

on an AYC racing buoy. This is likely to be a corruption of 'Chaplins Creek' given the proximity of Cowton. For Richard Chaplin's farming and earlier smuggling activities this hard would have facilitated both the export of his butter and cheese and import of bran

We have yet to find any vaults at Cowton where contraband might have been hidden. A plan of the house is needed to identify any unexplained spaces. It might be worth searching the crag pits near Cowton where caves formerly existed. Judith Hilliard, who lived at Red House Farm, recalled the existence of a crag pit cave near Cowton. *The Crown* at Snape was also said to have a smugglers' tunnel.

### The Regency addition

Richard and Elizabeth's 116 acres were surveyed by Isaac Johnson in 1813. Interestingly, Johnson uses the name Cowton Farm. Why the change? Maybe Richard thought that this better reflected the prosperous farm it undoubtedly was. However, the owner is 'Richard Chaplin, Gent', marking a man of means or leisure. The lands he owned or leased extended eastwards to the saltings on the edge of the Alde. The other boundaries abutted the Sudbourne estate of the Marquess of Hertford.

A small wing in Regency style, comprising two reception rooms and two bedrooms, was added around 1841 after Victoria came to the throne. It faces south and was built of London stocks – in strong contrast to the Suffolk reds of the attached farmhouse. Its front door faces a steep incline,



Cowton. Richard Chaplin's farmhouse is on the left. James, his son, built around 1841 the Regency extension.

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impractical for wheeled vehicles, and a small railed garden.

### Richard's children

Richard's son, James, was bequeathed Cowton and his other children were left other properties and money. The 1841 census shows that the house was occupied by a farmer, his wife and two farm servants. James is recorded as living there in the 1851 census. James had married Sarah Smith and her father, Francis Smith, having only daughters, left them money under their control as well as making James a trustee of his estate and an inheritor. It may have been that Sarah with her independent income had paid for the Regency extension. In 1829, James Chaplin had granted for £150 p.a. a 15-year lease of shooting rights with the Marquess of Hertford.

By the time James was living at Cowton in 1851, the census records eleven people living there: his wife Sarah, four children, a nurse and a visitor, two house-servants and a farm labourer. The house only has five bedrooms so eleven would have been a crowd and they would certainly have needed the extra space the extension provided. Perhaps the servants lived in the Cart House built about that



Gravestone of Richard Chaplin, All Saints Church, Sudbourne. © Simon Barrow