 17, p. 66.) A different view of this visit to Ireland appears in Mrs. Greer's *Quakerism*, 1851, pp. 165 ff.

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### Dr. Arnold on Quakerism

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Dr. Arnold wrote to Rev. F. C. Blackstone, in 1835 :—

“ I have always thought that the Quakers stand nobly distinguished from the multitude of fanatics, by seizing the true point of Christian advancement,—the development of the principles of the Gospel in the improvement of mankind. It is a grievous pity that some foolishnesses should have so marred their efficiency, or their efforts against wars and oaths would surely ere this, have been more successful.”

*From Dean Stanley's biography of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, 3rd ed., 1890, p. 264.*

*Forwarded by J. Ernest Grubb.*