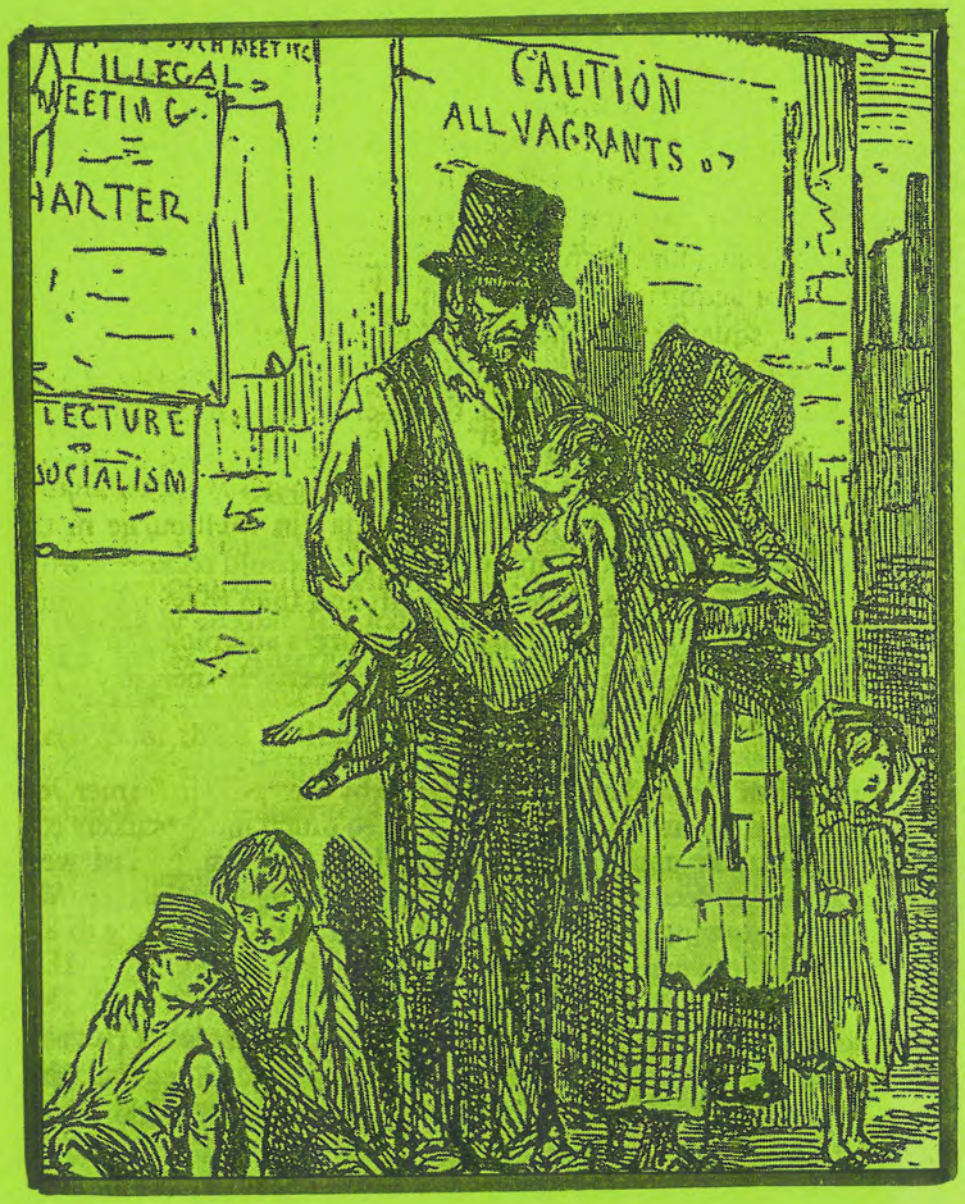
A VICTORIAN GIRL



D.P. Lindegaard

A VICTORIAN GIRL

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This book is dedicated to the memory of

Mary Britton nee Leighton, 1884-1973

With thanks to Julia Hartnett, David Ware, Bill Cooke, the "Indiaman" and especially to Jill, Linda & Christine.

GIRLS'ORPHAN SCHOOL, ca 1876

Chapter 1 :- At Home

Mary was not of our family, but she adopted us and during my childhood, which coincided with her widowhood, she was in and out of our house all the time.

She had long grey hair she could sit on when "down" – (she calculated time from "When I put my hair up" which was when she turned seventeen) - but which she generally wore in a complicated braided bun, the tyranny of which she only escaped in the last few years of her life when she made the sudden decision to have the lot cut off. She was delighted with her new short bob, and never regretted it.

She had been brought up in a children's home, whence she had been released in the early years of the 20th century into the drudgery of domestic service with the Hardy family. The Hardy's were coal merchants in Downend, in the parish of Mangotsfield, on the Gloucestershire side of Bristol. Mr. Hardy or "Mr. Walter" * was "my master" and Mrs. Hardy, "my mistress". Mary adored her. Another member of the family was "Miss Marjorie" who sounded rather grand, and who had Centre Court seats at Wimbledon every year.

Reflecting these old fashioned forms of address, Mary encouraged us children – my brother and I – to call her not "Mrs. Britton" which she was, but "Mrs. Mary". She would have been proud that she recognised my brother as being rather out of the ordinary run of the boys who played in the street around our dead end row of terraced houses. She predicted he would be famous one day, probably as Prime Minister. He didn't take up politics, but he did become the celebrated Professor Colin Pillinger, mastermind of the "Beagle 2".

Her first sweetheart, like those of so many more girls of Mary's generation was killed in the mud of Flanders. A second suitor reneged when she underwent an operation for a stomach tumour and allowed himself to be convinced she was not strong enough for married life. The tumour proved benign and she survived her timid swain by many years! Finally, in middle age, she married Samuel Britton, a widower with two teenage sons, some twenty years older than herself, and came to live next door to us at 34 Victoria Park, Kingswood.

She loved her "little home" for it was the first place she had ever had of her own. In later years, after Sam's death, she could not climb the stairs and occupied the downstairs front room. She was thrilled when the social security provided her with a new bed, and with money deemed enough to live on, but to her, such riches, she wanted to give most of it away.

There had been an elder sister who had died at the children's home, but now, as far as she was aware, she was entirely alone in the whole world without a single blood relation. She would write – in her clear Victorian copper-plate hand – to anyone she saw called Leighton, her maiden name, in newspapers, in the hope they might be a long lost relation.

I remember one reply "from a gentleman who had always wished he had a sister, but sadly knew he had not," said Mary.

She recalled Queen Victoria's visit to Bristol, and a funny old woman, holding her skirts aloft, who had run out from the crowd, shouting "I want to see my Queen" before being hustled off by the bobbies.

The Queen Visits Bristol – Mary was there

One day she told my mother a terrible secret.

"Nobody knows it now," she said, "So I want to tell you, my dear, the reason we were in the Home. My father killed my mother."

My mother and I kept the secret, occasionally mulled over it, but told no-one during Mary's lifetime. It was many years later with twenty years of family history under my belt that I decided to try to research the story. Who were Mary's father and mother? Had her father been hanged for murder?

With regard to the Home or school she attended, I vaguely remembered mention of Mary Carpenter's famous establishment for wayward girls at the Red Lodge, Park Row, but there was nobody called Leighton in the matron's book. I tried other schools and orphanages without success.

Applying the basic family history tenet of working from the known to the unknown, I looked for Mary's marriage to Sam Britton. I discovered it took place at Christchurch, Downend, in the ~~parish of Mangotsfield~~ on the 10th April, 1939. She was described Mary Ann Leighton, of full age, spinster, of 14, Westerleigh Road, Downend. The witnesses were Jessie Miller, a school friend of Mary's, who I had met several times, Herbert Henry Britton, Sam's son, and "Mr. Walter", her employer, Walter Graham Hardy.

I had not known Mary was Mary Ann. Her father's name was left blank.

As far as I was aware, there was no suggestion of illegitimacy – but her father, supposing the story was correct, had been a murderer, and his name had accordingly been expunged from memory and from the record.

I checked "The Times" indexes for the heading "Murder" connected with the name "Leighton" in the 1890's without result.

This was way before the Family Records Centre, and even farther from Births, Marriages and Deaths indexed on the internet, and I began the ordeal of searching the card index of St Catherine's House, not entirely convinced I would find Mary's birth under "Leighton". She herself had pronounced her name "Lee-tun", which was a clue, had I but known it.

Then I had a stroke of luck. In Elizabeth Ralph's "Guide to the Bristol Archives Office", under "Statutory Authorities, School Boards", there is a sub-section "Ragged Schools", which contained:

"Carlton House Industrial School. Registers 1876-1924; Reports on Pupils 1876-1900. Matron's Journal, 1882-1923."

Bingo! The Admissions Register contained:

"No. 192. Mary Ann Leighton. Admitted the 6th May, 1891. Finally discharged by secretary and staff the 16th January, 1899. Gone to Mary Carpenter, Bishop Street, St Paul's."

So Mary Carpenter had been correct, but it had not been at the Red Lodge.

Carlton House kept in touch with Mary's progress, and recorded her return visits, and the visits staff made to see her:

"1899, June, Spent the day at the school
December, Spent Christmas with us, looking well.
1900, January 9th, Spent the evening
April 6th, Spent two days at the school. Looking very well
December 28th, attended annual tea. Satisfactory.
1901, March, visited the school. Looks well.
November 15th, visited Mary Leighton in the Home.
December 30th. Attended the annual gathering. Satisfactory.
1902, (No date) still in the same House. Visited the girl there, who (is) bright and well cared for. Satisfactory.
1903, January 9th. Attended the annual tea. Same house. Satisfactory."

This was her last appearance in the register, and I assume she must have gone into service at the Hardy household sometime shortly after.

Elated as I was at finding this record, it told me nothing of how and why Mary came to be at Carlton House. I did not have to wait long for the answer lay among "Reports on Pupils".

"Mary Ann Leighton

Period of Detention: 12 years
Admitted the 7th May 1891, aged seven years. Sent under section 14. Found wandering."

The register tells the sad story of several lives –

"This little maid is sister to Elizabeth Leighton, sent to this school four years ago. The mother died after Elizabeth came here. Another grandmother took the child to Cardiff and had kept her there since on parish pay but the child grew older and had to attend school. The old woman, who is 78 years of age (took her) to preserve this little one from a bad father who…."

.....and here my eyes popped out of my head –

"KILLED HER DAUGHTER

"by his bad living. Came to Bristol in order to get this little one with her sister. Mary Ann was poorly clad and very emaciated from want of proper food, but not ill-used."

So all was not entirely as it had seemed. Mary's father had not murdered her mother, but had certainly been held responsible for her death.

Who was it who had placed on Mary the burden she carried with her for life? Somebody must have told her "Your father killed your mother!" To me it has all the hallmarks of a gleeful malicious child, who, looking furtively at the records and reading a line out of context could not wait to impart such thrilling information. Perhaps it went all round the school first. Poor Mary. "Nobody knows it now", she had said, obviously thankfully, to my mother. Clearly the half truth had once been common knowledge

There was one further entry on the page.

1899. "Gone to Mary Carpenter" – which I knew already from the other entry book. "To be protected. Not fit for service."

the sister

The trail still hot, I looked for Elizabeth Leighton and found her in the Admissions Book.

"Admitted January 28th, 1887
On licence, April 10th, 1894
Died April 27th, 1894"

And in the Reports on Pupils Register:

"Elizabeth Leaton (crossed out, and Leighton substituted) Admitted January 28th 1887 aged 7 years. Sent section 14. Found wandering.

"The mother and grandmother of this child go round the country begging. Also suspected of being immoral. The father is a lazy, evil man, abuses the wretched woman when she cannot supply him with the money for drink. He plays cards all the time and the woman is lying dying from immoral living. It is a sad case. A fine young woman, she belongs to Wales, and the man to England. This little maid never went to school and knows nothing. She looks a bright little maid." – (This Alludes to Xtian teaching)

Then, suddenly, there was Mary too.....

"There is also a lovely child, younger than this one, who has now a weary life with the sick woman. This child was fairly clean but very poorly clad."

Elizabeth again:

"March 2nd, 1887. Took this child to see her dying mother. They are in the greatest poverty. The child left them all, quite happy to be away."

Then the bald entry of Elizabeth's death: "Died April 27th, 1894."

Ann then, at last, the girls' father, whose name had been blank on Mary's marriage certificate:

"Fred Leaton
Card Sharper
Jack Reeve Lodging House, Ann Street, St Phillips, Bristol."

And his wife:

Mary Leaton, and

"one baby, younger." (Mary again.) "The child has been living with the grandmother, who goes begging."

"Elizabeth Leaton, 7 years, August 6th, 1886
Term of detention 9 years
Admission January 28th, 1887."

Notwithstanding Elizabeth's young death, life at Carlton House can only have been an improvement and indeed Mary herself always said she enjoyed school. The Matron's Journal affords a daily record of which the following is a glimpse:

1887
"Friday January 28th. Elizabeth Leaton admitted today.

July 19th. Eighty yards of material for winter frocks required. Piece of calico, 40 yards of flannel, 4 dozen combs for outfit, one piece of calico, 20 yards flannel. Linen for aprons.

"Wednesday August 17th. Mr. Whitwill called to say he had arranged for the girls to go to Winscombe on Saturday for two weeks.

"Friday. Packed blankets, pillows, sheets etc.

"Saturday. Fifty girls, four officers, went to Winscombe, six girls being down there with the Help Society. A. Stallard being left in the house to see after the fowls.

"Saturday September 3rd. Returned all safe from Winscombe.

I couldn't believe my eyes when I found this picture of an unknown waif, taken in Bristol and dated about 1890 on the "Hidden Lives" website. To me, she looks just like the Mary I remember, so I suspend disbelief.

"The girls have enjoyed the holiday, looking so much fresher and better. They have been very good and willing through it all. Engaged A. Taverner as servant to Mrs. Pimm, the farmer's wife, and would have engaged another three girls if they were ready to leave school."

(And we think that farmers supplementing their income by opening up their fields to campers is a new idea! The farm at Barton Hamlet, Winscombe, Somerset where the girls stayed, probably in a barn, is listed in the 1881 census. The farmer was George Pimm, then 65, "a farmer of 300 acres, employing 3 men and a boy." His wife, Eliza Pimm, was 60. Their adult children all lived at home: Betsey aged 38, Oliver aged 34, Annie, aged 24, Clement aged 17 and the youngest, Silvester, 14.)

The matron continues:

"The girls have washed 1,509 articles this week, and house cleaning.

"Saturday, September 24th. Sent Alice Taverner to Mrs. Pimm, Barton Farm, as servant. Alice on two months licence. Her time expires in November.

"October 7th. Looked over two sets of winter frocks. There are 41 new frocks required. Day set of winter frocks cast off sooner in order to come on for working frocks. Sent the 57 black hats to be cleaned and pressed.

"December 23rd. Mrs. Budgett kindly sent presents of books for each girl in the House. Also the girls in service.

"December 24th. Oranges sent to the House from grocer and greengrocer.

"Sunday December 25th. Girls attended St Nicholas in the morning, Cotham Chapel in the evening.

"Monday December 26th. Girls enjoyed their Christmas Dinner today instead of yesterday. The usual beef and plum pudding and finished up with a concert amongst themselves. Five girls from service came. The girls had a holiday all week.

"Friday December 29th. Annual Treat was held this evening. Mr. Whitwill sent the usual quantity of toys etc. for the tree. Twenty girls from service attended. Miss Sturge gave prizes to the girls in service and Miss Taylor gave prizes to the girls in the home. Miss Tribe and Mr. Whitwill attended and gave great pleasure to all.

"Saturday December 31st. Girls very tired after the pleasures of last night.

1888
"May 21st. Girls attended the marriage of Isabella Brabham at St Paul's church. (Isabella, a former inmate, married Alfred Raffill, a twine spinner of Milsom Street. Both parties

signed the register and in addition to Brabham and Raffill family witnesses, signatories were Mark Whitwill, the Home's father figure, and Katherine Macfarlane, the matron.)

"July 3rd. Girls left for two weeks in the country. We took beds and bedding with us. Girls made and filled their own beds with straw."

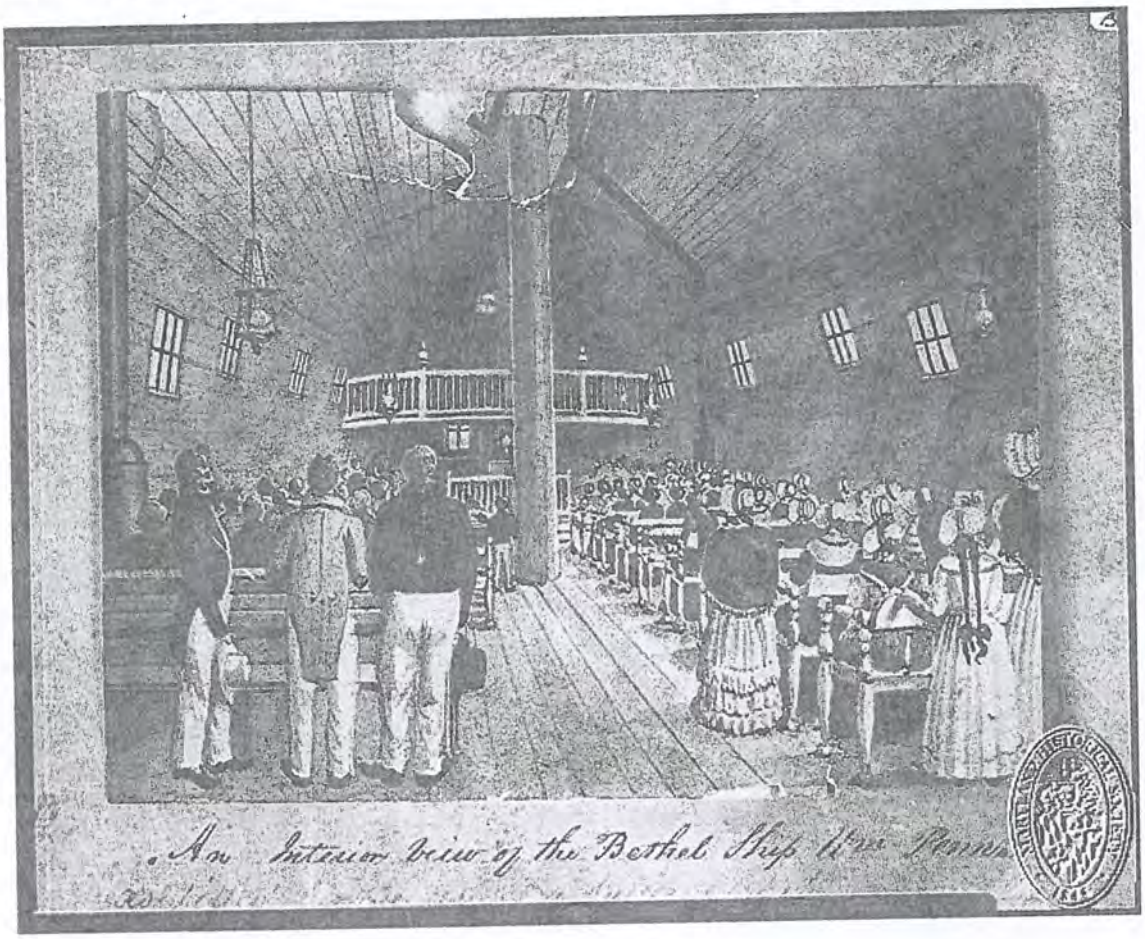
With the holiday over, there was yet more excitement to come:

"July 25th. Girls went to see the Procession of Prince Albert Victor."

"Prince Eddy" as he was known, was in Bristol to unveil the statue of his grandmother, Queen Victoria, which stands today in Lower Park Street at the foot of College Green. He was twenty four, and despite his bulbous eyes and pronounced chin, must have

1' m wants in 1997

seemed quite as glamourous as today's Prince William. I am sure the girls were wound up and swooning with passion. Clearly they would need to be calmed down after the experience: possibly by something religious. Mr. Whitwill had the answer: he arranged for them to go to the harbour, to visit the missionary Bethel Ship, *Children's Help*. I am sure no irony was intended.



As to the prince, he would have been a gift to today's tabloids: in his own time his sexual scrapes were hushed up. Certain modern pot boiling authors have suggested he was Jack the Ripper; no matter that he had an alibi for the time of each murder! Sadly, less than four years after his visit to Bristol, he died of pneumonia aged 28. His younger brother, the present Queen's grandfather, eventually succeeded to the throne as George V.

The matron's log continues:

"August 17th. Fifty girls were bathed" (!)

In such establishments the children were bathed one after the other using the same water. A metal implement which looks like a cross between a warming pan and a colander was

used to skim the dirt from the top of the water, an example of which can be seen in the Muller's Orphanage Museum in Bristol.

In September, there was fever in the House which I hope was not down to the weakening effect of the bathing, and all were "more or less, ill". Several pupils were taken into hospital but apparently recovered. In October the dormitories were disinfected and the girls scrubbed the walls, stairs, passages, dormitories and dining hall with carbolic. Every article was washed, including fifty quilts and 105 blankets. The sacking on three bedsteads had to be renewed as "they broke, being rotten, and could not be mended."

Throughout this and every year, the girls attended church twice every Sunday; St Nicholas in the morning and Cotham Chapel in the evening.

"Thursday December 25th. This being Xmas Day, the girls had their usual dinner of Roast Beef and Plum Pudding and enjoyed themselves in the evening. Mrs. Budgett sent a book to each girl, to 25 girls in service and also to officers in the Home. The girls received Christmas Cards from Mr. Whitwill, Miss Sturge, Miss Taylor and Miss Douglas.

"Friday December 28th. Annual Tea and evening with Xmas Tree and presents for each girl. Mr. Whitwill showed his Magic Lantern with views of America.

1889
"January 1st. New Years Day and the girls had their usual dinner of Roast Beef and Plum Pudding.

"September 21st. Children returned from Camp at Barton, much refreshed. They visited Cheddar and were taken through both the caves, Brent Knoll, Church Hill, Puxton, etc. in all 100 miles. Everyone was exceedingly kind."

1891.
"January 21st. Girls attended Poole's Myriorama by invitation."

Like Mr. Whitwill's Magic Lantern, the Myriorama was a forerunner of the Cinema. It consisted of 24 cards laid side by side to form a continuous landscape. Several billion possible combinations are claimed, which must have been a source of wonder for the girls.

"Thursday May 6th. Mary Ann Leighton admitted."

There is nothing further about Mary Ann in the matron's log, which ends abruptly on Saturday, the 20th February, 1892 with the entry "Ellen Haines, the new girl has absconded three times since she came in." It resumes on the next page in 1913 as though nothing had happened in between.

For about ten years I put aside the search for Mary Ann Leighton, and only took it up again in 2005 when I retired from full time work. It was time to seek out Mary's birth certificates, her parents' marriage certificate, and her mother's death certificate. I knew the names of neither of the grandmothers who had been mentioned in passing and what about the wicked Fred Leaton? This time I would be considerably helped by the internet.

The Family Tree was still very sparse:

Frederick Leighton (Leaton) = ?

Elizabeth b. 6.8.1879 d. 27.4.1894	Mary bca1884

NOTES:

The marriage of Walter Graham Hardy and Eva M. Harding was registered at Long Ashton, September 1902.

Incorrect * In 1881, Walter G. Hardie (sic), born Manchester, aged 5, was living at 16 Etruria Street, Charlton in Medlock, Lancashire with his father, John, aged 39, a carrier clerk, born at Camerton Court, Somerset, his mother Mary A. also 39, born Grimsby, and 3 brothers and two sisters.

In the same census of 1881, Eva M. Harding aged 7, born Long Ashton, was visiting Manor Farm, West Cranmore, Somerset with her mother Martha and sister Kate, 13. Her brother Hedley, 20, farmed 360 acres there and employed six labourers. Meanwhile, Richmond Harding, the father of the family was at Fenswood Farm, Long Ashton where he farmed 418 acres and employed another six men. There were four other girls, Alice, Laura, Ellen and Mabel and a son, Richmond, junior, aged 26, who was a wine merchant.

Mrs. Budgett, one of the benefactors, mentioned in the Carlton House minutes, was a member of the well known Kingswood family of philanthropists. I suspect the books were of the 'improving' variety

Aug 5 1902
WALTER GRAHAM HARDY 34 B. Coal Merchant Fishponds HENRY
Eva Manon Harding 28 Sp Long Ashton Richmond, Farmer dec'd
Alice, L. A. Mrs Richmond Hardy, Ernest Hoddell, Mabel Harding
1871 – at 3 Fulworth Tce STRETFORD, Lancs Ada Hardy
Father Hy, Maria Brewer b Bakewell, Derbyshire
aged 2 (mother Mary b, Cheltenham Glos.
Sibly Wm, Geo 4, Ada, 1. 2 Sists.

Girls at a Victorian Ragged School

Chapter 2 :- On the Street

Mary Ann Matilda Leighton was born on the 17th July, 1884, at No. 7, Great Ann Street, Bristol, in the registration district of Barton Regis, in the sub district of St Philip and St Jacob, known as St Jude's. Her father was stated to be Frederick Leighton, a general labourer, of the same address and her mother and namesake Mary Ann Matilda Leighton, nee Davis. The birth was registered eight days after the event by the father, who signed F. Leighton. So far, so mundane.

But behind the scenes, and knowing what we already know, look at the address. Great Ann Street is ~~little changed~~ in the years which have gone by since Frederick registered his daughter's birth. Then it was the home of the abject poor. In this area Mark Whitwill, the Bristol shipowner and philanthropist, who came so regularly to Carlton House School, laid the foundation stone to the New Street Mission about ten years before Mary was born. Several houses were pulled down to accommodate the new building, rendering the inhabitants homeless. In one room dwelt a man, his wife, four children and fourteen fowls. The floor was knee deep in filth and excrement. In another room, an old couple slept on sacks, sharing the space with their donkey. Above them, a blind man slept in an attic, open to the elements. Where these families and their assorted livestock moved to when their homes were demolished, is anybody's guess. These people had no need to read the works of Charles Dickens. They lived the stories every day of their lives.

still ? RECOGNISABLE

Nowadays the district is still the stamping ground of those who have slipped through the net of the welfare state, inebriates, intravenous drug users and failed asylum seekers. The Salvation Army hostel takes in some of these strays at nearby Little Ann Street, just as Jack Reeve's common lodging house took in similar unfortunates but with less charity, more than a century ago.

In these mean streets Mary Ann Matilda tried to provide for her two girls, Elizabeth aged five and the baby, little Mary. If the Carlton House account is correct, then Frederick, at best, was worse than useless.

By 1886 Mary Ann Matilda was seriously ill. At least it seems she had her mother with her. They became a charity case when the child Elizabeth was "found wandering" and apprehended under "Section 14 of The Act". Towards the end of the year Mary Ann Matilda and her mother received a visit from one who would these days be called a social worker.

The beggar? Eliz Leighton – mother Mary Davis!

She took down what she saw in the wretched dwelling and added some observations of her own. They went round the country begging.* Mother and daughter were probably common prostitutes too – a point of view, not proven.

If my surmise is correct, it was the older of the two women who voiced a scathing condemnation of her son in law. She clearly had no time for him. He was a lazy good for nothing, evil, a wife beater. When not drunk, he spent his time playing cards. He had brought her daughter down to this degraded state.

The social worker could see that Mary Ann Matilda had been a fine young woman once, and had done her best. The little girls were bright and clean, the baby in particular, was a beautiful child.

Elizabeth was taken into the care of Carlton House on the 28th January, 1887. In March she was brought to say goodbye to her mother who was dying. The grandmother took the toddling Mary.

Mary Ann Matilda Leighton, aged 27 years, died at No. 47 Great George Street on the 9th June 1887. She was buried at Greenbank Cemetery five days later. Frederick, now described as a mason's labourer, registered the death the next day, giving No. 31 Great Ann Street as his abode. They may have formally separated, or were simply living in different lodging houses. The two little streets run next and parallel to each other, but Great George Street – according to reports – was considered by the inhabitants to be a cut above Great Ann Street. The social worker's cruel diagnosis that Mary Ann Matilda's illness was due to her immoral living was incorrect. According to Doctor William Elder, who signed the death certificate, the cause of death was not syphilis, which I had expected, but phthisis, the archaic name for tuberculosis, known to generations as "consumption". It was a disease of poverty and want. Mary Ann Matilda had dwindled and wasted away like Mimi, in Puccini's "La Boheme".

In the background of this tragic deathbed scene are the grandmother and young Mary, who was not yet three.

Mary's birth certificate gave the information that her mother's maiden name was Davis and it was a comparatively easy matter to go back into a possibly happier time for Frederick and Mary Ann Matilda. I obtained their marriage certificate.

The wedding took place on the 18th November, 1878 after banns at the Parish Church of St John's, Cardiff.

Mary Ann Matilda Davies was 21, a spinster of no occupation, living at Frederick Street. Her father was John Davies, a collier, deceased. She made her mark, whereas her bridegroom signed.

Frederick Leighton was aged 20, a bachelor of Great Frederick Street, Cardiff and was a Private soldier in the 61st Regiment.

The 61st was the South Gloucestershire Regiment, which within a few years would be amalgamated with the 28th, the North Gloucesters to form the Gloucestershire Regiment proper. I imagine young Frederick looked a veritable "Sergeant Troy" in his red coat and shining cap badge, with the sphinx of Egypt above the emblazoned "61". His father's name was given as James Lightning, *(sic),* clerk. The Cardiff Registrar included a post it note with the certificate confirming that this was how the father's name appeared on the original.

The witnesses to the marriage were A.I. Holme Russell and Job Cook. Neither name so far means anything in the Leighton story.

For some years the entire 1881 census for the whole of England and Wales has appeared within the website of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, also known as the Mormons. I hoped I might find Frederick and his family, even his parents, there.

I failed to find any appropriate James Leighton (or Lightning!) and of Frederick himself there was no sign, but Mary Ann Matilda, her mother and two children were living at No. 4, Back of Clarence Street, Trevethin, Monmouthshire.

Mary Davies, a widow, aged 61, was head of the household. She said her birthplace was Blaenavon, and gave "schoolmistress" as her occupation. Not very good at her job, maybe, given her daughter's illiteracy, but let that pass. Here was the grandmother who had been in the house when Elizabeth was taken into care, who had taken baby Mary away with her, and who I believe gave Frederick such a bad character.

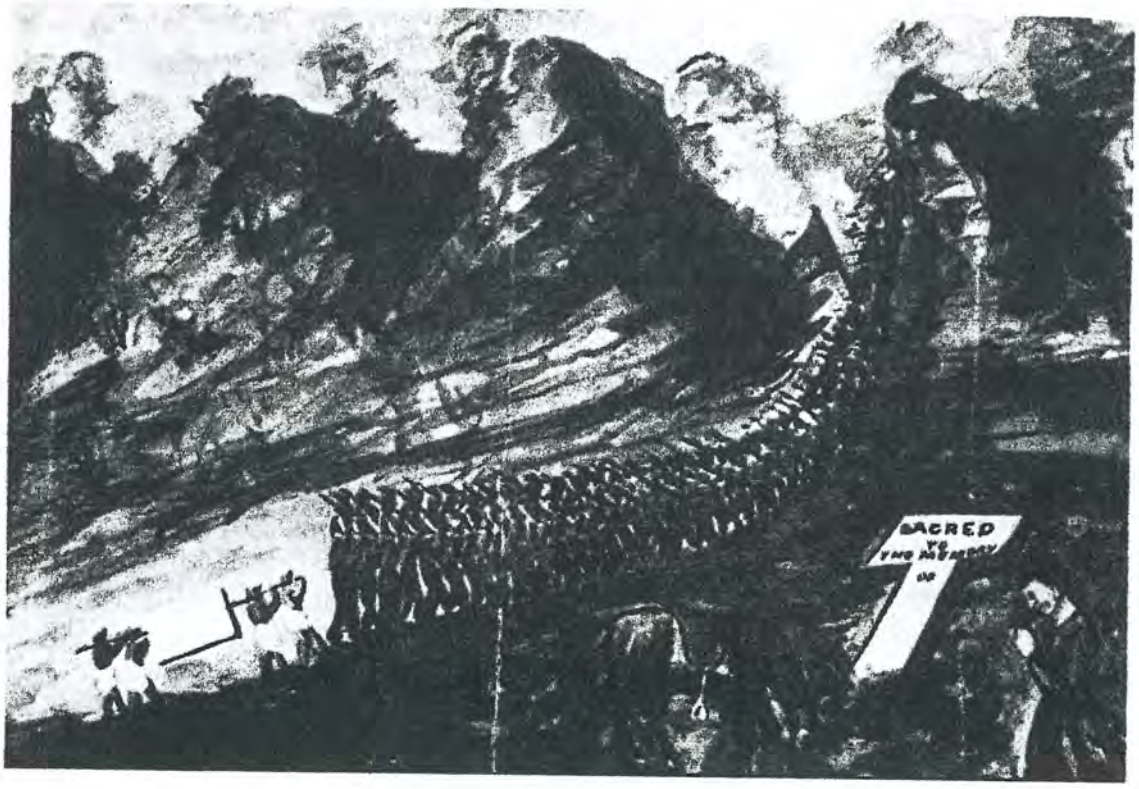
Mary Ann Matilda – listed as Mary Lighton – yet another alternative spelling – was described as married, aged 22, born Neath, occupation, pedlar. The children were Thomas Lighton, aged 3, and Lizzie Lighton, aged 1, both born at Newport.

Frederick was not with them because the 61st had embarked for India, and thence to Afghanistan.

Frederick's voyage must have been much the same as that of Edward Young, then a lance-corporal but later Sergeant Major, who joined the regiment at Quetta about six months after Frederick.

The voyage out in the "Crocodile" was far from luxurious and took seven weeks. After a brief respite in Bombay, they embarked for Karachi, a three day voyage via the Arabian

Sea. After two days they went overland by train, across the Sind Desert to Rinby at the mouth of the Bolan pass, a five day stint.



A British Column marching through the Bolan Pass

" No railway existed in those days to take us to Quetta, so we had a 6 day march with pack mules - no wheeled transport, a continual fording then refording of the "Snaky" river, and, to crown all, the last days through a blinding snowstorm. About 2 miles from the camp, we were met by the Regimental Band, which played us into camp. The OC was Colonel Heywood. For 3 weeks, owing to deep snow and generally arctic conditions, we were confined to quarters (chiefly mud huts), our time being spent in lectures, etc. After 12 months in Quetta, the Regiment returned to Karachi."

British camp, Afghanistan, winter campaign, circa 1879-80

Frederick Leighton, regimental number 1875, appears in the muster rolls for October 1880 to March 1882 for Nari Gorge Camp in Baluchistan. He was sent from Nari Gorge to Indian Depot (Amritsar?) on the 28th October, 1880 and in November and December was at Mhow, in Madhya Pradesh, India. From January to March 1881 he is listed at Humai Camp which I have so far been unable to locate. From April 1881 to November 1882 he was at Quetta, now the border town between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Quetta, a town at an altitude of 5,500 feet, is in modern Pakistan. It commands the entrance to the strategic Bolan Pass into Afghanistan and was occupied by the British from 1876. The British fought three Afghan Wars there in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Afghanistan became popular as a destination for those who took the "hippy trail" in the 1960s. This halcyon period came to an abrupt end with the Soviet invasion in 1979, when many Afghanis fled to Quetta. As a result of continuing wars, Quetta ~~is currently~~ a centre for arms and drug smuggling. A contingent of some three to four thousand British soldiers are currently serving in Afghanistan, in Helmand province, (2006), ostensibly as part of the NATO security force. There have been a number of skirmishes with marauding Taliban with many fatal British casualties.

became & continues to be

On the 8th November, 1882 Frederick embarked for England, and discharge. There is no information that he received an army pension. Fred, who had been lucky to miss the second Afghan War, was now on a slippery slope, and would never regain a firm footing.

By the autumn of 1883, he had met up with his wife again, and she soon became pregnant with Mary. There is no trace of the little three year old Thomas after 1881. If he died, as seems likely, then his death seems to have gone unregistered.

By June of 1887, Elizabeth was at Carlton House, Mary Ann Matilda was dead, Frederick was living at Great Ann Street, and, according to the school records, grandmother Mary Davi(e)s had taken little Mary to Cardiff.

During the next few years grandmother and granddaughter no doubt moved between Wales and the West Country, staying in a succession of cheap lodgings but by 1891, when the census was taken on the 5th April, the exhausted grandmother had brought the child to Bristol so that she could join her sister at Carlton House. They were amongst the 12 inmates of a "Registered Lodging House" at No. 1 Crown Court, Temple, run by a 38 year old widow called Emily Tripp. Mary "Davis", described as a hawker, born in Swansea, was now said to be 69, (not 78 as in the Carlton House minutes) and Mary "Leaton" was aged 7. There was only one other child in the house, William, the eleven year old son of the landlady. I can quite believe that the old woman, Mary Davies, was at the end of her tether.

This must be Eliz Leighton? not Mary Davies

"Applicants to a Casual Ward" by Sir Samuel Luke Fildes, 1874

On the same night, the 5th April, 1891, Elizabeth Leighton, aged 11 was one of a long list of girls, at Carlton House – called the Board School, Southwell Street, in the parish of St Michael's. Katherine Macfarlane, a 52 year old Scot from Edinburgh was still matron,

when the census was taken on the 5th April, the exhausted grandmother had brought the child to Bristol so that she could join her sister at Carlton House. They were amongst the 12 inmates of a "Registered Lodging House" at No. 1 Crown Court, Temple, run by a 38 year old widow called Emily Tripp. Mary "Davis", described as a hawker, born in Swansea, was now said to be 69, (not 78 as in the Carlton House minutes) and Mary

This must be

and presided over a schoolmistress, an assistant matron, and a young laundress of nineteen. With such a small staff, it is clear that the girls were expected to do much of the work.

I suspect Miss Macfarlane was weary when the census man called and could not summon up the strength to go through the girls' individual records. The official wrote on the form "could not say where born. Supposed to be all Bristol girls." Signed "Matron".

Mary Ann Leighton joined her sister at Carlton House just a month later. It is quite likely that their poor old grandmother was taken Bedminster Workhouse, or removed to Cardiff to await a similar fate. With a name like Mary Davies it would need a miracle to discover what happened to her. For similar reasons it has not been possible to find her daughter, Mary Britton's mother in any other census or in birth registers. It appears she was not registered as Mary Ann Matilda, and Mary Ann Davies's are too numerous to mention.

Goodbye to the Old Woman – Mary would never see her grandmother again

Sadly, our Mary Ann had no memory of her grandmother – or if she had, I never heard her mentioned. It would, I believe, have been a surprise if she had known she was half

Welsh. She had an affinity to Scottish marching bands and thrilled to the flounce of the kilts and the skirl of the bagpipes in such programmes as the Edinburgh Tattoo, which she watched on TV – in black and white, of course, - at our house.

"I love Scotch!" she would say clapping her hands. She thought this folk memory – though she never called it that - might have been a clue to who she was.

It had been a surprise to find that Mary Ann and her grandmother were both in Bristol in 1891. It was even more disturbing to find that her father Frederick Leighton, now aged 32, and working as a mason's labourer, was also in the City, cosily (or perhaps not) installed in two rooms at No. 15 James Street, off Mina Road, St Philip's with a new wife, Martha, also 32. Both gave their birthplace as Bristol. It has proved impossible so far to find a record of their marriage, and they may not have been legally married at all.

It seems extraordinary that he was living in Bristol at the time his two little girls were in the same city: Mary being shunted about from pillar to post, and Elizabeth in the Carlton House school. It is difficult not to see him other than the feckless wastrel his mother in law described to the charity worker. Was he summoned to the school whilst Elizabeth lay dying in 1894? Her death certificate which gives his name and his former occupation as a soldier of the 61st Regiment suggests he was. .

Frederick Leighton died on the 6th March, 1897, still resident in James Street, but now at No. 9. The information was given by his widow, Martha, of the same address. The cause of death was Phthisis Haemoptysis. (that is, consumption.) He had, it seems, coughed blood for one hour only when the doctor was called. In leaving this life, Frederick was touched at last by greatness: a Victorian personage only slightly less famous than the Queen herself. None other than the renowned Dr W.G. Grace in his day job as a General Practitioner, signed the lowly Frederick's death certificate.

Martha disappears after Frederick's death. She does not figure in the 1901 census as Martha Leighton or in any of the variations of the name. She neither remarried nor died under the name of Leighton or any alternative spelling as far as I can tell. Someone who does appear in 1901 is Elizabeth Lightning, aged 75, a widow, living at a lodging house at Lamb Street, St Jude's. The right area and the right kind of domicile for a member of this destitute family. Elizabeth Lightning states she was born in London, at St George in the East.* If Mary Davi(e)s was "another grandmother" as stated in the teasing line in the Carlton House minutes, then was this Elizabeth grandmother number one?

Much later, I found her ten years previously at the same address, 21 Lamb Street, St Jude's, this time, her name given as Elizabeth Leighton, a widow, aged 63, birth place simply "London", occupation "deputy lodging house keeper". There were thirty lodgers in the house, including whole families. The squalor can only be imagined. The doyenne of the enterprise was Mary J. Manning, a widow of 57, born in Jamaica, West Indies, who was the lodging house keeper in the main house, No. 23, which she shared with her grandson and seven lodgers. Next door, at No. 22, was another deputy, Eliza Dolman, with her children and nineteen lodgers. Our Elizabeth Lighton, nee Legg was specific that she was born St Martin's in the Fields, so the jury is still out. **

In 1899, Mary's school records had stated "Gone to Mary Carpenter" – to be protected. Not fit for service."

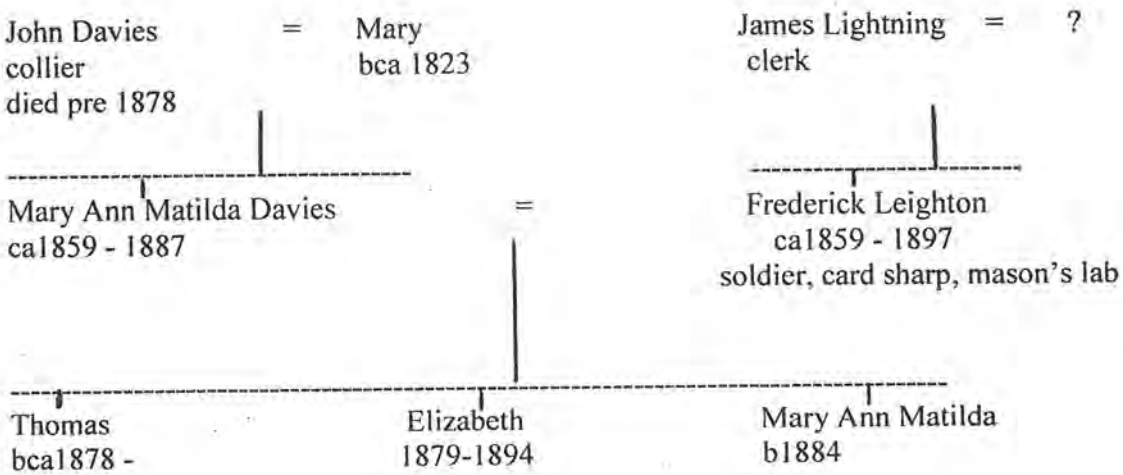
Once again this was not the Park Row establishment, but Mary Carpenter's Home at the Causeway, in the parish of St Mary, Fishponds. In the census of 1901, she was still in this institution aged seventeen, a general domestic, one of fourteen female "patients", aged between 27 and 15, in the charge of a lady superintendent and a matron.

At an advanced age, Mary would gleefully demonstrate that she could still "touch her toes" and at the drop of a hat would demonstrate her "monkey face", a contorted gurning which my mother found upsetting. In retrospect, and if I was pressed, I might have described her as "slightly simple", but at the time I had no opinion on the matter. She was, as far as I was concerned, just being herself. Therefore I was shocked and rather distressed to see that like all the other girls in the establishment she was said to be "feeble minded".

This important
+ Erm "Connected" i 2020 !

** no longer so - see 2020

The Family Tree was now as follows:



NOTES

The odd assertion that Great George Street was considered comparatively "aristocratic" appears in "The Bristol Poor". http://weldgen.tripod.com/bristols-poor/id2.html

The reminiscences of Sgt Major Edward Young, can be found on the website of the Gloucestershire Regiment.

The pictures of British troops from the Afghan war can be found on the "Afghan Interactive" website.

Chapter 3 :- Farther Afield

It was time to spread the net wider and go in search of Frederick Leighton's early life and to find his father James. In 1881 Frederick was in foreign parts and would not be found. He had said his father was called James Lightning. I searched under Leighton, Leaton, Lightning and Lighton – which was the version given for Frederick's wife, Mary Ann Matilda in 1881.

There was a James Leighton, born 1832 in Whitechapel, London, described as a "clicker". Could a clicker – something in the boot trade – be misheard as a "clerk" by the vicar in Cardiff when he entered Frederick and Mary Ann Matilda's marriage in his parish register? This James the clicker had a wife Elizabeth, born 1831 at St George's East. (Oh dear! Did she metamorphose into Elizabeth Lightning the deputy lodging house keeper in 1891?) and a string of daughters, all born in London. In 1881, people called Lightning appear mainly in Norfolk. These included a James Lightning, a mate aboard a boat called the "Pioneer". A Margaret Lightning, the wife of a Royal Marine, (absent on census night), and her children were living at Alverstoke, Hampshire. There was one James Lightening, *(sic)* aged 76, born 1805, at Ditchingham, Norfolk, but living at 5 Leopold Street, Portsea, Hampshire, with his wife Anne, aged 50, born Isle of Wight, giving as his occupation "Chelsea Pensioner".

A Chelsea Pensioner, of course, is a man who has served in the Army, and been honourably discharged to pension. James Lightening, *(sic)*, seemingly the same man, though said to be born Thwart, Norfolk, served in the 9th Foot, 38th Regiment, 1825-47, and left the army aged 42. For a time he appeared a prime candidate for the role of Mary's grandfather. James Lightening died a few years after the census, still at Portsea, having lost a few years in the process, as his age was recorded as 75.

For a while further progress seemed unlikely. Then one of my correspondents, David Ware, found a James Lighton living at King Street, in the parish of St Andrew's, Plymouth in the census of 1871.

James was aged 63, described as a book canvasser, with a wife, Elizabeth, aged 49 and with children, Emily, aged 17, a hawker, Frederick, aged 12, Mary aged 9, and James aged 4. The three youngest had no occupation, not even as scholars. Mrs. Elizabeth Lighton said she was born at St Martin's in the Fields, London, which was a pity, for a birth date of 1822 made an estimated age of about 75 in 1901 – give or take a year or so, for few people were sure how old they were - and therefore within the bounds of possibility that she was the Elizabeth Lightning the St Jude's lodging house keeper. At the time of this 1871 census Emily and Frederick were both said to have been born at Exeter; their sister Mary at a difficult to read place which could be Brighton and little James at Gosport, just down the road from Alverstoke – the place where Margaret Lightning, the wife of the absent Royal Marine was living in 1881. I couldn't for the life of me make any connection. Besides, my mind became preoccupied, not surprisingly, with the stated birthplace of James, senior, the father of the family. He made the thrilling

assertion that he was born in "Bombay, East Indies." This could mean nothing other than a connection with the British Raj.

My next step was to obtain Frederick's birth certificate, whilst at the same time making forays into the – to me – previously unknown territory of the British presence in India. My ignorance of the subject was vast. I vaguely knew about Robert Clive, recalled three names (learned by rote) of battles fought on Indian soil, Trichinopoli, Pondicherry and Chandernagore, and was aware of Tipu's Tiger.

For Frederick, I searched between 1856 and 1862 and there were only two boys of this name registered either as Leighton, Lighton, Lightning or Lightening. These were a Frederick Lighton registered in the September quarter 1859 at Boston, Lincolnshire, and a Frederick Lighton registered in the June Quarter of 1859 at Exeter. I felt that the second was likely to be the twelve year old boy of the census, but was he the Frederick I sought? I remembered he had stated in 1891 that he was born at Bristol – but say Martha had answered the questions on the form because Frederick was either out when the census man called or too drunk to care? Bristol or Exeter? I felt I could discount Boston, at least – too far away - but Exeter was the only other possibility.

The birth certificate gave the boy's name as Frederick William, born the 10th June, 1859, at Preston Street, in Exeter, in the parish of St. Sidwell. The father was James Lighton, a Canvassing Agent in the Book Trade and the mother, Elizabeth Lighton, formerly Legg. So these were definitely the people on the 1871 census.

I temporarily put aside efforts to find conclusive birth entries for the other children, though I knew I would have to return to this detail at some time.

A more perplexing problem was the absence of James and his family from the 1861 census, when Emily and Frederick would have been aged seven and two years old.

It was, however, a simple matter to find the marriage certificate for James Lighton and Elizabeth Legg.

The wedding took place on the 3rd September, 1849 at St Mary's Church, St Marylebone, London. James Lighton was "of full age", that is, over the age of 21. He was a widower, rank or profession "gentleman" of 15 Wyndham Street. His father was James Lighton, deceased, a Colonel. Elizabeth Legg was less grand. She was also of full age, a spinster of Moore Street in the same parish, the daughter of James Legg, deceased, a Soldier. James signed the register. Elizabeth made her mark. The witnesses were G.H. Gyton, Hy *(sic)* Martyn Baker and Mary Bowers. I had hoped these two male signatories were old chums of the bridegroom, but this seems unlikely.

A George Henry Gyton (teasingly born at Great Yarmouth, Norfolk – the county of the Lightnings) was still alive in 1881, aged 76, living in Marylebone, and described as a "retired parish clerk". I suspect that he was already performing this office in 1849! Henry Martyn Baker may have been a visiting vicar – or the curate at St Mary's, for a

man of this name, described as the "Reverend" was married at St Mark's, Holloway in 1860 to a Grace Belmore, the daughter of the late Rev Thomas Sweeny, of Spanish Town, Jamaica.* The other witness, Mary Bowers, who betrayed her nervousness amongst the two gentlemen by slightly botching her signature, was probably a friend of the bride.

So what can we make of the certificate?

Both parties had fathers who were not only dead before 1849, but had been in the Army. The groom's father was a commissioned officer of a high status. The bride's father was a private soldier. The difference in rank of the couple's fathers and Elizabeth's illiteracy, seems to make this an unusual match given the rigid class structure which pertained in Victorian England.

They were both of full age – so they must have been born prior to 1828. (The 1871 census gave a birth date of c1808 for James and c1822 for Elizabeth.)

Finally, James was a widower – so there must have been a previous marriage, and perhaps children of that marriage.

As to Elizabeth Legg, I have so far been unable to find her baptism at St Martin's or elsewhere in London. Two men by the name of James Legg were British Army pensioners, James Legg, born Lingfield, Surrey, of the Rifle Brigade, 1809-1823, discharged aged 31, and James Legg, born Clonmell, Tipperary, of the Royal York Rangers, 1808-1816, discharged aged 32. Either of these two old soldiers could have been Elizabeth's father.

Two years after their marriage when the census of 1851 was taken, James and Elizabeth were living in Exeter, at Preston Street. James Lighton was 36, "Late Lieutenant, Army, India, born East Indies, British Subject; Elizabeth, his wife was 25, born St Martin's in the Fields. Their birthdates were now c1815 and c1826. These dates may be more reliable, unless James was conscious of being so much older than his wife and fibbed a little. In the year or so since their marriage, baby Elizabeth, now aged one, had been born at St Marylebone.

Elizabeth was registered at Marylebone in the June Quarter of 1850. I sent for her birth certificate and at the same time also ordered certificates which I hoped would prove to be those of Emily and James. An Emily Louisa Lightening was registered at Alverstoke in the September Quarter of 1853, and James Alexander Lighton was registered at Alverstoke in the March Quarter of 1867. Whilst Emily was supposed to be born at Exeter, James's younger son and namesake was said to have been born at Gosport. Nowadays Alverstoke seems to have been subsumed into Gosport.

Was our family connected with Margaret Lightning who was living at Alverstoke in 1881? Indeed, were the Lightnings part of the family? Could Margaret's husband, the absent Royal Marine, be a son of James from his first marriage? Would the certificates

give any answers, or would they be for different people altogether? Whilst waiting for them to arrive, I went to India.

The Family Tree, supposed, was now as follows:

James Lighton = ?
died pre 1849
Colonel

? (1) = James Lighton (Lightning) bca1808/1815, gentleman, late Lieutenant, Army book canvasser

James Legg = ?
died pre 1849
Soldier

= (2) Elizabeth Legg bca1822

- Elizabeth bca1850
- Emily bca1854
- Frederick 1859-97 = Mary Ann Matilda Davies c1859-87
  - Thomas 1878-
  - Elizabeth 1879-94
  - Mary Ann 1884-
- Mary bca1862
- James bca1867

NOTES

*The marriage of Henry Martyn Baker and Grace Belmore was announced in the Illustrated London News of 18.2.1860.

Chapter 4 : - Seringapatam

"It is better to live like a lion for a day than to live like a sheep for a hundred years."
Tipu Sultan

Tiger Mask

James Lighton may have puffed up his father's rank somewhat, for the only possible candidate for the "Colonel" appears to be Major James Lighton or Leighton, 1772-1816, of the Bombay Army of the Honourable East India Company Artillery.

The East India Company administered British India, and many men rose to high rank through military service within it, though it was accepted that an officer in the King's forces was always senior to a Company officer of the same rank.

An HEIC (native) battalion might be commanded by a British HEIC Captain, with two or three officers of lower rank and several inexperienced young subalterns or cadets. The native battalions were by no means inferior to the King's men and their white British soldiery, but were often considered so.

James Lighton was commissioned as a cadet, aged 19, in 1791, was made Ensign on New Year's Day, 1792 and rose to Lieutenant Fireworker on the 6th September, 1797. As Fireworker, he would be expected to have particular expertise in and take responsibility for ammunition.

Whether he saw action in the six years since he was first commissioned is so far unknown, but in 1799, he was in the thick of the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War.

At the end of the 18th century there were three British "Presidences" or provinces in India: at Bengal, centred on Calcutta; Madras and Bombay. Beyond these enclaves were scores of local states ruled by absolute monarchs, some of whom were at war with each other.

One of these local rulers has resonance today: he was a cruel tyrant, the son of a usurper, who ruled absolutely. The majority of his subjects followed a different religion to his own. He was dangerous in that the British had fought him several times before, and he even had the 18th century equivalent of weapons of mass destruction – great brass cannons and a formidable rocket artillery. He was known to be sympathetic to the French

and in the frenzy which was whipped up in 1798 – that Napoleon, set on world domination, had designs on India, the British were determined to remove this potential threat.

The enemy was Tipu, "the Tiger of Mysore". He was aged forty six, physically short and stocky, dark skinned and with a pencil thin moustache. He was a Muslim, who claimed descent from the Prophet, though the majority of his subjects were Hindu. He had been a soldier since he was fourteen years old. He was fearless in battle and had fought the British in the three previous Anglo-Mysore wars between 1766 and 1792. Many claim him nowadays as India's first freedom fighter.

Intelligence had it that Tipu was plotting with Napoleon who would either bring his army overland from Egypt across Afghanistan into India – a rather obvious non starter, or would come by sea, invade India at Mangalore and join up with the Sultan's army against the British.

The hysteria was largely orchestrated by Lord Mornington, the Governor General, who seemingly cherry picked the evidence to support his view that a pre-emptive strike against Tipu was justified. The British army in India, the Company's army and the army of the aged Nizam of Hyderabad, who had recently been brought on side, went to war against Mysore in 1799.

Wonder today!

The campaign plan involved squeezing Tipu in a pincer between two forces, east and west, so that he would have to draw back and would be trapped in his capital, Seringapatam, an island in the confluence of two rivers, to which the British would lay siege.

In command of the (eastern) Madras Army was Lieutenant General George Harris, with his deputies Major-General Baird and Colonel Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, the younger brother of the Governor General. Their 20,000 force, native and

European would be joined, before they reached Mysore, 250 miles to the west by another 20,000 troops belonging to the Nizam of Hyderabad.

In comparison, the Bombay army on the western flank was tiny, consisting of only 6,000, men – sepoy infantrymen - and officers drawn from both the British Army and the East India Company. The Bombay army, under the command of Lieutenant General James Stuart, and which included the artilleryman Lieutenant Fireworker Lighton, had half the distance to travel and started out five days later than Harris. Tipu was occupying the interior position between the "Grand Army" on the one side and the smaller force from Bombay on the other. Naturally, he attacked the weaker flank. On the morning of the 6th March, 1799, he attacked the British position on the high pass at Sedaseer. Because the pass was long and narrow, Stuart could only deploy three infantry battallions and six guns for its defence, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John Montresor. In a battle which lasted four hours, and the British were outnumbered by five to one, the guns and infantry smashed all assaults. They were nearing exhaustion and their ammunition was all but spent when at last the enemy withdrew.

The Sultan boasted that it had been a victory but it was estimated that he lost 2,000 men, killed, wounded and missing at Sedaseer. The British casualties were one hundred and forty three. Among the wounded was James Lighton. The nature of his wounds is unknown.

In a letter to Lord Mornington, Stuart praised "the Officers and Men including the Artillery of the Brigade, for their gallant and steady Behaviour throughout the Whole of this arduous Affair."

Whilst the Bombay army regrouped and tended to the wounded, "the Grand Army" of the combined Madras and Hyderabad forces proceeded towards Seringapatam, placing it under siege. Stuart's force arrived on the 14th April, presumably bringing their wounded, walking and otherwise, with them.

On the 25th April, Tipu executed thirteen British prisoners, one by one, either by the twisting of their necks through 180 degrees or having a nine-inch nail driven into their skulls. Most of them had been captured in a failed night raid commanded by Arthur Wellesley: the only serious setback in his illustrious career

After a sustained bombardment, the walls of Seringapatam were breached on the 3rd May by two assault columns, each headed by a "forlorn hope" contingent of volunteers. The left flank was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Dunlop of Stuart's force. About 5,000 men lay huddled in trenches behind them until 1 p.m. the next day. At that precise time, the attackers rushed forward under heavy fire and into the 300 yards wide South Cauvery river, through a passage marked out by white flags. The water varied from ankle to waist deep. Sergeant Graham, carrying the Colours, and with the shout "Lieutenant Graham", the promotion he would receive for being first, planted them amidst the rubble. He was shot dead immediately. The British onslaught was now unstoppable. Seringapatam was taken and Tipu, fighting bravely to the end, was slain. There is a monument at

Seringapatam where his mutilated body was found under a pile of corpses. He was buried with full military honours the following day.

In Seringapatam, the British Army went on a disgraceful spree of looting and pillage within the fortress and town.

Arthur Wellesley, who was made military governor, executed and flogged to restore order.

On 13th May, the Bombay Army with the injured James Lighton, left Seringapatam.

Native Artillerymen

NOTES:

See www.lib.mq.edu.au/digital/seringapatam/bombay.html for James Lighton at Sedaseer or simply google "Lighton Seringapatam".

Indian Servants

Chapter 5 : - The Lightons of the Raj

James Lighton recovered from the wounds he sustained at Sedaseer, and in 1802 was promoted to full Lieutenant. He then rose in the ranks to Captain Lieutenant on the 18th October, 1803 and Captain on the 12th February, 1808.

Officer's coat, HEIC.

Captain James Lighton, having been in India, perhaps non-stop since 1791, went home on leave shortly after his latest promotion, and lost no time in finding a wife.

On the 24th January, 1810, he married Isabella Aitchison at Kenton, in Devon. This helpful, if brief, information is contained in the Mormon International Genealogical Index (IGI).

Why Kenton? It is a tiny village, and seems to have no previous connections with either the names Lighton or Aitchison. Nearby is Powderham Castle, the seat of the Earls of Devon. Such a place might offer employment to a young, perhaps refined, although impoverished, young woman.

Whether she had any associations with Powderham or not, I felt that Isabella already had links with India. Perhaps through a brother called Andrew. Years after the wedding, on the 19th December, 1838, the Bombay Times carried the following announcement:

Look again for Bps? Isabel & And Aitchison, Devon?

"27th July, 1838.
Her Majesty has been pleased to appoint the undermentioned officers in the East India Company's Forces to rank, by Brevet, in her Majesty's Armies in the East Indies only. Commissions to be dated 28th June 1838...."

Among the names:
"Colonel Andrew Aitchison to be appointed Major-General."

In 1810, could Andrew Aitchison, then up and coming, and perhaps a comrade of James Lighton, have played matchmaker between his sister Isabella and his friend James Lighton?

Again from the IGI, an Isabel Aitcheson *(sic)* the daughter of John Aitcheson and Barbara Mouet was baptised the 2nd May, 1780, and Andrew, their son, was baptised on the 16th January, 1784, both at Prestonpans, East Lothian, Scotland. It is by no means certain that these were the sister and brother I sought, but they were at least a possibility.

I had so far found no baptism or birth record for a boy called James born to James Lighton of Sedaseer and Isabella, though the IGI shows a daughter, Elizabeth, born on the 7th October, 1812 who was baptised at Bombay, Maharashtra on the 7th May, 1813.

According to the Army List, James, shown as serving in the East Indies, was promoted to Major (Local Rank) on the 4th June, 1814, as was Andrew Aitchison.

James became a full Major on the 2nd February, 1816. Seven months later on the 19th September, he died at Bombay, of ~~(presently)~~ an unknown cause. Three months later, Isabella gave birth to another child who was christened posthumously.*

I felt that Isabella might be the Isabella Lighton whose death is registered at Newton Abbot, Devon in the September quarter of 1840. This was surely the woman of the same name who died at Dawlish on the 30th July that year and whose obituary appears in the Gentleman's Magazine of September, 1840. This volume is listed on the internet as having been indexed by a William Cooke, of Ontario, Canada. I emailed him without a great deal of expectation.

What other evidence was there to support the theory that "our" James was the son of James and Isabella? There is evidence, but it was circumstantial, and lies with the name Isabella.

On the 12th December, 1834, at Bombay, a marriage was announced between Mr. J. Lighton, late of His Majesty's 2nd Foot, to Miss *(sic)* C. Fullarton, described as the "widow of the late William Fullarton, Esquire".

In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a portrait of a William Fullerton *(sic)*, dated about 1760-3. He was an official of the Company and adopted all aspects of Indian courtly life. In the portrait, he is greeting a visitor, and is seated on a carpet, leaning

against a bolster and smoking a hookah. Beside him are a rose water sprinkler and a box for betel nuts. Servants with whisks hover nearby.

Whether this flamboyant William Fullerton was the same person as the William Fullerton-Elphinstone, who was born in 1740, and was three times Chairman of the Company, 1803-04, 1805-06 and 1814-15, I have not been able to discover. Fullerton-Elphinstone died in 1834: it may be pure coincidence that Catherine and James were married at the end of this year. If by any chance he was Catherine's first husband, he was many years her senior. Another relative may have been General Fullerton "an old twaddler from Bengal" who wore a green gauze veil because of defective eyesight, and who took his "Hindoo" wife to Scotland in 1801.

The IGI lists a birth for Isabella Catherine, daughter of James and Catherine Lighton, on the 23rd May, 1835, who was baptised at Belgaum the following 17th January, 1836.

Belgaum is in the foothills of the Western Ghats and lies between two states Maharashtra and Goa. Its capital and namesake, "the town of Bamboos" is known for its natural beauty and lush vegetation – it has 50 inches of rainfall – and is said to attract tourists, settlers and entrepreneurs.

Belgaum had been one of the provinces ceded to the Bombay Presidency after the 5th November,1817, when Baj Rao II, the last of the Marathas was defeated.

After their sojourn at Belgaum, the family moved back to Bombay, probably to the fort at Mazagon. The transcripts on the website of the Families in British India Society taken from the East India Register do not refer to their first daughter, but the births of three later, un-named children are recorded there:

24th June, 1836, a daughter to the Lady of J. Lighton, Esq., since dead, at Mazagon
24th November, 1837, at Bombay, to the Lady of J. Lighton, Esq., a son
25th December, 1839, lately, to the Lady of J. Lighton, Esq., a daughter

No further mention is made of Isabella Catherine, their first born, but the death registers tell a heart breaking story.

On the 1st January, 1839, at Bombay, the death took place at thirteen months old of "James Alexander Lighton, the only son of J. Lighton, Esq."

More sorrow was to come. Catherine gave birth to another baby, a girl this time, in November or early December. The baby survived but Catherine did not. Her death is recorded: "On 21st December, 1839, at Bombay, Mrs. Lighton, the Lady of J. Lighton, Esq., deeply regretted." James registered the baby Catherine Anne Elizabeth on Christmas Day.

The little girl must just have been beginning to crawl and coming to that age when everything around her was of particular interest, but tragically, she fell sick and died on the 25th September, 1840. The death register records: "Catherine Ann Elizabeth, at Mazagon, aged ten months, the daughter of J. Lighton, Esq."

I had no doubt that "Mr J. Lighton" who had endured such tragedy was Mary's grandfather, but his link to James of Sedaseer at this time remained circumstantial.

Now supposing "our" James Lighton alias Lightning, otherwise Mr J. Lighton of Bombay was the son of James Lighton or Leighton of Sedaseer and Isabella, I thought he must have been conceived on the boat to India and born in Bombay, either in 1810 or 1811 or conceived in India, and born between 1814 and 1815. These windows of opportunity fall between the marriage and the dates of the births of their two children, described in the IGI as Elizabeth and Anne.

From the information contained in the censuses of 1851 and 1871, James was born sometime between 1808 and 1815.

If he was born in 1808, then I decided I was looking for a previous partnership or marriage of James of Sedaseer. In Bombay in 1809 the number of European women was very small: there were about three times as many men as women. Most British officers set up a household with a *bibi* or Indian wife, along with the necessary servants,

including a cook, punkah wallah and chah wallah. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries there seems to have been little of the racial and religious discrimination of the 1850s.

As Sita Ram described in his memoir "From Sepoy to Subedar" in 1812:

"Most of our officers had Indian women living with them, and these had great influence on the regiment. They always pretended to have more influence than was probably the case in order that they might be bribed to ask the sahibs for favours on our behalf.....In those days the sahibs could speak our language much better than they do now, and they mixed more with us....."

At the end of the 18th century the Company offered free passages to "gentlewomen" and "other women" (!) who were prepared to travel to the sub-continent to find husbands. This trickle would vastly increase when the shorter route to India was established by the 1840s and contributed greatly to the change of attitude between Europeans and Indians.

As I had not found a christening for James, born about 1808, it was tempting indeed to suspect that he was the product of a union between the Major and an Indian wife.

Although unlikely, it was not beyond the bounds of possibility that James junior named his first daughter after an adored stepmother. If he was born in 1815, then he was only about nineteen when he married the widowed Catherine Fullarton, and this seemed to me to be far too young an age to be "**formerly** of the 2nd Regiment" in 1834. It cannot go unnoticed that James was either "formerly" or "late of" the Army both in 1834 when he was in India and in 1851 when he had returned to England!

A first marriage when he was 26 or thereabouts was, I thought, surely far more likely, in which case he was born before his supposed father married Isabella Aitchison.

There is another mention of a James Lighton or Leighton. On the 27th October, 1831, a man by this name was described as a "Captain in the service of the HEIC at Madras, Esq., bachelor" and is named on a document which appears to relate to a gift of some sort "to the brother, £20 in province, resworn June 1834, £200." Was it a legacy to James Lighton – or a legacy from him? (In which case he was dead.) Were there two men of this name? And why Madras – when all previous connections are with the Bombay Army?

REF? Anything to do with the Court case

James Lighton was a near contemporary of an Alexander Arbuckle Lighton, 1815-58, of the Madras Army, HEIC and I was as certain as I could possibly be that this Alexander Arbuckle was connected to "our" family. A family tree posted on the World Wide Web gives the following information:

Alexander Arbuckle Lighton	=	Agnes Follett
b 12.11.1815	m 1849	b 17.5.1818
d 18.5. 1858		d 11.9 1884
Invalided 31.1.1855		

Alexander Gerald A.	Arthur Follett	Charles Lumley	Agnes Isabel Augusta	Spencer Alexander Arbuckle
b 5.10.1850	b 21.1.1852	b 24.1.1854	b 5.3.1857	b 14.6.1858

Alexander Arbuckle, I thought, must be a close relative of James Lighton junior, who called two of his sons James Alexander – the baby who died an infant in Bombay, and the child born many years later in England.

In 1871, Alexander's widow, Agnes Lighton aged 50, was described as living on "Dividends" at Radnor Place, St Leonard's, Exeter. The birthplaces of her three youngest children give a taste of the roving nature of army life. Charles, aged 17, was born at Wynberg, South Africa, Agnes, 14, at Rochester in Hampshire and Spencer, aged 12, at Plumstead in Kent. They had one servant, Louisa Sweetland, aged 22. It is intriguing, and surely not simply coincidental that Agnes Lighton, nee Follett, was born at Star Cross, in Devon, within walking distance of Kenton!

The widowed Agnes, her surname given as "Leighton" aged 62, was living at Marine Parade, Newton Abbot in 1881 with her daughter Agnes Isabel Augusta, now aged 24, and a sixteen year old servant, Bristol-born Rose Riele. In 1891, daughter Agnes junior, now shown as Lighton, age given as 30, was living on her own means as a visitor at Goring, Berkshire, with a boat builder, twenty nine year old Arthur Saunders, his wife Annie, nee Baigent and their two young sons. I suspect Agnes had been sent away to school at some point and that Annie may have been a school friend. The family was sufficiently prosperous to employ two maidservants. Agnes sadly died aged 42, at Epsom in the December Quarter of 1899.

Another person found in the same corner of Devon is a woman called Ann Lighton who was living in the ecclesiastical district of St Thomas, at Temple House Lodge, Littleham, Exmouth, in 1861. She was a spinster of fifty, born in the "East Indies", who was in lodgings at a house belonging to William Hooper, a brewer and his wife Hannah. She was evidently in dire circumstances, as she was described as being "dependant on her friends". If she was not related to James and Isabella, then who was she? Exmouth is not a million miles from Dawlish, of course. In 1871, with her name given as Anne Leighton, her circumstances had slightly improved for she was an "annuitant", aged 62, living as a lodger with James Tapp, a hotel servant and his family at 35 Albion Street, Exmouth. Her place of birth is given as Madras, East Indies, which surely connects her to the "alternative" James Lighton, named in the "legacy" which is mentioned above. Her death, as Ann Lighton, was registered in the June Quarter of 1876 – at St Thomas, Devon. She is stated to be "aged 75", i.e. born 1801, which sounds as if somebody just guessed her age.

Alexander Arbuckle Lighton	=	Agnes Follett
b 12.11.1815	m 1849	b 17.5.1818
d 18.5. 1858		d 11.9 1884
Invalided 31.1.1855		

A second Alexander Lighton married Rebecca Terrington at Walthamstow, London on the 29th January, 1829, and Rebecca subsequently applied to be a passenger to Bombay on the following 4th February. Her father, William W. Terrington, a merchant, of Great Winchester Street, and William H. Leith, another merchant, of Mansion House Place, stood as sureties in the sum of £200.

William Terrington had begun his career as an insurance broker and in 1811 according to Hay's London Directory was living at No.11 Gould Street, Crutched Friars.

Rebecca was widowed when Alexander Lighton of the 21st Regiment, died at Poonah on the 10th July, 1835. I obtained a copy of his will from the "on-line" indexes of the National Archives.

It was whispered to a scribe on the 4th July, 1835, when he was already on his death bed, and contains just one line: "Everything I own to go to my wife and all that is left of my property once just debt is paid."

Probate was granted on the 22nd February, 1836, to the same men who had stood as sureties when Rebecca was granted passage to Bombay: William Hay Leith of Throckmorton Street in the City of London and her father, William Terrington of Walthamstow in the County of Essex, esquires. They swore to the validity of Alexander's signature, and that he was a Captain in the 21st Regiment of Native Infantry in the service of the Honourable East India Company in the Presidency of Bombay. I can find no note as to the sum of money involved, but Rebecca, having later been additionally bereaved by her father's death, stayed on in India, and in 1837, her remarriage was announced in the Bombay Times:

"Farish-Lighton: 19th June, 1837, Bombay: James Farish, Member of the Council to Rebecca, widow of the late Captain Alexander Lighton of H.E.I.Company's Military service and 4th daughter of the late William Terrington, esquire."

As we shall see later, Mr. & Mrs. Farish eventually returned to England

I have said I believed that Aitchison was the surname of James's supposed mother (or stepmother) and uncle. The surname is almost peculiar to Scotland. I also believed it was more than likely that James Lighton of Sedaseer was a Scot - there is after all, a tartan for his alternative name of Leighton. Remembering Mary's enjoyment of all things Scottish, I thought it would be truly delightful if her paternal ancestors, Aitchisons and Lightons, were from Scotland!

It is known that the Honourable East India Company found the younger sons of respectable Scottish families made very good soldiers and officials, giving further credence to my theory that the Lightons came from Scotland. Commissions in the British Army had to be purchased, and the Company was a good alternative career for those of ambition who had little money or influence. Promotion within the Company could not be

bought, so rising through the ranks occurred mainly through ability rather than family connections.

Most of the HEIC officers were therefore relatively poor by comparison to those of the British Army, and were often in debt, though there were also huge fortunes to be made in India.

In the light of my knowledge at this time, this was my romantic version of the story so far:

James Lighton was born in India around 1808, the son of James of Sedaseer and an unknown, possibly Indian, woman. He was only eight years old when his father died and perhaps like Kimball O'Hara he made the best of it, and was able to pass unremarked on the Bombay streets.

As soon as he was old enough, and mindful of being a "gentleman", he enlisted – not in the Company's Army, as officers of mixed race were not accepted at this time**, but in the King's Army – to whit, the 2nd Regiment of Foot, the Queen's Own, which became the West Surrey Regiment. At the time, the Peninsular War where the Regiment had been engaged at Talavera was history and Britain's peacetime Army was deployed either in Ireland or India. There was increasing worry about Russian intentions towards the sub continent – the Great Game was afoot - and I suspected that James became a soldier in about 1825 when the 2nd Foot was stationed variously at Bombay, Decca and Poona, where latterly it stayed until 1830. The Regiment was then at Bombay between 1831 and 1837, with deployments at Colaba (1832-33) and Poona (1834-36). By the time he was married in 1834, James was "formerly of the 2nd Regiment" and I assumed he had either been invalided out or was surplus to requirements. He was dignified with the title "Mr." which denoted he was a "gentleman", and it would be interesting to know how he and his family eked out a living. I see him as a pen – pusher with the Company, - the "clerk" of Frederick's marriage certificate - and making a bit on the side. With the tragic loss of his wife and three children – it is so far unknown whether the eldest, Isabella Catherine had survived - he returned "home" to England. As he was still a "gentlemen" when he remarried, which signifies quite properly that he had no occupation, he may have lived on some small profits he had brought with him from India. That these were less than substantial is obvious. Once in England, it is said that only "a combination of fair skin, the wealth of a nabob father and a claim to descent from Indian aristocracy" allowed the offspring of cross cultural marriages a place in polite English society***, which perhaps partly explains his marriage to the daughter of a private soldier.

At his marriage in London in 1849, he gave his father's name and station as James Lighton, Colonel. Whilst I continue to suspect that he had elevated his father's rank, it is possible that James senior was a Brevet (or local) Colonel – that is he had the style, but was still officially Major Lighton at his death. His father's name may be all that remained to James junior of his Indian life.

From 1851, as we know, the family went into a desperate decline, which led the Officer and Gentleman to a life hawking books about the highways and byways of southern England. The Family Tree – supposed – was now as follows:

James Lighton = (1) ? = (2) Isabella Aitchison
1772-1816 mar Kenton, Devon, 1810
Major, H.E.I.C

- Elizabeth 1812-
- Anne* 1816-

James Lighton
?1808 - ?
Lieut. formerly 2nd Regiment
= (1) Catherine Fullarton
mar 1834, Bombay
(died 1839)

- Isabella Catherine 1835-
- dau b&d 1836
- James Alexander 1837-1839
- Elizabeth Ann Catherine 1839-40

= (2) Elizabeth Legg
1822-

- Elizabeth bc1850
- Emily bc1854
- Frederick b June 1859
  = Mary Ann Matilda Davies
  - Thomas 1878-
  - Elizabeth 1879-94
  - Mary Ann 1884-
- Mary bc1862
- James bc1867

NOTES:

* James and Isabella's posthumous child is shown incorrectly in the IGI as Ann Lighton

For information on the numbers of European women in Bombay in 1808, see Richard Holmes' "Sahib" p444.

For the document concerning James Lighton of Madras, (1831) and his brother, see PROB 6/207 at the National Archives which is not currently on line. Without seeing the item in question it is not possible to make anything of it, but subsequent chapters will reveal another James Lighton, born 1784, and it may refer to him – as "our" James senior was in the Bombay Army of the HEIC, and not the Madras Army.

** Colour Bar. The ban on mixed race (Eurasian) cadets in the HEIC existed until 1835.

The story about General Fullerton and his "Hindoo" wife appears in "Children of the Raj" by Vyvyen Brendon, and is taken from a letter written by Frederic North to his sister in 1801; the quotation*** concerning the trials encountered by mixed race Anglo-Indian children is from Rosina Vizram in the same book..

Chapter 6 :- Mostly Back Home

The birth certificates arrived – and so, to return to Victorian England:

Elizabeth, the daughter of James Lighton and his wife, nee Elizabeth Legg, was born on the 23rd February, 1850 at No. 3 Spring Street, Marylebone. The registration was made by the baby's mother, (who marked with an "X."), six weeks after the birth on the 3rd April, which suggests that Elizabeth had to wait until she and the child were well enough to go out. This time, the father's occupation was given as simply "soldier", and I wonder whether he had enlisted again, and was away.

Seventeen years later, James Alexander, the son of James Lighton, and his wife Elizabeth, formerly Legg, was born the 19th January, 1867 and registered by his father on the 25th January. I have no doubt that he was a longed for replacement of the boy who had died so many years before in India. The family now lived at No. 60, South Street, Gosport, Hampshire, though the registration district was Alverstoke. For the third time in this history James was between occupations: he was described as "lately a merchant's clerk". Nevertheless here truly was the "clerk" of Frederick's marriage certificate, in fact, rather than in my imagination.

I was not so fortunate with the third of the certificates. Emily Louisa, also registered at Alverstoke, and born the 24th August, 1853 was not a member of the family. She was the daughter of James Lightening, a warder at the Military Prison, Dorton, near Gosport. His wife was Hannah Lightening, late Morris, formerly Smith. A marriage between these two is not indexed, but I am almost ninety eight per cent certain that he is the Chelsea Pensioner documented in the 1881 census, then with a new wife called Anne. The Lightenings of Alverstoke, which include Margaret, the wife of the absent Royal Marine appear to be red herrings, and it is pure coincidence that both Emily Louisa Lightening and James Alexander Lighton were both registered there.

Still, two out of three was not bad, and I resolved to have another punt.

Further study of the birth indexes threw up more possibilities and I sent for the birth certificates of two who I believed could have been Frederick's sisters: Emily Catherine Lighton registered in the June Quarter, of 1852 at Birmingham and Mary Adelaide Lighton registered in the December Quarter, 1862, at Brighton.

I hoped the second might afford some clue as to why the family had been missed at the 1861 census.

Going back in time to Georgian England, by the same post came a copy of the full marriage entry for James Lighton and Isabella Aitchison at Kenton, Devon, on the 24th February, 1810. Both were said to be of the parish of Kenton. No marital status was

shown for James, but Isabella was a spinster; both signed with good literate signatures and their witnesses were Andrew and Mary Aitchison who also likewise signed. The appearance of Andrew at the wedding gave further credence to my theory that he was Isabella's brother. Mary is probably Andrew's wife. The marriage was by licence, and I eagerly contacted the Devon Record Office again, for although the original licence which would have been handed to the vicar is unlikely to have survived, there should be an allegation or bond existing for the marriage. The information contained in this document would show the groom's status and occupation (Captain in the HEIC?) and that of his bondsman, who surely would be the similarly ranked Andrew Aitchison?

The response from the archivist brought me down to earth: "I have searched the marriage bonds and allegations for January-February 1810," she emailed, "and can confirm that there are no documents relevant to the marriage of James Lighton and Isabella Aitchison."

It is of course quite possible that James Lighton arrived in Devon already armed with a marriage licence which he had obtained en route from a Bishop of another See. The archivist suggested that in the first instance I should try the allegation bonds of the Archbishoprics of Canterbury or York. It sounded like a daunting task.

Then something exciting happened which even without the allegation bond, proved that the marriage was the right one. I received an emailed reply from Canada in respect of the Dawlish obituary:

"Doreen

"Most obituaries were in the form of short death notices.

Gentleman's Magazine, Sept 1840, p. 328

July 30, At Dawlish, Isabella, relict of Major Lighton, Bombay Horse Artillery.

Regards,

Bill Cooke
Ontario, Canada."

~~This was pure gold.~~ I could hardly wait to get to Dawlish to see whether there was a gravestone.

In the early years of the 19th century, Dawlish was a small fishing village with a population of 1,424 inhabitants. By 1841, shortly after Isabella's death, the population had increased to 3,132, reflecting the new popularity of sea bathing resorts. In 1850 it was described in "White's Devonshire Directory" as being "delightfully situated near a fine bay of the English Channel, between Exmouth and Teignmouth, lying in a picturesque valley opening to the sea, and a rivulet, which runs through its principal

street, is crossed in several places by small bridges of stone or iron..... Large quantities of mackerel, herring, and other fish are taken on the coast, and the neighbourhood is celebrated for orchards and excellent cider."

The Parish Church of St Gregory where Isabella must have been buried, is at the upper end of the village, three quarters of a mile from the beach, and was all rebuilt, except the tower, in 1824-25.

St Gregory, Dawlish

The information in Isabella's obituary gave me another piece of the puzzle. The Bombay Horse Artillery, not previously mentioned, was raised in 1811.

It was, it seems, very grand, and one piece of equipment demonstrates this: a spectacular and glamourous addition to the Officers' uniform of the Bombay Horse Artillery called a sabretasche.

It was basically a leather satchel, but faced with an elaborate panel of gold embroidery worn suspended from the sword belt.

Cavalry regiments always regarded themselves as superior to the infantry and their uniforms were normally more sophisticated, with extra fittings, and early in the nineteenth century, when James Lighton was serving in the regiment, sabretasches were added.

These large pouches were intended to hold maps and documents, but later they were used for any personal items. They could also serve as a writing surface. Suspended from the sword belt by three long straps, they had a flap covering a series of deep pockets. The flap was embroidered with the royal cypher and crown, and in Victorian times the practice of adding battle honours was common. Regimental designations were also embroidered on, so the dress sabretasche became very ornate indeed. For undress purposes a plainer model of patent leather with metal badges was used.

This flashy piece of kit was abolished in 1901.

Chapter 7: Trials and tribulations of a Family Historian.

Recent programmes on BBC TV have given rise to Ancestry Hooligans who arrive mob handed at Record Offices, talk loudly and grab microfiches and seats in temporarily vacated places, irrespective of whether one's papers are already *in situ* at that particular desk.

These programmes also foster the myth that it is possible to trace one's forebears – or anybody else's for that matter – in about an hour. A glance at this narrative will refute this suggestion entirely. There is occasional progress on different fronts, a lot of disappointments along the way, not to say expense, and a great deal of waiting about, which gives time for thought and the pursuit of new ideas.

I had already sent for birth certificates which I hoped were Frederick's elder and younger sister. Whilst waiting, I endeavoured to find out what had happened to them from the time they were last encountered in various censuses.

Of these, Elizabeth, the eldest, last seen in 1851, had vanished by the time of the 1871 census where the rest of the brood appeared. Had she died young? Had she been married before 1871 and therefore appeared under her husband's name?

One entry seemed promising: an Elizabeth Sophia Lighton and a Jacob Fix were united at Stepney in the June Quarter of 1868 and appear on the census of 1881 at No. 1 Cross Street, London, Middlesex, as follows:

Jacob Fix, Head, married aged 37, baker, born Germany (F) (for Foreign)
E. Fix, wife, 32, born Middlesex
Clara Fix, daughter, 11, scholar, born Middlesex
Jessie Fix, 9, daughter, scholar, born Middlesex
Christian Fix, 7, son, born Middlesex

It remained to be seen of course whether Elizabeth Sophia Lighton was James's eldest daughter, and would take a marriage certificate – yet another certificate - to find out. I soon succumbed to temptation.

If Elizabeth Fix was the former Elizabeth Lighton then there was the distinct possibly that Mary Britton might have living relatives.

Unfortunately, this proved to be a blind alley. James Lighton was not shown as the father of Elizabeth Fix. The General Register Office did not issue the certificate and therefore refunded half the fee. The fate of Elizabeth Lighton, James and Elizabeth's first daughter remains a mystery. *

For the Indian family, I ordered the films of the HEIC Cadet Certificates from the Mormon Library at Wells Road. I hoped they might take me back a little further in the careers of the various Lightons who joined the Company – the two James and the two

* This Elizabeth was daughter of Jonathon Lighton, a shipwright – was reg. on-line 2020

Alexanders. The archivist said "They may take a month to come - if you're lucky; if not, three."

Whilst at the library I had a stab at finding something which ought to have been easy – Mary Britton's death certificate. I have an indistinct memory of one of my children as a baby sitting on her lap, so to perm one of three, this meant sometime between 1968 and 1971. However, I searched every quarter between March 1965 and December 1975 without success. Either I missed it somewhere, or it was later than December 1975.

A week later I went back to the drawing board and discovered from the last of the printed Bristol street indexes, that Mrs. M.A. Britton was listed at No. 34 Victoria Park in 1973. (Next door at No. 33, of course was Mr. A.J. Pillinger!) Here was proof that Mary was still living at least until 1972, given that the Directory was probably compiled the previous year. More searches necessary. It must have been Kevin, my son, that I remembered sitting on her lap.

As to Isabella Lighton, the memsahib, a visit to Dawlish to look for her was impossible before the middle of July because of the 2006 World Cup. Desperate for a fix, I logged on to the Devon Family History website and notice board and made a plea for somebody to look for her gravestone in the churchyard there. A Patricia Cheeseman kindly emailed me to say she was going to Dawlish the following day, and would have a look.

Bated breath gave way to disappointment when Patricia emailed again that a leaky car radiator had curtailed her trip, but that she would be going down again in a few weeks with her niece.....and "it would be no trouble: I enjoy doing it." Family historians are both extremely kind and a little dotty. More patience required. (In the event, this was the last I heard of it.)

As to the Victorian part of the search, disappointment came in the following email from the Office of National Statistics:

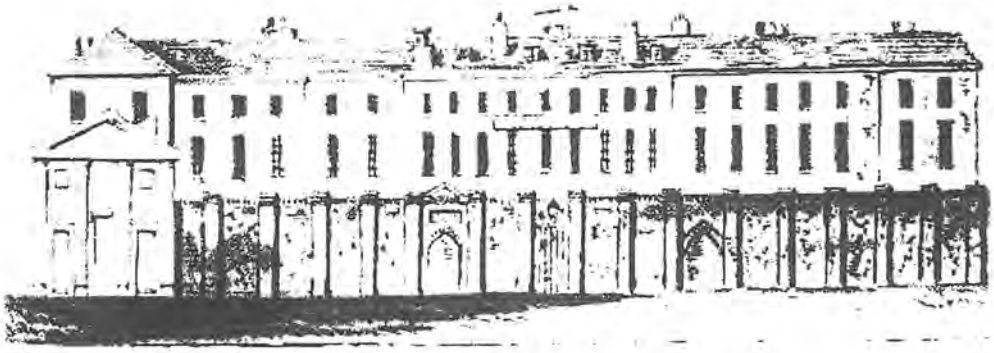
"Birth certificate: Emily Catherine Lighton, registered March 1852 at Birmingham. We have not produced a certificate as the Mother's name is not Elizabeth Legg and there is no record of the Father."

So it appears that James Lighton's daughter Emily was not registered at all. Once again, half the fee was returned.

I couldn't help feeling that this reinforced an idea of the ramshackle nature of family life at the Lighton ménage. There was no word yet on Mary Adelaide Lighton, but I didn't hold much hope. I sent for Isabella's death certificate to see who provided the information for the registrar, thinking that the ideal result would be if it was "James Lighton, son or stepson of the deceased." Some hopes.

Oh ye of little faith.

On another front, Mary Adelaide's birth certificate arrived and there was another shock in store. The baby was born on the 8th September, 1862, in the Brighton Workhouse. In retrospect, suppose I should not really have been surprised.



The Workhouse – Brighton

I believe that Elizabeth was obliged to go to the Workhouse for the birth of the baby, taking her family with her: eleven year old Elizabeth, Emily who was seven, and little Freddie, who was two. James was obviously absent on the road, touting his pathetic wares. By the 8th October, perhaps he had returned with sufficient money for them to take up lodgings in the outside world for when Elizabeth registered Mary Adelaide on this day, their address was shown as "No. 20 Derby Place, Brighton" with James's occupation given as "travelling agent".

Until I began this search, most of my family history research had focused on the hand to mouth existence of the industrial and rural poor. Genteel poverty was a situation I had not encountered outside the novels of Jane Austen. I now understood the desperation involved in making a "good" marriage. It had never occurred to me before that the middle class could descend so rapidly to destitution, perhaps even faster than their fellow human beings in the mines and factories of working class England. James had been "a Gentleman". He had no training in anything else. He would not have known where to start, and in any case, embarrassment and awkward awareness of rank would have prevented him being hired. The only skill he possessed was literacy.

The fact that the family was in Brighton may solve the mystery of their non-appearance in the 1861 census. I discovered that the whole book of "the Palace" district of Brighton was stolen sometime during the century prior to microfilming, and if this is where they lived at the time of Mary Adelaide's birth eighteen months later then they will never be found in 1861.

I found an death index entry for James Leighton, aged four, who had died at Alverstoke in the September Quarter of 1871 and as James's son, little James, also aged four, had appeared in the census, taken on the 2nd April that year, I sent for this death certificate. At the same time I ordered that of an Elizabeth Leighton aged 54, whose death is registered

in the June Quarter of 1875. I thought that either of them or both could be members of our family.

The piecemeal nature of the research can be further judged by the fact that a few days later I received Isabella's death certificate. She was described as the "widow of the late Major James Lighton" who died at Dawlish, with no qualifying address, on the 30th July 1840, of a diseased heart, aged 52 years. The information was given by "M.A. Truman, present at the death."

A Mary Anne Truman, the thirty five year old wife of a tailor was living in Dawlish in 1841. The actual place of birth is not recorded in this census, but intriguingly, the box is ticked which denotes that Mary Anne was born in "Foreign Parts". I think it is more than likely that she was Isabella's maid, and came back with her from India.

Thus the obituary notice was confirmed, but the age given for Isabella's death suggests a birth date of 1788 – and not 1780, so she may not be the daughter of John Aitcheson and Barbara Mouet of Prestonpans, East Lothian, Scotland, as previously surmised. However, Mary Anne probably had to make a guess at her mistress's age.

On the 28th June, being advised that two of the HEIC films which I had ordered had been received at the Mormon Library, I hastened there at once.

The microfilms comprise the entry particulars of the cadets, and though indexed after a fashion, the details I was after took some finding. The two Lighton entries were at the end of one microfilm and at the beginning of the other, but referred to the same cadet, James Lighton.

Young James's vicar wrote:

"I do certify that Mr. James Lighton of Dunnmara in the County of Tyrone, Ireland was baptised on 13th January, 1784.

"Given under my hand at Eastgift (?) in the parish of Donaghiddy, Co. Tyrone, 11th day of January 1804.

"Signed Andrew William Hamilton
"Rector of Donaghiddy."

and his father confirmed:

"I, Samuel Lighton, father to James Lighton, do make oath that James Lighton my son was born the 10th January, 1784 and that he was 20 years old on the 10th January, 1804.

"Sworn and signed, Samuel Lighton."

So, despite my pumping heart, this James is not the James Lighton who fought at Sedaseer, for he was born in 1772. I had previously found it difficult to fit a James Lighton of the Madras Army into the story, and this confirmed there were two men of the same name. The surprise came in the fact that this one was not from Scotland at all, but was Irish!

I had now become so embroiled in the quest that any Lighton, Leighton or Lightning was grist to my mill, and a website by a Marilyn Ainslie led me to an Isabella Elizabeth Lighton who married a Claudius Buchanan Ker on the 2nd September, 1856, at Charlton Kings, Gloucestershire.

I looked up Isabella Ker on the 1881 census, but Claudius Ker was a widower by then. He was aged 66, a physician, born in Edinburgh. Two children were at home on census night: Francis, a twenty two year old Oxford undergraduate, and Sybil, aged 8. However, I perked up when I saw there was an Indian connection. Amelia M. Hopkins, aged 52, sister in law to Claudius, was born in Bombay.

Clutching at straws, I emailed Marilyn Ainslie, who, confirming my experience of kindly family history addicts, responded immediately.

"This is probably the family you are looking for," Marilyn said, attaching a copy of their entry on the 1851 census. It was the above Isabella all right, but now called Leighton, and this family were ultra posh.

They lived at Bafford House, Charlton Kings. The head of the family was David Leighton, aged 76, born Brechin, Scotland, a Lieutenant General in the Service of the East India Company. His wife Isabella was 50, and born at Walworth, Middlesex. There were three daughters. Honoria aged 28 and Amelia aged 22, who obviously became the Mrs. Hopkins above, who went to assist her brother in law after he lost his wife. Both were born in Bombay. Isabella, the third daughter, aged 17 was born at Charlton Kings. Other members of the family were Henry P. Tucker, aged 27, in the Civil Service of the EIC, and two grand nieces, Florence aged 3, and Clara Davidson, aged one, all of whom were born in Bombay. They were waited on hand and foot by a governness, a housekeeper, a lady's maid, two housemaids, a cook, a cook's assistant, a nurse and a footman.

David Leighton, then a Lieutenant Colonel, married Isabella C. Williams at Bombay on the 29th August, 1818. A son, unnamed, had been born two years before on the 11th June, 1816, presumably to a previous wife. Unnamed daughters were recorded on the 7th October, 1823 and the 20th February, 1829, evidently Honoria and Amelia, and a son, again unnamed, on the 17th September, 1826.

It think it is very unlikely that this family is connected to "our" James and Isabella in any way, apart from the obvious one of India.

I still had been unable to find the registration of Mary Britton's death and I made another search through forty eight quarters of microfiche covering the years 1972-83. The task was made even more tedious as I checked Britton, Britten, Britain and Brittain. In the latter years, the date of birth appears in the indexes, theoretically making identification that much easier. It was all to no avail. Not only did I not find Mary, I found no one with a birthday on the 14th July 1884.

I believed Mary was taken to Manor Park Hospital shortly before she died. I kicked myself for not being able to recall anything more about this, though I remembered the step relatives gathering to clear out the house, Pamela, her step granddaughter and Iris her step daughter in law. Not that there was anything of value, apart from a silver brooch with small embossed figures on it, which she always wore pinned to her knitted jumper and a Toby Jug of a nodding sailor, both of which I coveted. In the end all that was left behind was an earthenware plate decorated with some faded roses and with "Give us this day our daily bread" around the edge. I still have it.

I then emailed the Bristol registrar, not so much for advice, as in the vain hope I would be permitted to trawl through their local indexes. I explained that I suspected Mary never had her birth certificate: her father's name was blank on her marriage entry, so would the hospital authorities have known her date of birth? The Bristol registrar didn't "bite" and suggested checking the spelling variations of Britton. Gee thanks. She also "wondered if I had considered whether Mary had remarried?" As I had given her Mary's birth date of July 1884, and specified I was looking for a death from 1973-83, chance would have been a fine thing. You just can't get the staff.

Burial registers? Bristol's Canford Cemetery holds not only its own, but also those for Greenbank and Avonview. The helpful custodian obligingly looked through the burial registers without result and apologised that he did not have time to trawl through the cremations. After a series of phone calls to various hospital almoners, I found the Manor Park Records had been deposited at the Bristol Record Office, which should of course have been my first port of call. Duh! However, they had not been catalogued and there was no chance of them being so in the foreseeable future. Besides, they were subject to the "100 year rule."

We were in one of the hottest, clammiest heatwaves ever. We sat indoors, with the curtains drawn. I seethed with frustration.

What else was left? Social Security? National Assistance, as it then was? A trawl through Old Age Pensions? Did such records still exist? I did not care for the prospect.

In the midst of this, another death certificate arrived.

Little James Alexander Lighton, who had been named for his baby half brother who had died in India so many years before, died on the 6th August 1871, aged four, of smallpox, after nine days suffering. I wondered how much more anguish the family could take. Elizabeth registered the death on the following day. They were then living at No.12

Lower South Street, Gosport. If James had not long ago taken to drink, then he must have done so now.

With humidity decreasing and to take advantage of the summer weather, we took a brief holiday in Charmouth, Dorset. It was over all too soon, and on the 5th July, 2006, homeward bound, in blazing heat, we made a detour via Dawlish to look for Isabella Lighton's grave. The parish church is on a hill above the town and is surrounded by a large graveyard. Though many of the legible inscriptions came from the mid 19th century, most were so eroded as to make the wording impossible to make out. Despite our best efforts, we did not find Isabella.

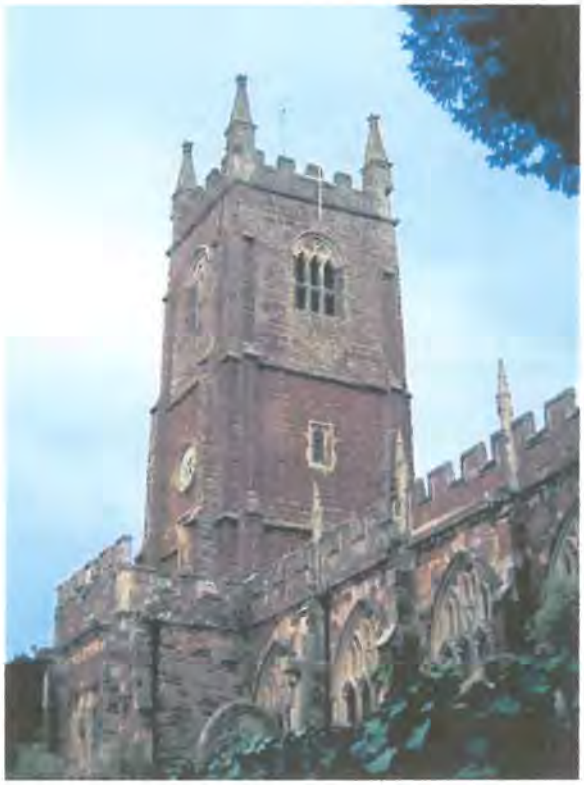
This picture of the graveyard at Dawlish gives some idea of the superb light on the day. We could have been in the South of France.

Though we failed to find Isabella's grave, it was somehow comforting to feel that she would not have been lonely there. At least two of the graves held the remains of soldiers of the Raj.

This one commemorates William Sage of the Bengal Army

I later posted a note of the website for the town of Dawlish, asking for details of a possible connection between the town and retired Anglo-Indians. This was clutching at straws and nobody ever replied.

From Dawlish, we continued through Kenton, and visited the church where Isabella Aitchison and James Lighton were married.



All Saints, Kenton, Devon

On our arrival home, amongst the bills and junk mail which had arrived during our absence was another death certificate. Disappointment. This Elizabeth Leighton, who died at Landport, in Southampton, in 1875, aged 54, of cancer of the womb, was the wife of John James Leighton, a shipwright.

As to the rest of the family, there is a possibility that James and Elizabeth's elder daughter Elizabeth died in the June Quarter of 1860 at Brighton, and I may yet succumb to temptation to put this to the test by sending for the certificate. Of Emily and Mary Adelaide I can find no trace, either married or dead.

James and Elizabeth do not appear in a census after 1871 and it is possible that given the itinerant nature of their lives, they were simply missed. I can find no trace of either in death indexes.

In my imagination I see James, the soldier, the gentleman, drunken and destitute, stumbling into a ditch, his books drowning in the mud beside him. One of those sad individuals who appear now and then in the registers of our churches: "Buried, a man unknown, supposed to be about 70 years old."

But what of Elizabeth? However far fetched, I append the following item

A Canadian census was taken in 1881 and at Mulmur, Simcoe South, Ontario, is an Elisabeth *(sic)* Lighton, aged 57, born in England, a widow, living with her son Samuel Lighton, aged 10, who was born in Ontario. Could they have escaped from England and emigrated to Canada, only to find more misery and death, with Elizabeth and her new born the only survivors?

No! I must not write novels, and there is one much nearer to home who is a far more likely suspect. Were it not for the zealous census taker who recorded her birthplace as "St George's in the East" in 1901, in place of "St Martin's in the Fields" and rather than as plain "London" as stated for 1891, I would have no hesitation in claiming her: Elizabeth Lightning, the under manager of a lodging house in St Jude's, Bristol.

My mistake again J. check it anyway

I come back time and again to the aside in the Carlton House book. Mary Davies was "another grandmother". Therefore there were most certainly two who were alive in 1891.

Chapter 8: Soldiers of the Raj

The 19th July, 2006 was the hottest day recorded in England since 1911, 39.5 degrees C. In India the average is 40 degrees. As we sweltered, I spared a thought for the officers of the HEIC and their Royal Army counterparts in their thick serge uniforms. At least the sepoys were allowed to wear shorts and sandals below their uniform coats. Sita Ram found the red coat unbearable at first, but later wore it with great pride.

I wondered what else I could possibly do whilst waiting for the next batch of HEIC films to arrive at the Mormon Library. Without much hope of success I emailed the Evening Post "Bristol Times" section asking:

"Has anyone any memories or could anyone supply a photograph of Mary Britton, nee Leighton, born 1884, who lived at 34 Victoria Park, Kingswood from 1939 until her death in about 1973-4? For many years she worked as a domestic servant for the Hardy family who were coal merchants in Downend, until her marriage to Samuel Britton, a widower, in 1939. There were no children, but Mr. Britton had sons called Herbert and Reginald, and I remember a step daughter in law called Iris and a step granddaughter called Pamela.

"If any of these names ring a bell, and you have any information, however small, please contact me at the above email address or write to me, Mrs. D.P. Lindegaard, 49 Clayfield Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 4NH."

A few days later my wait for the remainder of the HEIC films was over, and once again I hastened to the Mormon Library.

James Lighton of Sedaseer was also Irish!

His entry to the cadetship of the Company showed that he was.....

....."The first son of John Lighton, late of Rossferry Hill, in the County of Londonderry, (who) to the best of his belief was born in or about the month of June in the year of our Lord, 1772 in the parish of Cumber in the said county of Londonderry. That the said parish has been searched which contained no entry of any such baptism. Sworn before me
London 8th April 1793."

(signed) "Paul Le Mercier. (signed) James Lighton"

James was accepted into the Company's service and a note declared:

"Mr. James Lighton, cadet for Bombay, 8th April, 1793."

This was not all, for in the same reel was William Lighton, the son of Mr. Samuel Lighton, who was born about the 1st August 1780, as was certified on the 19th May, 1801,

Post "Bristol Times" section asking:

"Has anyone any memories or could anyone supply a photograph of Mary Britton, nee Leighton, born 1884, who lived at 34 Victoria Park, Kingswood from 1939 until her death in about 1973-4? For many years she worked as a domestic servant for the Hardy

by the Rector and churchwardens of Donaghiddy, County Tyrone. This William is obviously the brother of the James whose record I had found on my previous visit. William was accepted into the Company in 1804.

The Family Tree of these Lightons is:

Samuel Lighton of Donaghiddy, Tyrone

William	James
b 1780	b 1784

I turned to the next reel, and found by far the most information, which was given in respect of Alexander Arbuckle Lighton, who made a "humble petition" for a Madras cadetship, promising to conduct himself with "fidelity and honour", and was nominated by William Stanley Clarke, esquire, on the recommendation of "Colonel Aitchison" on the 30th November, 1836.

On the 16th February, 1837 he completed a cumbersomely worded questionnaire answering as follows:

What school have you been educated at? "By private tuition."

What nature has your education been? "Classical and Mathematical."

What is the profession, situation and residence of your next of kin? "My mother, Mrs. Major Lighton, residing at Dawlish, Devon."

Who recommended you to Mr. Clarke? "Colonel A. Aitchison."

Alexander made oath that he was of good character and his signature was witnessed by "Andrew Aitchison, Colonel, Bombay Army, Ryde, Isle of Wight." (Who was presumably on leave at the time.) Or retired ?

A Madras Infantry Cadet certificate was signed by "A. Aitchison, Colonel, Bombay Army" and Mr. R.B. Bowd of the Royal College of Surgeons confirmed that the cadet was in good health.

A parent or guardian consent form was produced "at the solicitation of his uncle, Colonel A. Aitchison", and signed on the 12th January, 1837 by Isabella Lighton, his mother, which was the proof that Isabella and Andrew Aitchison were brother and sister which had seemed logical all along, even before I knew Andrew had been James's best man.

A copy of the church register of Colabah and Tannah showed that Alexander Arbuckle Lighton was baptised there on the 12th November, 1816 by the Chaplain, the Reverend Henry Davies, and was the son of James and Isabella Lighton, his father's rank given as "Major in the HEI Company's Artillery." (This made me suspicious of the IGI entry

which had specified that Anne, the daughter of James and Isabella was baptised 12th December 1816.)

It is evident that Alexander Arbuckle Lighton is named after an Alexander Arbuckle, a member of the family, perhaps on his mother's side. An Alexander Arbothenil or Arbutton *(sic)* of Artrea, Tyrone, a rather obvious mis-spelling, is shown amongst other Arbuckles of Donaghedy and Ardstraw, Tyrone in 1796, where James and Samuel Lighton of Donaghedy also appear. Samuel Lighton of Donaghedy is the father of William and James born 1780 and 1784 respectively. It is likely therefore that James Lighton born 1772, whose father was called John, and was of Rossferry, Londonderry, belongs to the same family having additional connections with Donaghedy via the Arbuckle family, after whom his son was named.

Eighty years later, in 1876, Alexander, James and John Arbuckle are listed as landowners of Tyrone, as is the late Reverend Christopher Lighton. A notable Lighton family connection is John Lighton Synge, 1897-1995, the Irish mathematician and nephew of the dramatist J.M. Synge.

The maze of Irish genealogy is notoriously difficult to circumnavigate, and making further progress will be no easier than in India.

I still had no reason to doubt that James who I thought was born ca1808 was indeed the elder son of Major James Lighton, 1772-1816, in which case he was the grandson of John of Rossferry, Londonderry. On his father's death he was not abandoned by the family, but was brought up in their midst – why else would he name one daughter Isabella and two sons James Alexander? If he was of mixed race, which I still thought a possibility, he would not be eligible for a commission in the Company's service, but might well be able to purchase a commission in the King's Army, especially if the Colonel, "Uncle" Andrew Aitchison vouched for him, just as he would commend his nephew, Alexander Arbuckle Lighton.

Could this be a clue as to why James told the fib at his second wedding and said his father was a Colonel?

The Flag of the Honourable East India Company

The supposed Family Tree is now as follows:

John Lighton == ?
of Rossferry Hill, Londonderry, Ireland

- James Lighton = Isabella Aitchison
  1772-1816 c1788-1840
  Major, H.E.I.C mar Kenton, 24.2.1810
  - ? James
    bca 1808
    see below
  - Elizabeth
    b.1812
  - Alexander Arbuckle
    bp 11.11.1816
    invalided 31.1.1855
    d 18.5.1858
    = Agnes Follett
    m 1849 b 17.5.1818
    New Forest d 11.9 1884
    - Alexander Gerald A.
      b 5.10.1850
    - Arthur Follett
      b 21.1.1852
    - Charles Lumley
      b 24.1.1854
    - Agnes Isabel Augusta
      b 5.3.1857
    - Spencer Alexander Arbuckle
      b 14.6.1858
      d 29.9.1899
  - Anne*
    bp 11.12.1816
- ? Alexander
  b ? d 1835
  = Rebecca Terrington, 1829
  She married (2) James Farish

* this entry from the IGI is dubious.

James Lighton
?1808 - ?
Lieut. formerly 2nd Regiment
= (1) Catherine Fullarton
mar 1834, Bombay
(died 1839)

- Isabella Catherine
  1835-
- dau
  b&d
  1836
- James Alexander
  1837-39
- Elizabeth Ann Catherine
  1839-40

= (2) Elizabeth Legg
b. ca1822

- Elizabeth
  b 23.2.1850
- Emily
  bc1854
- Frederick William
  b 10.6.1859
  = Mary Ann Matilda Davies
  - Thomas
    1878-
  - Elizabeth
    1879-94
  - Mary Ann
    1884-
- Mary Adelaide
  b 8.9.1862
- James Alexander
  b 19.1.1867
  d 6.8.1871

The upshot of all this was that I could go no further without more investment. I sent £18 to the "Indiaman" research service to make a final attempt to find a birth date and parentage for James Lighton, in 1808 or thereabouts.

As to the Aitchisons:

Andrew Aitchison had at least two sons. These were Andrew Nepean, who at the time of his marriage at Bycullah on the 20th January, 1842, was a Lieutenant in the 13th Native Infantry. He married Frances Matilda Farish, the only daughter of James Farish, a Member of the Bombay Council. That same James Farish who married Rebecca Lighton, the widow of Alexander Lighton!

Andrew Nepean, by then a Captain in the Regiment died at Cairo in Egypt on the 1st April, 1850, leaving £450 to his widow, Frances Matilda of Norwood, Middlesex.

Andrew and Frances had two daughters, Elizabeth Frances, born in 1845 and Caroline Emma, born in 1848.

In 1861, the widowed Frances Aitchison, aged 40, and her two daughters aged 15 and 12, were living with her parents, James and Rebecca Farish at No. 26 Hamilton Terrace, St Marylebone. James, born Cambridge, was then 69, and described "late Lieut-Col HEIC, Ret'd" and his wife Rebecca, born Newington, was 64. They had a visitor, Frances Farrar, a maiden lady of 36, from Cumberland, and were waited on by a footman, a cook and three housemaids.

Rebecca Farish died aged 73 at Marylebone in the June quarter of 1870. In 1871, Frances Aitchison and her daughter Elizabeth were still living with James Farish, described as "a magistrate in Cumberland" at Hamilton Terrace, along with several visitors and servants.

Meanwhile, Caroline Emma, Frances Aitchison's elder daughter was married to George Arbuthnot, another old India hand, twelve years her senior. By 1871 he was a Tory Member of Parliament for Hereford and they were living in fashionable Chelsea surrounded by servants.

James Farish, aged 81, died in the March quarter of 1873 at Marylebone.

At the time of the census of 1881 Caroline Arbuthnot had been summoned to Taynton House, at the eponymous village in Gloucestershire whence Frances had moved following her father's death. The older woman, now 61, was dangerously ill. She was being tended by Miriam White, a trained sick nurse, assisted by Caroline herself and her spinster sister, Elizabeth, now 34. Also there were two visitors, Elizabeth Fawcett and Emily Vickers, as well as Gowrin C. Aitchison, aged 17, a nephew, who was born in India. All the family members and visitors lived on private incomes, and were waited on by a housekeeper, a cook, a lady's maid, a parlour maid, a housemaid and a coachman.

Perhaps the coachman, David Holland, who was also a reservist in Her Majesty's Army had brought Caroline to Taynton from her home at Burton Court, Eardisland, Hereford.

Here she had left her husband George Arbuthnot, aged 45, "born Madras, J.P., D.D., Lt.Col. R.A. (Retired)", and their four children, Frances, 9, John, 5, Dorothy, 3 and Mary, 1, all born in Middlesex. A solicitor, John R. Symonds was visiting, perhaps on business. In attendance was another retinue of servants: a governess, a housekeeper, a nurse, an under nurse, a nursery maid, two housemaids, a kitchen maid, a scullery maid, a lady's maid, a footman, and last but no means least, a general servant, poor old Mary Hill, aged sixty.

Frances Matilda Aitchison died shortly after the census.

Charles Terrington, brother of Andrew Nepean Aitchison, was born in Bombay on the 28th May, 1825. His second name is another link with Rebecca Farish, formerly Lighton, as Terrington was her maiden name. Charles was educated at Addiscombe, the Company's Military Seminary at Croydon in London and then joined the 2nd Bombay European Light Infantry in 1842 as an Ensign. He fought in the Persian Expedition of 1856-7 and in the Indian Mutiny. He took part in the capture of Shorapore in 1858, where he commanded a force of 200 European soldiers. He later rose to the rank of General and was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1875.

He seems to have been abroad when the 1881 census was taken. In 1891 he was living as a boarder at No. 48, Chambers Lodgings, Duke Street, St James. He was then sixty seven and a widower. I have not been able to trace his marriage or establish whether he was the father of Charles U. Aitchison who married Beatrice Cox in Bengal in 1863. This couple were presumably the parents of Charles U. Aitchison, junior, who was born at Simla in about 1876, was at Winchester School in 1891 and in 1901 was a medical student, living at St George, Hanover Square. Meanwhile in 1901, Charles Terrington Aitchison, now seventy seven, and described as a Military Pensioner, General, Indian Army, was living at Kensington His death was registered there in the March Quarter of 1919, aged 95. His medals are in the Museum of the Durham Light Infantry.

I had long believed that Major General Andrew Aitchison of the Bombay Army died at Hastings on the 28th February, 1848. A note of his will for this date appears on the National Archives website, but I hesitated before ordering it and paying out more money as I saw with dismay that he is described as a "*Captain* in the Honourable East India Company's service on the Bombay establishment".

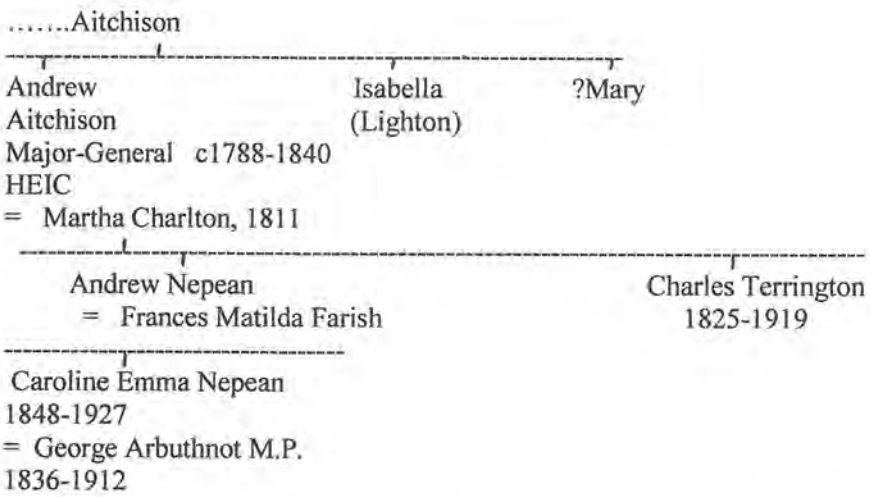
Surely the grand Major General had not been demoted? Or was this another man entirely?

But never one to let a stone remained unturned, I purchased it on line.

To my utter astonishment, it was pure gold.

The will was made when Andrew was indeed a Captain of the Bombay establishment. It left all to his dear wife Martha Charlotte Aitchison. It was written on the 5th January 1811, the very day when he and Martha Charlotte Charlton were married at St Olave's church, Hart Street, London. It remained unaltered for the 37 years of their marriage until Martha proved it on the 25th March 1848! And that was not all. The original will had been signed in the presence of two witnesses: the second was Nicholas Gibbs. The first was James Lighton!

It is likely in view of the above information that the Mary Aitchison who witnessed Isabella's wedding in Kenton, was her sister.



The contrast between James Lighton junior and his family and the other Lightons and the Aitchisons could not be more marked.

An interesting story concerns a Sir Thomas Lighton who came into possession of a stately home called Merville at Dundrum, a suburb of Dublin in 1790. According to "The History of Merville", Thomas Lighton was formerly an army private in India serving under General Matthews. When Lighton and Matthews were captured by Tipu Sultan, Matthews handed over a substantial amount of money, jewellery and the title deeds to the house to Private Lighton, charging him to give them to Mrs. Matthews should he manage to return to England. Lighton escaped and delivered the items to Mrs. Matthews who gave him £25,000 as a reward for his honesty. He subsequently bought Merville, became a banker, was elected to Parliament and became a baronet. He is buried in Taney Churchyard at Dundrum. No connection between Sir Thomas and our James Lighton has been established – apart, that is, from the tantalizing juxtaposition of Ireland, India and Tipu.

NOTES:
James Lighton – HEIC Cadet Registers: Reference IOR/L/MIL/9/113/163, Mormon Film, 1951684

MARRIED Website: Barbour Family Tree, Marilyn Ainslie – for details of Isabella Lighton who marred Claudius Ker see ainslie.org.uk

Website: FIBIS (Families in British India Society)

A list of Flax Growers, Country Tyrone, 1796

Arbothenil	Alexander	Artrea	Tyrone
Arbuckle	Daniel	Donaghedy	Tyrone
Arbuckle	James	Ardstraw	Tyrone
Arbuckle	James	Donaghedy	Tyrone
Arbuckle	John	Donaghedy	Tyrone
Arbuckle	Joseph	Camus	Tyrone
Arbuckle	Joseph	Donaghedy	Tyrone
Arbuckle	Samuel	Ardstraw	Tyrone
Arbutton	Alexander	Artrea	Tyrone
Lighton	James	Donaghedy	Tyrone
Lighton	Samuel	Donaghedy	Tyrone

1831 Census of Dunboe Parish, County Londonderry

Head of House hold		Townland	Bldg	No of .Families	No. of Males	No. Female	No. of svts	CE	Cath	Presb
James	Lighton	Bally wildrick	8	1	1	3	1m			5
James	Lighton, sen	"	9	1	1	1	2m,1f			5
Jane	Lighton	Fermulen	4	1	1	1				2
John	Lighton	Knockmult	8	1	5	3				8
William	Lighton	Bally wildrick	11	1	11					1

Landowners, County Tyrone, 1876

Alexander, James and John Arbuckle are listed. The only Lighton is the late Rev Christopher Lighton.

"The History of Merville" – is quoted on a website:
http://www.ucd.ie/biochem/merville.html

Chapter 9: A Correspondence

My letter to the Evening Post was published on the 1st August and on the 3rd August I received a response. It was from Mary's step granddaughter!

"Dear Mrs. Lindegaard
I am writing to you after seeing your letter in the paper. My maiden name was Britton and Herbert was my father. I will try and remember as much as I can about Aunty Mary. I was just born on the 26th December, 1938 when my grandfather married Mary in 1939. My sister Pamela was four years old when I was born and my sister, (and) Mum and Dad used to go every Sunday to see Aunty Mary and my Grandfather Samuel. My mother was called Iris and I also had an uncle Reginald. My memories of Aunty Mary meant a lot to me as a child. She was a very caring and loving lady and the highlight of my sister and I was collecting one penny each for sweets when we visited. She used to say if you don't come with your Mum and Dad when they visit you won't get your penny. Needless to say if we didn't, she would give us two pennies the following week. She had a heart of gold. I remember especially her lovely long hair which she would wear in a plait, then pinned up into a bun. When we used to visit she would take her hair out and let us brush it and say to us "There I can sit on it" as it was so long. I remember going there one Sunday and had such a shock. Aunty Mary had short hair and there on the table was her beautiful long plait. She had tripped on some steps and fell and cut her head, so decided to have her hair cut, but she always kept it on the side so we could see it. I can still see my Grandfather in bed. I think he suffered from his chest but Aunty Mary looked after him and it became quite a family day with my sister and I sat on the bed while Mum & Dad had tea. I always felt very special as I can remember her saying she was the first person to hold me when I was born. She always had that special way of making you feel you were very important to her. I don't know if I was born at Aunty Mary's* or at New Cheltenham Rd. where we lived until I was 10 years old. Sadly, my father died in the summer of 1947. He was very young and it broke Grandfather's heart. I'm not sure where the funeral went from as I was only 9 and Mum decided I was too young to go. I remember kissing my Dad every night and saying good night God Bless and not realising what it was all about. I'm not sure when Grandfather died, but I think it was a few years after my Mum, Iris (who) later remarried and moved down to Whitehall, so I didn't see Aunty Mary quite so much then, but I can remember taking my oldest daughter up to see her. My sister Pamela unfortunately has Alzheimer's disease but I asked her some questions and her memory wasn't too bad remembering Aunty Mary. My half sister used to visit her and we have found one small photo of Pamela about twenty years of age with Aunty Mary. I couldn't get hold of it at the moment but I will send it to you as soon as my sister brings it over. In the meantime I will jot down a few things which may interest you. As I said, my father Herbert died in 1947. Iris, my Mum died of a heart attack on the 6th April, 1985. Uncle Reg is dead, but I'm not sure of the details, as when my Dad died we moved and we didn't see much of him. He had a wife Betty and one daughter Christine, and I believe she is now living at Bedminster. Pamela my sister lives in Warmley and will be 74 in November. I had 5 daughters and one son, so Aunty Mary eventually landed with quite a big family, although she didn't see all of them. She used to laugh and say I made up for her lack of children. Pamela seems to remember Aunty Mary was an orphan which I

didn't know and that she worked for the Hardy family and said that she was very happy with my Grandfather Samuel, as I have many happy memories of her. She truly was a lovely lady. I hope I have answered some of the questions you wished to know. I could ask Pamela for you and send the details on to you. Please don't hesitate to ask and I promise to send the small photograph on to you in the next week.

Yours sincerely

J.V. Eddolls."

(*She later discovered from her birth certificate that she was indeed born at 34 Victoria Park.)

This is a rather a rosy portrait of life at No. 34 Victoria Park, and not absolutely as I recall it. Sam was quite stingy and Mary did not have quite the very happy marriage portrayed here, surrounded by loving relations. In her last years, she was very lonely.

On the 4th August I replied as follows:

"Dear Mrs. Eddolls

Thank you very much for your letter.

You may like to know why I am enquiring about Mary Britton. My name was Doreen Pillinger and I lived at No. 33 Victoria Park, next door to Mary for many years until I married in 1966. Though I remember Pamela quite well, strangely, I don't remember you, although I am just one year older than you.

Mary used to come into our house quite a lot, and one day she told my mother and me (in confidence) a very tragic story. We thought about it for many years, and discussed it many times until my mother Flo – who came to live with us after several burglaries at No. 33, died aged 95 in 2001.

In my semi - retirement – (ha! – more to do than ever before), as an experienced family historian, I decided to check Mary's story, and see if I could find out more about it. My quest resulted in much more than I could possibly have envisaged, from total destitution in Bristol, and much tragedy, back to India at the time of the Raj.

Mary did not even know her father's name – and I do, as well as discovering a string of ancestors, travellers, soldiers and minor gentry. I do so wish she was still alive, so that I could have told her – or had known how to do this research during her lifetime.

I am writing Mary's story as a book, which is almost finished, and I need to have it done in time for my brother at Christmas, as he always wants something new of mine to read!

Coming to the end, I realised I did not have a photo of Mary – and strangely enough, I cannot find out exactly when she died. I cannot find her name in the death indexes, and obviously someone has given out the wrong information so that her death certificate is misfiled. I believe she died at Manor Park Hospital, and that it was about 1973. I do recall all my children (3 of them) sitting on her lap – just as you remember, and my youngest was born in 1970. Manor Park has become Blackberry Hill, and the hospital records would give me the date of her death, but they are not publicly available. Bristol Register Office can't help, neither can various cemeteries I've contacted. I wonder if you or Pam would know when and where Mary was buried? I have racked my brains – my Mum would have known, but unfortunately I started this task after she died. I did not think that with everything I've found that this would be a stumbling block. I remember several family members coming to clear out the house when Mary died, Pam among them, I think – do you remember the fox's head that was on the wall above the living room door? I was grimly fascinated by it – and also by a nodding sailor Toby Jug which was on the mantle shelf. I well remember Sam Britton – he had taken to his bed, and was always in his long white nightshirt. My Dad – Jack Pillinger – who died in 1985, used to go in and sit with him sometimes. The bed was in the front room, where Mary lived also in her last years. I remember your Dad, Herbert, dying young – of a brain tumour, I think. A great tragedy.

I would be so pleased if you could let me borrow the photo of Mary – I would have it copied and return it to you, of course, and will also let you have a copy of the book when it is done, if you would like it.

I was sorry to hear that Pam has Alzheimer's disease. My brother Colin has MS and has to get about in an electric cart now. You may know of him – Professor Colin Pillinger, who sent the Beagle 2 to Mars – which very sadly crash landed and was not heard from again. Mary always said he would be Prime Minister - well he did become famous, but in a different way!

Thank you once again for writing, and if you have any other information, particularly when Mary died and where she was buried, I would be very grateful. Would it have been in the same grave as Sam? I seem to remember that his first wife was called Rosina, and they may be all in the same grave.

I look forward to receiving the photo, and thanks again. Please keep in touch."

I waited impatiently for further correspondence and at last received a reply from Jill Eddolls on the 26th August.

Jill told me that she had made contact with Christine, the daughter of Reginald Britton and his wife Betty. Christine, it appears had thought herself an orphan since the death of her parents and was overjoyed to hear news of her cousins. A family reunion was in the offing, with me included. It appeared that Christine was the custodian of the "family jewels", or in this case, something much more precious – papers and photographs.

My reply on the 30th August, was in hindsight, gushing:

Dear Jill

Thank you for writing again.

Now that you have told me your first name, I do remember "Jill" being mentioned, but I don't think I ever met you, although I did meet Pamela. I also remember Christine, as a little girl, coming with her mother Betty. Betty was very slim and wore a smart blue suit! As you know it was a long time ago, and not done to be too nosey when people had "company".

Mary would have been pleased that you will be reunited, especially as Christine has felt herself an orphan since her parents died – Mary felt her orphan status very keenly. Please give Christine my phone number and I hope we all can meet soon. Sometime memories can be jogged by a bit of brainstorming. Could you give me your phone number too?

I am still hoping that one of you will remember the church/chapel/graveyard where Mary was buried. There is a death listed for a Mary Ann Britton, Kingswood, in the September Quarter of 1969, but the date of birth given is 2.1.1888, and I know that our Mary was born 17.7.1884, and against this too is the fact that she appears in the Bristol Directory up to 1973. I thought that if I could find the burial, that would give me a clue. I don't want to waste £7 to purchase the certificate if it is the wrong one, as I have already spent quite a bit of money on this quest!

It is a nuisance, but my memory is a total blank about the date when Mary died. There must have been a funeral, but I didn't go to it. I was living in Brislington by then and our children were all babies. I just remember family members clearing out the house after Mary went, so I must have been visiting at the time. As Christine has some beads, it may have been Betty who came with Pam.

A middle aged couple bought the house from Miss Gerrish, the landlady, and after them a young couple called Ray and Yvonne lived there. It was sold again when Yvonne died and I don't know who is there now as my Mum had come to live with us by then. I was in Victoria Park about a year ago, and a man whose daughter now lives in our house, No.33, offered me a look round to see the alterations, but I was rushing back to work at the time and didn't have time to take up the offer.

I did take some photos of No.32, the house opposite, a few years ago – outside privy, upstairs fireplaces, stone floors, a well in the back kitchen, just in time, before they were demolished forever. So as all the houses were the same originally, we can picture them more or less. Mary's still had gas lighting, as I remember – now there's something I had forgotten up to this moment!

You may be interested to know about Sam's first marriage: Samuel Britton married Rosina Coggins, the marriage being registered at Barton Regis in the September Quarter of 1896.

This doesn't necessarily mean they were living at Barton Regis, as the wedding could have been in any of the churches between St George and St Philip and St Jacob in Old Market.

At the time of the 1881 census Rosina aged 4, was living at No.12 Tichborne Street, St George, with her father George Coggins, aged 33, a "City Pitcher" whatever that may be. and her mother Mary Ann, 28. There were three other children..

By 1891, Rosina, aged 14, was living at No. 10, Owen Street, St George. There is no sign of the father. Her mother, Mary Ann was 39. George, the eldest, and only son, was eighteen and worked as a labourer. Clara, 16, worked at the cotton factory. Rosina, 14, was said to have an "infirmity", the nature of which is unspecified. Her sister Polly was then aged 3, and there were three other daughters.

Rosina's sister Polly later lived at No. 35, Victoria Park, next door to Mary. She was Polly Drinkwater by then. You may remember Polly's daughter Vera Garland, and her children Barry, Anne and Douglas, who are all about our age.

There are several Samuel Brittons in 1881 and 1891 that would fit the bill, but as you know Mary is my prime interest.

Please write or phone soon."

Whilst waiting for a reply – which in the circumstances is not unlike waiting for the Second Coming, I continued to trawl through the death indexes.

According to Sherlock Holmes, I believe, "When you eliminate the impossible then that which is left must be the answer, however improbable."

I found that the death of a Mary Ann Britton "born about 1883" was registered at Sodbury.

On 5th September, I spoke to and then and then wrote to the registrar at

South Gloucestershire Register Office
Poole Court
Yate
BS37 5PT

Dear Madam

Further to your helpful advice today, I would be grateful if you would issue a **death certificate** hoping that some or more of the following information matches up. Please use your discretion and not issue it if it is obviously the wrong one. If it's not the one, I'm sunk!

Death Certificate: **Mary Ann Britton**

Birthdate in index given as "about 1883" (her actual birth day was 17.7.1884); in the index as April May June Quarter 1973, registration district Sodbury

I am sure she died in hospital – but not sure which one. Originally it was thought to have been Manor Park, Fishponds, Bristol, but of course she may have been transferred somewhere else.

Maiden name: Leighton (sometimes spelled Lighton, Leaton or even Lightning); Widow of Samuel Britton; Private address: 34 Victoria Park, Kingswood, Bristol."

I enclosed a cheque for £7 and a stamped addressed envelope, and waited.

On the 9th September, during "Open Doors Day" with Celia, my daughter, when we steamed around old houses in Bristol not usually open to the public, I managed to fit in a trip to look for the houses in James Street, off Mina Road where Mary's father, Frederick Leighton lived and died in the last years of his life. The road is mostly rebuilt. No. 9 where he died is no more. No. 15, however, is part of a small rank of four respectable looking terraced houses, just up from the railway bridge, the only ones still standing in an otherwise drab thoroughfare. I was able to take a furtive photograph without arousing twitching curtains. When engaged thus, there is always the risk of actual bodily harm from an irate householder demanding an explanation.

This is Fred's erstwhile dwelling:

When I got home, the phone was ringing as I walked through the door. On the other end of the line was Linda, the half sister to Jill Eddolls, born of their mother Iris's second marriage. She too remembered going to see "Aunty Mary" and had spent a great deal of time quizzing vicars trying to discover where Mary's grave might be. Holy Trinity Kingswood. was dismissed – as "Sam was not church" though his son Herbert had been buried there, and it was thought more likely to have been in Whitfield's Tabernacle, Wesleyan, or Zion.

The Tabernacle, not to be confused with Whitfield's poor burnt shell of a listed schoolroom – to Kingswood's abiding disgrace, it has never been cherished – has long been closed with a chain across the gates. The graveyard at the back has reverted to primeval forest.

Sam Budgett's great project, the Wesleyan Chapel is now a dance studio, and as for the graveyard, it is positively dangerous. The last time I was there I fell several feet down a hole in the ground, possibly a grave, and climbed out scratched and bleeding from the brambles that had secreted it.

Zion is still functioning with some very lofty monuments from a bygone age when to erect such things was a symbol of one's status in the community.

Personally, I thought that if it was any of these, within walking distance, Jack and Flo Pillinger, our Mum and Dad, would have gone to the funeral service, though if not asked, they would not have pushed themselves forward. I still favoured a pauper's funeral, somewhere out in the sticks.

Linda said she would arrange a meeting between me and Mary's step-granddaughters in Bedminster.

On the 20th September, South Gloucestershire Council came up trumps and Mary's death certificate arrived. Blessings on all saintly heads concerned.

Mary died on the 26th April, 1973 at Frenchay Hospital of Bronchopneumonia. Her maiden is given as Leighton, and she was the widow of Samuel Britton, shoemaker. The informant was her stepson, Reginald Edgar Britton, of No. 17, Gages Road, Kingswood, Bristol, who registered the death the same day. He obviously did not know her birthday, and as I had supposed, the hospital authorities had not seen her birth certificate – hence the "about 1873" in the index list. Frenchay Hospital is in South Gloucestershire, hence the Sodbury registration.

name

I experienced a pang of sadness on seeing Mary's previous address: "Meadowsweet", Fishponds, Bristol. She had landed up in a "Home" which was a fate she had dreaded. Meadowsweet, at Manor Road, however pretty its name, was part of the old Stapleton Workhouse complex.

It was an isolation (TB) hospital in the 1930's and 1940's before it became a home for the elderly. Some buildings are still there.

There were only a few things left to find before the puzzle was complete: a photograph of Mary; the site of her grave and finally the birth date of James Lighton, the son of "the Colonel".

As to the first, the net began to close in with a message from Linda promising a meeting on the following 28th September.

And how's this for suspense?

Having heard nothing from the Indiaman research service, I sent a chaser and this is the reply, dated 25th September:

"Hi Doreen,
Yes we have completed the search and James' record is here on my desk. Many apologies for the delay in getting it to you I have been sidetracked trying to get the latest issue of the magazine out.

You may be pleased to know that as well as finding James' birth record, we also found 3 other siblings, copies of which I will also send to you. If you can bear with me a short while longer, I will get them in the post to you as soon as I can.

Regards
Paul."

Three days later Linda picked me up from home, and we joined Jill and Christine for a convivial pub lunch at Bedminster Down.

Wonder upon wonders. Linda gave me a picture of Mary and Pamela, taken outside the front of the house in Victoria Park in the 1950s. It is a kindly portrait and Mary still has her trademark long plait wound around her head.

Pride of place must go to the wedding photograph kindly donated by Christine, which was taken on the Christchurch steps. Mary wears a pretty hat, an unflattering coat, with a corsage of lilies of the valley, and is smiling shyly. As to Sam, he is dapper and sharp suited with a watch chain and the customary carnation in his buttonhole. Not for the first time, I wondered how they had met. The couple standing behind, a thin Virginia Woolf - like woman and a white haired man are surely Walter and Eva Hardy, Mary's employers?

There was one aspect of the union I had not contemplated. I don't know what I expected but there suddenly came a revelation so shocking that my heart sank in dismay. Mary had once described to Pamela her first experience of married life and their first sexual encounter. "It really hurt me," she said. Mary had been a fifty five year old virgin. Christine echoed my thoughts. "I believed it was just companionship", she said, obviously taken aback. It was unusual enough that the subject had been broached at all, and certainly not one that could ever have been raised with my mother, even in the so called liberated 1960s.

After eleven years of marriage, Sam died in 1950, aged 82. Christine had his will in which he left all his furniture to Mary. There was no mention of any money – I remember Mary saying he had always kept her short – and exclaiming "When he died there was a ***five pound*** note in his pocket!" with enough awe to suggest it could have been five

thousand. It would have been one of the old elegant white fivers, proper folding currency: "that's fine looking money, Ma'am" as an American once said to me, redolent of a country with a deep sense of its own importance.

It seems that Mary was Sam's third wife which I had not known. The will revealed another son, in addition to Reggie and the late Herbert who had predeceased his father.

The full text reads:

"This is my last will and testament of me Samuel Britton of 34 Victoria Park Kingswood Bristol in the County of Glouster *(sic)* made this eighth day of January 1948. I appoint William Britton of 64 Charlton Road to be executor of this will. I leave my wife Mary Ann Britton all my furniture and all of the rest of the household things to do as she like with it but if her death should take place while she was a widow all of the Furniture shall go to my sons Clifford Britton and Reginald Edgar Britton to be equally divided between them or deposed *(sic)* of in such way they think best. *(signed)* Samuel Britton."

"Samuel Britton
34 Victoria Park
Kingswood
Bristol

Wilfred George Demmery
10 Alsop Rd
Kingswood, Bristol
(corset cutter)

William Britton
64 Charlton Rd
Kingswood
Bristol (Pensioner)"

Sam's will

This is my last Will and Testament
of me Samuel Britton of 34
Victoria Park Kingswood Bristol
in the County of Glo[illegible]ster made ~~this~~
this Eighth, day of January 1948
& appoint William Britton of 64
Charlton Road to be executor of
this Will I leave my Wife Mary Ann
Britton all of my Furniture and
all of the rest of the household
things to do as she like with it
but if her death should take place
while she was a Widow all of
the Furniture shall go to my two
Sons Clifford Britton
and Reginald Edgar Britton
to be equicaly devided between
~~them~~ or deposed of in such
way they think best
Samuel Britton

Samuel Britton
34 Victoria Park
Kingswood
Bristol

Wilfred George Demmery
10 Alsop Rd
Kingswood Bristol
(CORSET CUTTER)

William Britton
64 Charlton Rd
Kingswood
Bristol
(Pensioner)

The furnishings I recall consisted mainly of the double bed with the headboard to the wall and facing the window of the downstairs front room. From this bed, Sam would alight if Mary happened to be out, and he thought nobody was looking, and go to the front door in his long night shirt to collect the Evening Post which had been left by the paper boy folded up under the knocker. On all other occasions he was alleged to be bed-ridden and unable to walk. There was a bedside table with medicines and a wireless set which required frequent visits "up Kingswood" to charge up the accumulator.

In the stone flagged kitchen, as we always called the main living room, was a dresser, a deal table and a black horsehair stuffed chaise longue which had seen better days. There must have been chairs each side of the black leaded grate, but I cannot see them, because my eye was always drawn to the mantle shelf where sat the blue and white nodding sailor.

In the back kitchen was water well with a large round metal cover, a sink and a mangle. The outside lavatory was a wooden board with a hole cut through the middle. Unlike Mary and Sam, we, in the comparative luxury of No. 33, had a flush toilet and electric lighting, items my mother had insisted upon before renting the property. Mary's hissing gas jet light with the white mantle which required many changes, an office often carried out by my father, remained as long as she lived.

All in all, it was not much of an inheritance, but as I have said elsewhere, she loved her "little home". It was all a very long way from the splendours of the Raj.

The day after my happy meeting with "the girls", I received copies of four baptism notices from *The Indiaman.*

Three took place at Bombay:

Elizabeth, daughter of Captain James Lighton of the Artillery by Isabella his wife born the 7th October, 1812, baptised the 1st May, 1813.

James, son of Captain James Lighton of the Artillery by Isabella his wife born the 12th September, 1813, baptised the 7th October, 1813.

So after all, there had been no Indian *bibi.* James belonged to James and Isabella. I have to admit to a pang of disappointment at this anti-climax.

There followed: Andrew, son of Captain James Lighton of the H.E. Artillery by Isabella his wife, born the 11th October, 1814 and baptised the 12th November, 1814.

And at Colabah

Alexander Arbuckle, son of James & Isabella Lighton, Quality of Father: Major, H E I. Artillery, born the 2nd September, 1816, baptised the 11th November, 1816, which I had already seen copied into his cadetship papers.

Between 1812 and 1814, Isabella had given birth to three children.in as many years. (This is by no means an impossible feat: I accomplished the same myself!) A surprising newcomer is Andrew, born in 1814, and named after Andrew Aitchison, Isabella's brother. I had not come across him before and know nothing else about him.

Isabella had a year off in 1815 and in 1816 gave birth to Alexander Arbuckle. The date of December 1816 given for the baptism of the child alluded to at the beginning of this section who is stated in the IGI to be Anne, the daughter of James and Isabella must surely be a mis-transcription. The IGI is, after all, an index and not the original record.

When James Lighton junior married Catherine Fullarton in 1834, he was already "late of the 2nd Regiment". Clearly he had been less than successful as a soldier. He was just twenty one years old.

The mighty Andrew Aitchison had probably preferred his younger nephew Alexander Arbuckle Lighton over the elder James. Perhaps his early marriage to the widowed Catherine had not met with the family's approval.

James must have been – as my husband suggested – "The black sheep of the family."

"The girls" – Linda, Jill and Christine

Chapter 10: The end of the Victorian Girl.

Still attempting to solve the mystery of Mary's burial place, I sent an email to Gerry Brooke of the Evening Post, on the 30th September, 2006.

"Dear Gerry

"Thank you for publishing my letter on 1st August 2006 in which I asked whether anybody could help me with my search for Mary Britton, nee Leighton, 1884-1973, who lived at 34 Victoria Park, Kingswood.

Thanks to the Evening Post I was contacted by Jill Eddolls Baker whose husband spotted the article by chance and recognised the names. Jill got in touch with her sister Linda Britton, who from an old address book was able to find their cousin Christine Deady. Jill and Linda had not seen Christine since they were children. The three ladies along with Pamela Britton, who I mentioned in my letter, but who is not too well at present, are the step-granddaughters of Mary Britton.

So not only has the family been reunited after many years, but Linda, Jill, Christine and I got together over a pub lunch last week and shared our reminiscences. I now have several photographs of Mary and other members of the family, including one of Mary's wedding to Sam Britton, in 1939, as well as a copy of Sam's will.

From her death certificate, we know that Mary died in Frenchay Hospital on the 26th April, 1973 and whilst many of the details of her early life and ancestry have now been resolved, one question remains. Where was she buried? Her step granddaughters and I think that it could have been at the now derelict graveyard belonging to the former Wesleyan Chapel in Blackhorse Road, Kingswood. Attempts to find the whereabouts of the burial registers have met with a blank. About 25 years ago, I was allowed to see the grave records by a gentleman who I believe was called Graham Garland. I am far from being the only person looking for these records, so if anybody knows Graham's whereabouts or where these elusive Wesleyan records are, please get in touch."

There were several responses, mostly from people also looking for the Wesleyan burials book. One gentleman told me I had misremembered the name of the possible custodian of the records: it should have been Graham Bamford, an ironmonger, whose shop was opposite the Clock Tower in Kingswood. As soon as he said the name, I knew it to be correct. At last a Miss Chappell rang, who said she had a copy of the register, 45 pages long. However, she said, there was no sign of Mary's name. Nevertheless, I made arrangements to meet her.

Sadly this proved to be another dead end. It was not the register of burials, but a list of the inscriptions on the tombstones. Not the same thing at all. Whilst everybody had a plot of

some sort where their body was laid, not all could afford a monumental stone. Mary was not there, and come to that, neither was Sam. Nevertheless, I spent a pleasant afternoon with Miss Chappell and her sister Fay. To my surprise, Fay, now Mrs. Cryer, had been my contemporary at Kingswood Grammar School!

To tie up more loose ends, I also made a foray to the house where Mary had lived with "my master and mistress", Walter and Eva Hardy.

No. 14 Westerleigh Road, Downend proved to be a good sized Victorian house, solid and respectable, but semi-detached and not the grand pile I had somehow envisaged. I hovered about outside for a while before plucking up the courage to knock. As I did so, a gentleman came in through the front gate carrying two shopping bags.

"Can I help?" he enquired politely.

I explained I was seeking information about somebody who lived there a long while ago.

"How long ago?"

"1939"

"I've only been here about twelve years", he said, "I don't think I can help…but tell me the story anyway…"

Soon I was pouring out Mary's story from Downend, back to Carlton House and her ancestry in India. He said he would have asked me in, but he was on his way to work in Bridgwater. We exchanged email addresses and telephone numbers and he made me promise to keep him informed. His name was Jim Young. He came from Northern Ireland.

What could have been more fitting?

about outside for a while before plucking up the courage to knock. As I did so, a gentleman
came in through the front gate carrying two shopping bags.

"Can I help?" he enquired politely.

I explained I was seeking information about somebody who lived there a long while ago.

"How long ago?"

No. 14 Westerleigh Road, where Mary lived and worked for many years

Liberated by my OAP bus pass, I continued my journey to Kingswood, down Hopewell Hill, across Downend Road, up Alsop Road, and across the Patch, for many years our childish hunting ground, once a piece of treasured green lung, where we had dens and which we abused by lighting fires. It is now built over by hideously ugly flats. The long back gardens and low walls of our terraced houses have been fortified by high wooden fences. A sign of the times and a reminder that our poor Mum was burgled twice before she came to live with us in Brislington.

I went round the front, to our little cul de sac. Five out of the nine houses are pebble dashed. Eight out of nine windows have been changed to plastic, and most annoying of all, a *bay* window has been installed at No. 34, Mary's house.

No.34 Victoria Park, Kingswood in 2006

Only one house has retained its integrity. Ours. No. 33 is still red brick with its original sash cord windows. I photographed no.34 because I would have liked to put my foot through it, and no.33 because the façade of Mary's house, was once identical with it, as were all the rest. Besides, someone is sure to alter it soon, and if ever Kingswood Council should have the good sense to put up a blue plaque: "Colin Pillinger was born in this house", we shall need the record.

No. 33 Victoria Park, Kingswood in 2006

It had long puzzled me what James Lighton was doing in Kenton, a tiny Devon village. I had supposed that Isabella was already living there and that he had conducted a correspondence with his brother officer's sister and had simply gone there to be married. This did not explain why Andrew Aitchison also wangled a trip to Devon at the same time.

I have now found what I believe is a more plausible reason for the arrival of James and Andrew in East Devon.

A Sepoy – wearing Devon cloth? – and his wife

The Devonshire wool industry produced serges or "long ells", unusually long cloths with combed wool warps and carded wool wefts in a twill weave. According to "Wrapping the Globe - British South West Tradecloth around the World", on the MOLLI website, one maker, Thomas Fox, at Coldharbour Mill, Uffculme, produced Devon long ells for the East India Company and in 1816 wrote to a fellow manufacturer that the Company's orders kept 16,000 workers in employment!

I suggest therefore that our two men were in Devon negotiating the purchase of cloth for HEIC uniforms.

We know that a Mary Aitchison had been a witness at the wedding of James and Isabella and I had originally believed she was Andrew Aitchison's wife. I am now almost certain that she was his sister.

Further combing of censuses led me to discover two maiden ladies called Aitchison living at no. 2, the Strand, Dawlish in 1861. These were Eliza, aged eighty, "born St George's, Middlesex" and Mary, aged sixty eight, "born Greenwich, Kent." Both were described "gentlewomen".

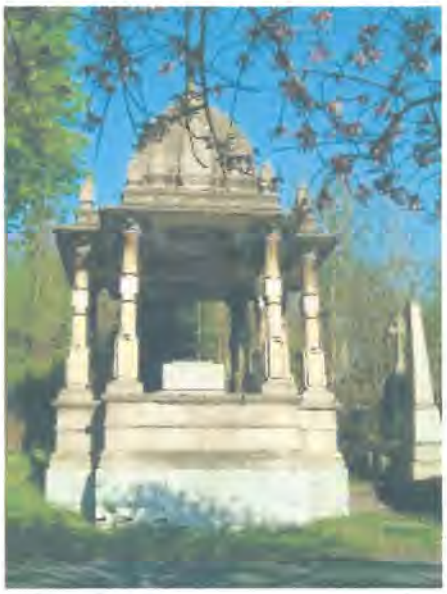
I believe that Andrew's three sisters seized the opportunity to travel to the West Country to meet him, and whilst there, his middle sister, Isabella met and fell in love with his friend James.

The presence of eligible officers in the vicinity in 1810 must have caused the sort of stir among young girls so vividly described by Jane Austen, with a flurry of country dances hurriedly arranged. Sadly, the other two girls failed to catch the eye of a suitable officer, clergyman or a Mr. Darcy, and like Jane Austen herself, and her sister Cassandra, never married.

Eliza and Mary retained links with Devon – and with India..... On census night 1861, the old girls had a visitor, fifty year old Jane Thompson. She, bless her heart, was "born East Indies".

There was still that one last piece of the jigsaw to complete – where was our Victorian Girl's, final resting place? Once again I rang the kind man at Canford Cemetery – this time armed with the date of Mary's death. Now he looked through the cremation records. No luck. "Are you sure it was Canford or South Bristol?" he said. "Are you quite sure it wasn't Arno's Vale?" I assured him I was indeed sure. Arno's Vale is at Brislington, and is Bristol's famous historic and once privately owned cemetery and crematorium, which now after much struggle and a compulsory purchase order, is in the hands of Bristol City Council. For some years I have been a "friend".

I then had a brainwave. Alderwick's, the Kingswood Funeral Directors. Did they have records going back that far? Would they have handled Mary's funeral arrangements? I telephoned and spoke to a helpful assistant called Marian. She said she would look and straightaway rang me back. It was a lesson in not being too cock-sure of anything. They had indeed handled Mary's funeral. The bill, which struck me as quite steep for the time, came to £80.50, and included the fees for the Funeral Director and £14.50 for the *cremation.* It was paid by Christine Deady's father, Mr. Reginald Britton of Gage's Road, Kingswood. On the 30th April, 1973, Mary Ann Britton was cremated at Arno's Vale!



As Mary's ashes could have been scattered anywhere at Arno's Vale, I laid flowers in her memory near the tomb of the Indian reformer Raja Rammohun Ray, who died in Bristol in 1833, and which seemed somehow a fitting place to end the story of a Victorian orphan girl whose ancestors were servants of the Raj.

The Lightons Revisited

"Things are not what they seem on the surface. Dig deeper, dig deeper."
Harold Evans, 1928-2020, doyen of crusading journalists.

The lockdown during the Pandemic of 2020, together with the huge advances in available on-line technology, offered an opportunity to fill in the blanks left in this project since I 'completed' it fourteen years ago in 2006.

Frederick Leighton and the army.

Frederick attested at Horfield on 22 May 1878 at the age of nineteen. His period 'at home', 21 May 1878 until 5 August 1880 lasted two years and 77 days until he was posted to India (East Indies) in August 1880 and thence to Afghanistan in January 1881, spending two years 44 days there. He returned to the Indian sub-continent in March 1883 and left the following year for a home posting until 19 February 1890.

When he enlisted in 1878 he gave his father's name as his next of kin, 'James of Swansea, Glamorganshire.' James was presumably still living at this time.


Brigade, Regt. or Corps
No. 37. 1975 Name Frederick Leighton.
Joined at Horfield
on 22d May 1878.
B PROCEEDINGS ON ATTESTATION.

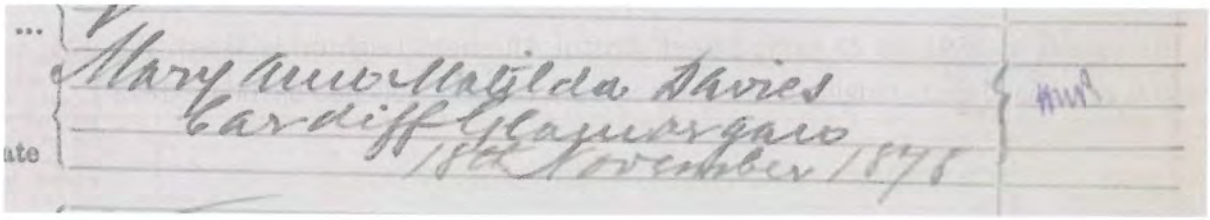
Service at Home and Abroad.

Country	From	To	Years	Days	The Country only to be shown—it is not necessary to show separately the service in the different stations of same country.
Home	21 May 1878	5 Aug.t 1880	2.	77	
East Indies	6 Aug.t 1880	15 Jan.y 1881	.	163	
S. Afghanistan	16 Jan.y 1881	25 Feby 83	2.	44	
East Indies	1 March 83	19 February 84			
Home	20-2-84	20 May 90	6.	90	
			12.	0	

NOTE.—For mode of computing Foreign Service, see G. O. 56 of 1874.

Next of Kin Father James Swansea Glamorganshire

Initials of Officer making the Entry.


Mary Ann Matilda Davies
Cardiff Glamorgan
18th November 1878

Frederick must have been in Barracks at Cardiff, (Maindy in the Cathay District) when he met and married Mary Ann Matilda Davies, at St John's, the only pre-Mediaeval church in the centre of the city, on 18 November 1878. Fred was a bachelor aged 20, a Private in the 61st Regiment, of Great Frederick Street, his father named as 'James Lightning, clerk,' which again suggests that James was still alive, particularly as the bride's father, John Davies, a collier, is stated to be 'deceased'. The Cardiff registrar who copied the certificate to me appended a note:

"Mrs Lindegaard. In this entry, the vicar has recorded the groom's name as 'Lightning' and then altered it to 'Leighton'. He did not however alter the father's name."

On his enlistment papers Frederick stated he was born in St Philip & St Jacob's Bristol, information he re-iterated when three months after his first service ended, he re-joined the colours on 21 May 1890 for a further three years. He was then aged 31, address Mina Road, Bristol, 5 feet 10 inches tall, 149 lbs, chest 38/39, and had a fresh complexion with brown eyes and hair. He had a scar left of his jaw, and his left arm was embellished with a tattoo in the form of an anchor. He served again until 1894.

According to his military papers his conduct was 'temperate and very good': hardly the black-hearted rogue of the Carlton House school records.

There is no Frederick Leighton/Lighton/Lightning, Leaton in any conceivable spelling of Fred's age born in Bristol or the surrounding area for ten years either side of his alleged birthdate. It is possible that he believed he was born in Bristol, or if he did not know his birthplace, it was simply a matter of expedience to say it was so. He was definitely in Bristol by 1878, just as his (probable) mother was in the city by 1891, if, as I believe, she is the person identified tentatively as one of Mary's two grandmothers who were in Bristol when 'another grandmother' (Davies) took the child to Cardiff, at the time her sister Elizabeth was admitted to Carlton House in May that year.[1]

In the census of 1891, at 21 Lamb Street, Bristol, Elizabeth Leighton is listed: she was 'a widow, aged 63, deputy lodging house keeper, born London.' (alleged birthdate 1828.)

[1] See Chapter 1, page 8.

In 1901, at the same address she was 'Elizabeth Lightning, a widow, aged 75, born London, St George's Barracks; condition: Blind.' (alleged birthdate 1826; St George's Barracks was behind the National Gallery, in the parish of St Martin's in the Fields.)

In 1911, she was still alive, though by then an inmate of Eastville Workhouse, now shown as 'Elizabeth Leighton, widow, aged 84, a charwoman, blind; place of birth unknown.' She died in 1913, aged 87.

<u>But where was the Lighton family, however spelt, in 1881?</u>

As already known, in 1871 they were at 79 King Street, Plymouth, in the parish of St Andrew, an address shared with 6 other families:

James Leighton, head, 63, (1808) book canvasser, born Bombay, India

Elizabeth Leighton, wife, 49, (1822) born St Martin-in-the Fields, Middlesex

Emily Leighton, daughter, 17, (1854), hawker, born Exeter

Frederick Leighton, son, 12, (1859) born Exeter

Mary Leighton, daughter, 9, (1862), born Brighton

James Leighton, son, 4, (1867) born Gosport, Hampshire

The registered births and/or baptisms of the children are as follows:

<u>Emily Catherine</u>, daughter of James & Elizabeth Lighton, baptised on 11 March 1855, not in Exeter, but at St Peter's church, Plymouth where they were then living at 87 King Street West. James was clinging to his status as a 'gentleman'. Emily is not in the birth registration indexes and I have been unable to trace her after 1871.

March 11 1855	Emily Catherine	James × Elizabeth	Lighton	87 King St West	Gent.	Arthur Adams Apothecary

<u>Frederick William</u>, born 10 June 1859 at Preston Street, Exeter, was registered on the 25th June by his father, James Lighton, of the same address, a 'canvassing agent in the book trade'. His mother named as Elizabeth, nee Legg. The boy was baptised the next year on 7 December 1860 at St Margaret's, Westminster. At this time they lived at King's Head Court, with James described as 'Lieut: 2nd Foot'.

1860 Dec 7 No. 3[illegible]	Frederick William Son of	James Elizabeth	Lighton	Kings Head Court	Lieut. 2nd Foot	[illegible]

Mary Adelaide, born 1862, daughter of James & Elizabeth Lighton, Silver Street, traveller, was baptised not at Brighton where she was born, but at St Giles, Reading, 10 January 1864, (no image available). Again I have not traced her after 1871.

August 11 Born February 19 No. 1408.	James Alexander Son of	James & Elizabeth	Leighton	High Street	Late Lieutenant 2 Foot	James White Off. of Pmin.

James Alexander Lighton's birth was registered at 'Alverstoke, in the county of Southampton' by his father. According to the certificate he was born 19 January 1867 at 60 South Street, Gosport. He was the son of James Leighton, 'lately a merchant's clerk' and Elizabeth, nee Legg. The boy was baptised the same year six months later, on 11th August (though his date of birth is stated as 19th February) at St Mary Magdalene, Woolwich, parents James and Elizabeth Leighton of High Street, father: 'late Lieutenant in 2 Foot'.

James Alexander Leighton, aged four, died on 6 August 1871, at 18 Lower South Street, Gosport of 'small pox, nine days' son of James Leighton, book hawker. His death was registered the next day by his mother Elizabeth, 'present at the death' who made her mark.

Not all Nabobs - James Lighton, father and son, India and thereafter.

THE HORSE BRIGADE.

COMMANDANTS HORSE BRIGADE.

Brigade formed G.O. 18 Nov. 1811.

No in list.			
181	James Lighton	18 Nov.	1811
191	F. H. Pierce	16 Apr.	1813
192	R. Macintosh	23 May	1821-31 Jan. 1826
198	L. C. Russell (temporarily)	May	1826
198	L. C. Russell (permanent)	June	1828
210	T. Stevenson	4 Feb.	1834
243	M. C. Decluzeau	11 Apr.	1840
248	J. Leeson		1849
258	A. Rowland	11 July	1855
272	W. T. Whitlie	25 Mar.	1856
304	S. Turnbull	Jan.	1857
294	H. Forster	23 Jan.	1858

1st TROOP.

1811. Formed at Seroor in December. Of a draft of 103 men taken from the Bombay Regiment (2nd. Batt. Royal Dublin Fusiliers), 40 were posted to the Horse Arty. and 63 men to the Foot Arty. to replace a similar draft therefrom for the Horse. First commander, Cap. J. Lighton (181).

Bombay Artillery, List of Officers Col F.W.M. Spring

James Lighton was only three years old when his father, also called James, named above in 1811, died at the early age of 42 of an unknown cause at Bombay on 19 September 1816.[2]

The Bombay Presidency registers show that, the boy James, the son of Major James & Mrs Isabella Lighton was born on 12 September 1813 and baptised just over three weeks later, on 7th October. He was the second of three siblings; his sister Elizabeth was a year older (born 17 October 1812 and baptised 13 May 1813) and his brother Andrew a year younger (born 11 October 1814, baptised 7th November. They would be joined by another brother, Alexander Arbuckle Lighton, born posthumously to the widowed Isabella on 11 October 1816 at Colabah. This baby, who was not expected to live, was christened aged one day, but survived to adulthood. He served in the army until his death in 1858.

For our James losing his father was not the most promising start in life. Nothing is known about Isabella's life as a single parent with four babies or the childhood of the children. She would certainly have had an 'ayah' or native Indian nanny, probably more than one who lived with the family and took care of the children's daily needs. Ayahs were an integral part

2 on-line, list of 'Military Contemporaries of Lachlan Macquarie, at Sedaseer and Seringapatam in 1799'; Bombay Army

of European families in India, who lived in the household, often from childhood to old age, caring for several generations of the family.

Isabella's financial position would have been slightly cushioned by the quarterly pension of £34.6s 3d she received from the 'Capital & Military Fund' from 1817 until at least 1826. [3]

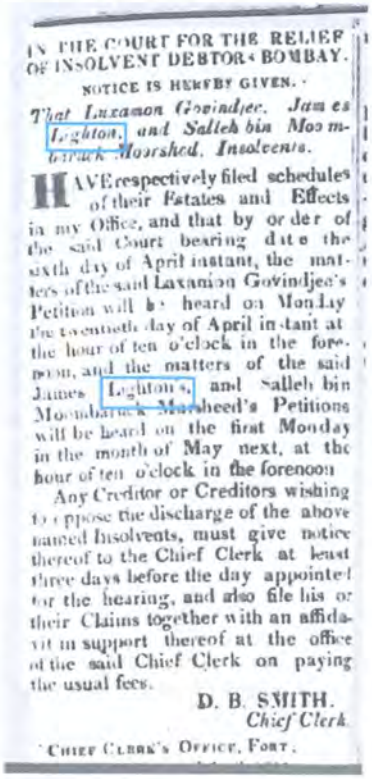
Perhaps her brother Andrew Aitchison kept a fatherly eye on the widow and her orphaned children. Somebody certainly desired to settle young James into an army career and a commission was purchased for him on 20 March 1832. The young man described as Ensign James Lighton (showing he had previously been a cadet) became a Lieutenant in the British Army, the 2nd Regiment of Foot, (not the HEIC).[4] Curiously his birthdate is given as 12 September 1814, a year later than that on his baptismal record. His scant military documents show only that he 'retired' 2 years and 93 days later on 20 June 1834, having served 'abroad' which is ambiguous. He would cling on to that army rank which established his status as an officer and a gentleman throughout his life despite all the tribulations which would follow. On 12 December 1834, at the age of twenty one, he married Catherine Fullerton, a widow, with two previous husbands. Later events suggest that this did not go down well with his family.

[3] Extensive pension records of Raj officers can be found on the FMP website. They would make a splendid PhD study.

4 The FMP indexes calls him 'Evelyn James Lighton' having misread 'Ensign' which is why you should always check the original!

No record of Catherine's first marriage to Joseph Leonard, a Gunner in the Artillery has been found. He died on 13 December 1832. Her second husband, Walter Fullerton, described as 'a writer', arrived in India from London aboard the *James Sibbald* in November 1822.[5] He worked as a Civil Servant in the Territorial Department of the Revenue, Assistant to the Principal Collector at Dharwar, and subsequently was '3rd Collector at Poona'.[6] Something evidently went awry, for by 9 February 1832, Walter Fullerton, described as 'formerly residing at Mazagon, without the Fort' was 'a Prisoner in the Gaol of Bombay'.[7] Whatever this 'little local difficulty' it was apparently resolved before he married Catherine Leonard on 19 May 1833. Less than six weeks after their wedding, on 6th July, Walter died. Eighteen months later her marriage to James Lighton took place.

By 5 March 1835, with Catherine Lighton near confinement, James' journey into misfortune may have begun. He is recorded as 'formerly residing at Khatewaddy, without the fort of Bombay.....' and like Walter before him, was currently 'in the Gaol of Bombay' though in his case his offence is known: he was in prison for debt. On 23rd March, Catherine's child was born and christened Isabella Catherine (the baby's first name after her paternal grandmother.) James Lighton's case was due to be heard on the first Monday in May. On 14th August, he was still listed among the insolvent debtors.


IN THE COURT FOR THE RELIEF OF INSOLVENT DEBTORS BOMBAY.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN.

That Luxamon Govindjee, James Leighton, and Salleh bin Moombarack Moorshed, Insolvents.

HAVE respectively filed schedules of their Estates and Effects in my Office, and that by order of the said Court bearing date the sixth day of April instant, the matters of the said Luxamon Govindjee's Petition will be heard on Monday the twentieth day of April instant at the hour of ten o'clock in the forenoon, and the matters of the said James Leighton's, and Salleh bin Moombarack Marsheed's Petitions will be heard on the first Monday in the month of May next, at the hour of ten o'clock in the forenoon

Any Creditor or Creditors wishing to oppose the discharge of the above named Insolvents, must give notice thereof to the Chief Clerk at least three days before the day appointed for the hearing, and also file his or their Claims together with an affidavit in support thereof at the office of the said Chief Clerk on paying the usual fees.

D. B. SMITH.
Chief Clerk.

CHIEF CLERK'S OFFICE, FORT.

His abrupt departure from the Army, his youthful marriage to a woman who might be construed as having 'a past' who was probably some years his senior, and now his sojourn in gaol, seems likely to have widened the perceived rift with his family.

The next few years were tragic. James & Catherine's firstborn, Isabella, died at fourteen months, and their son, James Alexander died aged thirteen months the next year. A third child Catherine Ann Elizabeth was born on 29 November 1839, but this time James' wife Catherine did not recover from the birth and she died on 21 December 1839.

[5] 'Friends of the British in India' (FIBIS)

[6] Bombay Gazette 12.11.1823 & 11.4.1827

[7] London Gazette, 7.8.1832, FIBIS website, transcribed from 800 entries, 1823-46 by Peter Evans.

DOMESTIC OCCURRENCES

BIRTHS.

At Mazagon, on Monday the 27th instant, the wife of Mr. D. A. D'Silva, of a daughter.

At Mazagon on the 24th inst., the Lady of J. Lighton, Esq. of a daughter.

DEATH.

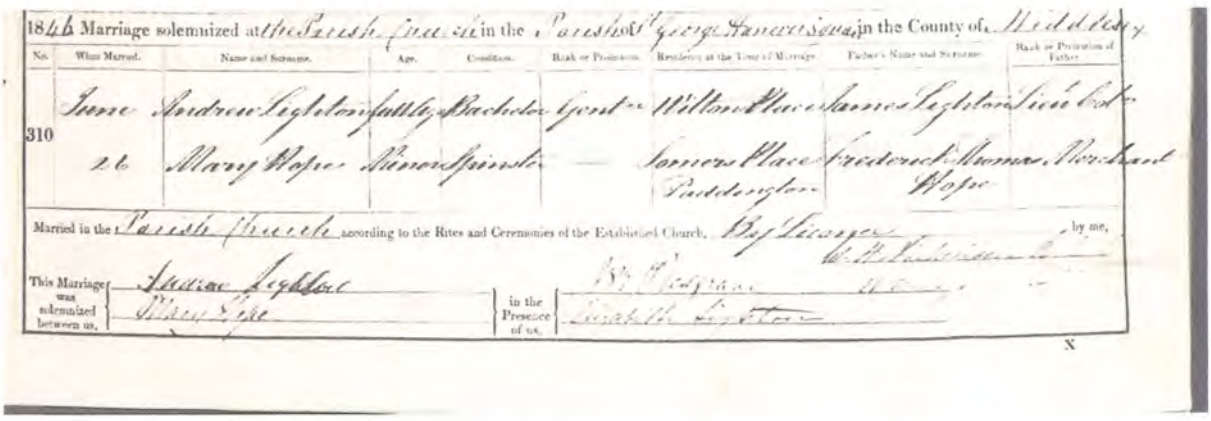
On Wednesday the 20th instant, at Mazagon, Isabella Catherine, the eldest daughter of James Lighton Esq.

These birth and death announcements in the Bombay Gazette, 29 June 1835 and 30 July 1836 refer to James & Catherine's first child, Isabella Catherine.

The infant Catherine Ann Elizabeth was baptised on 5 January 1840. She lived less than ten months and died on the 26 September 1840.

In the meantime James' mother the widowed Isabella had left India. At the time of her death in June 1840, she was living at Dawlish in Devon.

James' younger brother, the posthumous Alexander Arbuckle born in 1816, was meanwhile forging a successful army career. He was commissioned into the 35th Regiment, (Native Infantry) Madras, in 1835. By 1845 he had been promoted Captain. In June 1846, their brother Andrew was in England. A 'gentleman' the son of James Lighton, Lieut. Col, he married Mary Hope, daughter of Frederick Hope, a merchant, at St George, Hanover Square. Elizabeth, the elder sister of the three Lighton 'boys' signed the register as a witness, showing that she too had come 'home' by then.



1846 Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of St George Hanover Square in the County of Middlesex

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
310	June 26	Andrew Lighton	full age	Bachelor	Gent.	Wilton Place	James Lighton	Lieut Col.
		Mary Hope	Minor	Spinster	—	Somers Place Paddington	Frederick Thomas Hope	Merchant

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by me, [illegible]

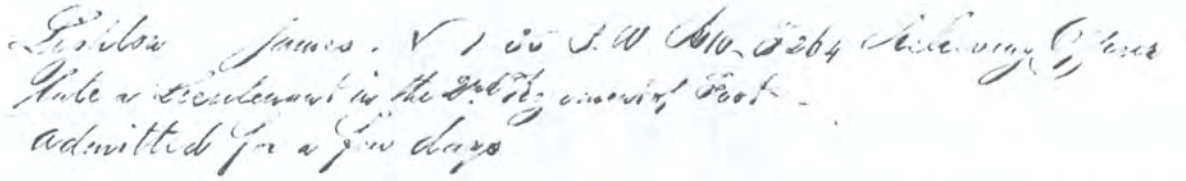
This Marriage was solemnized between us, Andrew Lighton, Mary Hope

in the Presence of us, [illegible]

So.....whether Elizabeth and Andrew accompanied their mother home, or arrived later, they were certainly in England by 1846. Did the bereaved James come with them or did he arrive separately sometime between his daughter's death in 1840 and May 1846? He was

definitely in London a month before his younger brother was married, but his circumstances were radically different. He had already fallen on hard times.

The records of the London Workhouse at Castle Street, Westminster, show that he had entered the establishment on 23 May 1846 'for a few days':


Fielden James. V 1 in S.W. No. 3264 Lieutenant Late a Lieutenant in the 2nd Regt. Queen's Foot.
admitted for a few days

On the 25th May he is described: 'Partially unfit for work, rheumatism, partially disabled, unfit for employment, lately a Lieut. in the 2nd Regt of Foot, widower.'

The 'few days' spread over much of the rest of the decade during which he makes periodic appearances in the Workhouse records. On the 14th December 1846 he had: 'no settlement', (which means the Union would have liked to decant him to a place where he 'belonged', if they could discover where, so that somebody else could provide for him, but they had so far failed.) Just after Christmas, 28th December, 'He absconded Saturday last when on leave for the day.'

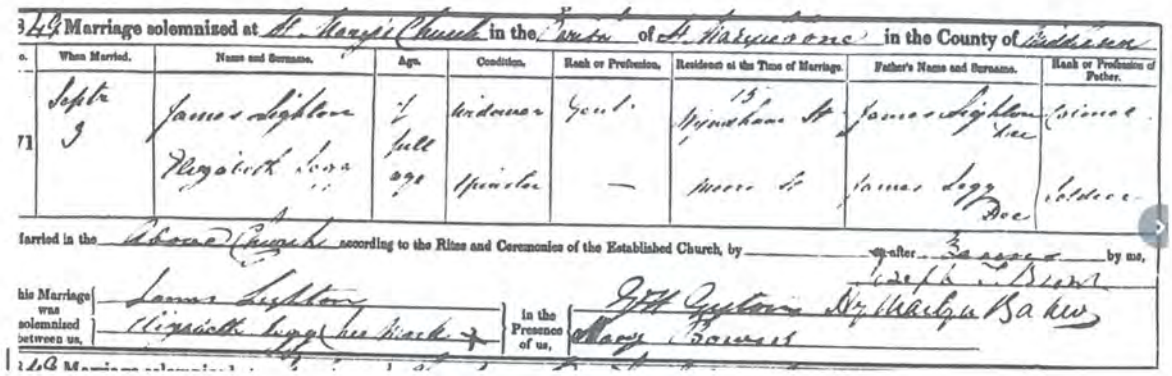
Nothing is known of his situation until 27 November 1847 when once again he was admitted. On 4th December he is noted 'date of birth 1812, widower, Protestant, Parish not known.'

By the 5th January 1848 he was 'discharged at own Request, with house clothing.' One can only assume that his own gear had by then totally disintegrated and he was so desperate that he left garbed in coarse 'Fearnought', the stout woollen cloth provided by workhouses, but was also worn on ships as bad weather gear. By 13 May 1848, 'aged 35', he was back in 'the House' again. He stayed this time until 30th May when he was 'discharged with a loan of two shillings and sixpence.' He was back again on 22nd June, 'Pauper, birthdate 1813, admission to Ward 31; discharged at own request, 26 June 1848.' On 6th October, the Union perhaps having discovered his vague tie to the county, recorded, perhaps with relief, 'Removed to Devon.'

Had he been in contact with his siblings during this decade? Was he aware that his mother Isabella had died in Dawlish in 1840? We shall probably never know. In any event, he soon returned to the Metropolis. On 2 September 1849, he was

married for the second time at St Mary's church, Marylebone.

This church looks towards Wyndham Street where James lived at no. 15. In 2020 it is described as 'a prime location' but still looks decidedly bleak.



Marriage solemnized at St. Mary's Church in the Parish of St. Marylebone in the County of Middlesex

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
71	Septr 9	James Lighton	of full age	Widower	Genl.	15 Wyndham St	James Lighton Esq	Gentl.
		Elizabeth Legg		Spinster	—	Moore St	James Legg Doc	Soldier

Married in the Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by ~~me~~ after Banns by me, Ralph Brown

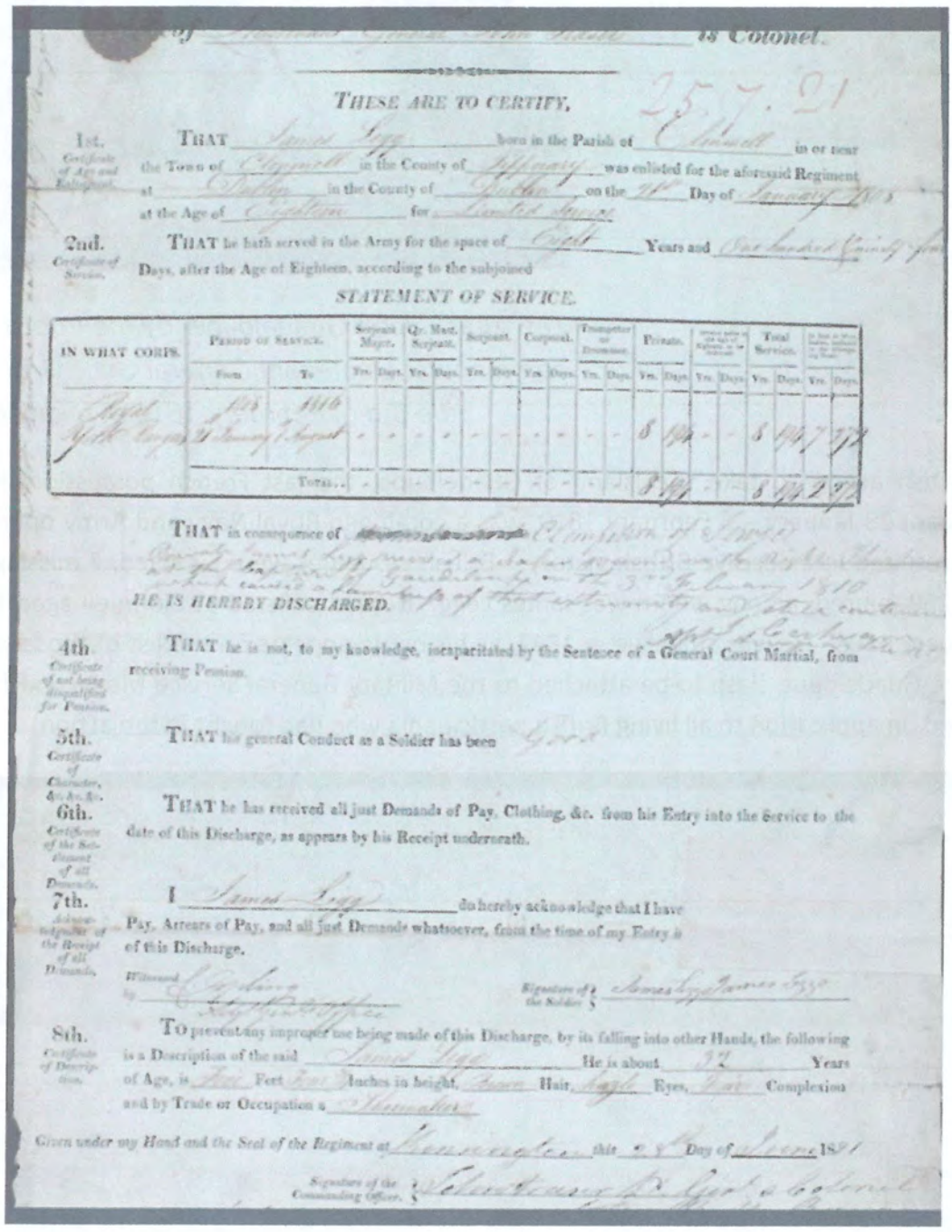
This Marriage was solemnized between us, James Lighton / Elizabeth Legg her Mark +

In the Presence of us, Geo Gyton / Sarah Baker / Mary Bowers

Both parties were 'of full age' which means they were 'over 21'. James was in fact between eleven and fourteen years older than his bride. I had surmised in 2006 in my previous visitation to the Lightons that he was somehow 'a catch' for Elizabeth Legg, that she was dazzled by his fine uniform and his status as an officer when she herself was the daughter of a private soldier. As the previous evidence shows, the truth, as always, was much more complicated. It seems to me on reflection that James was extremely lucky that Elizabeth would have *him*.

I now know that Elizabeth was consistent in her belief that she was born in St George's Barracks, in the parish of St Martin in the Fields, (not at St George in the East, as I had incorrectly thought) but apart from this small fact, I have been unable to discover anything more about her young life, even Moore Street where she lived at the time of her wedding appears no longer to exist. I cannot identify her soldier father with any degree of certainty

though the record below shows a possible (even probable) James Legg an Irish-born soldier who received a sabre wound at Guadeloupe in 1810, which left him with a limp.



is Colonel.

THESE ARE TO CERTIFY,

1st. Certificate of Age and Enlistment. THAT James Legg born in the Parish of Clonmell in or near the Town of Clogheen in the County of Tipperary was enlisted for the aforesaid Regiment at Dublin in the County of Dublin on the 7th Day of January 1805 at the Age of Eighteen for Limited Service.

2nd. Certificate of Service. THAT he hath served in the Army for the space of Eight Years and One hundred Twenty four Days, after the Age of Eighteen, according to the subjoined

STATEMENT OF SERVICE.

IN WHAT CORPS.	Period of Service. From	To	Sergeant Major. Yrs.	Days.	Qr. Mast. Sergeant. Yrs.	Days.	Sergeant. Yrs.	Days.	Corporal. Yrs.	Days.	Trumpeter or Drummer. Yrs.	Days.	Private. Yrs.	Days.	Yrs.	Days.	Total Service. Yrs.	Days.	Yrs.	Days.
Royal Irish Regt	1805 7 January	1816 7 August	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	124	-	-	8	124	7	224
		Total..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	124	-	-	8	124	7	224

THAT in consequence of [illegible] Clonmell & Cork County James Legg received a sabre wound on the right thigh on the 3rd of Feb. 1810 in the Battle of Guadeloupe which left him with a limp of that extremity and otherwise continues unfit for Service

HE IS HEREBY DISCHARGED.

4th. Certificate of not being disqualified for Pension. THAT he is not, to my knowledge, incapacitated by the Sentence of a General Court Martial, from receiving Pension.

5th. Certificate of Character, &c. &c. THAT his general Conduct as a Soldier has been Good

6th. Certificate of the Settlement of all Demands. THAT he has received all just Demands of Pay, Clothing, &c. from his Entry into the Service to the date of this Discharge, as appears by his Receipt underneath.

7th. Acknowledgment of the Receipt of all Demands. I James Legg do hereby acknowledge that I have Pay, Arrears of Pay, and all just Demands whatsoever, from the time of my Entry to of this Discharge.

Witnessed by [illegible] Signature of the Soldier James Legg his mark

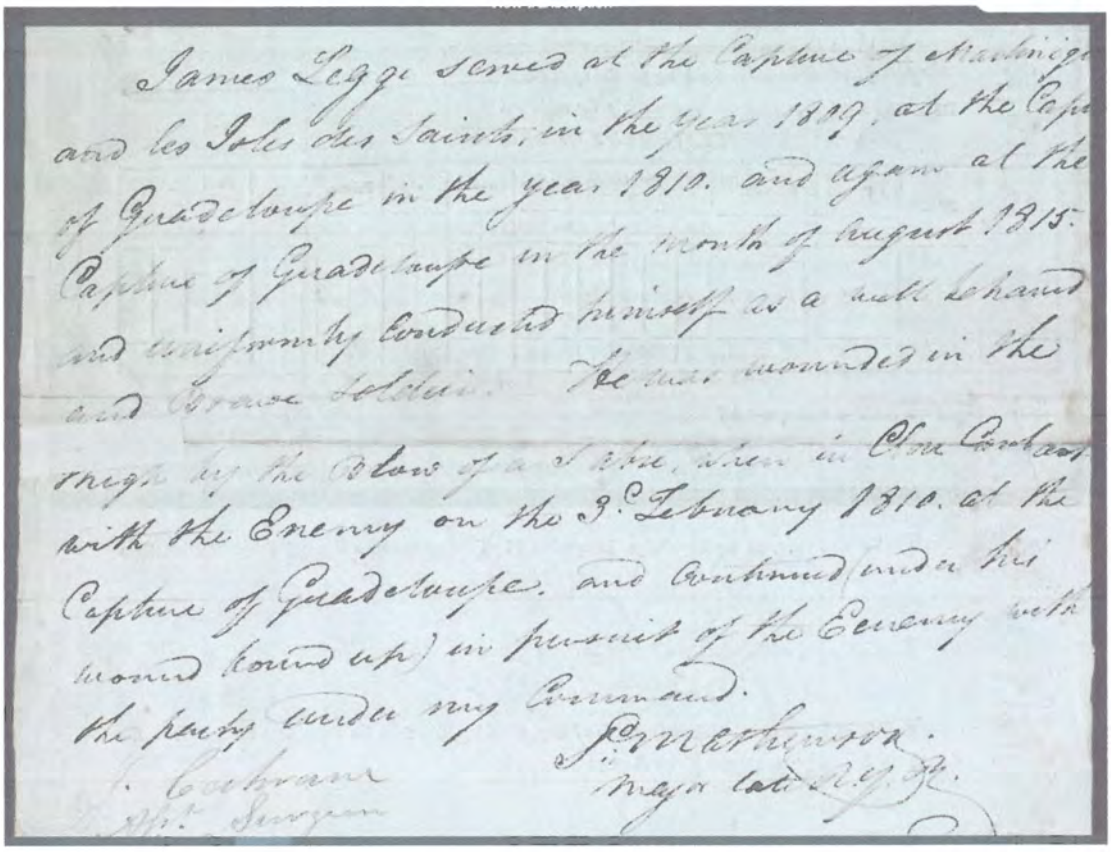
8th. Certificate of Description. To prevent any improper use being made of this Discharge, by its falling into other Hands, the following is a Description of the said James Legg He is about 32 Years of Age, is Five Feet Four Inches in height, Brown Hair, Hazel Eyes, Fair Complexion and by Trade or Occupation a Shoemaker

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Regiment at Bermuda this 28 Day of June 1821

Signature of the Commanding Officer. Charles R. Gore Lt Colonel

The Attack upon Guadeloupe, by the troops under the command of Lieutenant General George Beckwith on the 3rd of February 1810 at midnight

The British action to take the Island of Guadeloupe, the last French possession in the Caribbean, 28 January – 6 February 1810, was a combined Royal Navy and Army operation which resulted in a decisive British victory. British casualties were 52 killed, 7 missing and about 250 injured, among whom was James Legg. He had enlisted at Clonmell aged 18 on 21 January 1808. He was still alive in 1847, as his name appears on the list of those issued with the Guadeloupe clasp to be attached to the Military General Service Medal which was provided on application to all living British participants who had fought in the action.



James Legg served at the Capture of Martinique and les Isles des Saints, in the year 1809, at the Capture of Guadeloupe in the year 1810. and again at the Capture of Guadeloupe in the month of August 1815. and uniformly conducted himself as a sober hard and brave soldier. He was wounded in the thigh by the Blow of a Sabre, when in close Contact with the Enemy on the 3rd February 1810. at the Capture of Guadeloupe. and continued (under his wound bound up) in pursuit of the Enemy with the party under my Command.

S. Macpherson
Major late 21st Ft.

Cochrane
Asst. Surgeon

This document states that

"James Legg served at the capture of Martinique and the Isles des Saintes in the year 1809, at the Cape of Guadeloupe in 1810 and again at the capture of Guadeloupe in August 1815 and uniformly conducted himself as a well-behaved and brave soldier. He was wounded in the thigh by a blow of a sabre in close combat with the enemy on 3rd February 1810 at the Capture of Guadeloupe and continued (after his wound bound up) in pursuit of the Enemy with the party under my Command. (signed) S. Mathewson, Major, late Royal York Rangers. [RYR](witnessed) J. Cockram, Asst. Surgeon."

James Legg was in London on 25 July 1821, the date of the notice, and presumably refers to his application for a pension. This was just a few years before Elizabeth was born. Unfortunately I can find no appropriate marriage which would enable me to identify Elizabeth's possible mother, and/or baptisms for any children, especially Elizabeth.

The only comment I can make about the nuptials between James Lighton, the officer, and his 'army brat' bride is that the bridegroom was a man of honour. Once again James Lighton 'did the decent thing'. Elizabeth, like Catherine before her, was several months pregnant.

Their child, a daughter, Elizabeth, was born on the 25 February 1850 at 3 Spring Street, Marylebone, to James Leighton, [sic] a soldier, and Elizabeth, formerly Legg, who registered the baby at The Rectory, Marylebone, on 3rd April, making her mark.

St Marylebone workhouse engraved by an inmate "W.A.D.", 1866.

Spring Street was in the immediate vicinity of the St Marylebone Workhouse, if not precisely part of it. I have to wonder if they were actual residents. It appears that a removal of James to Devon - again - now with his new family, was on the cards. As his wife, Elizabeth's 'settlement' – where she would have to go to seek relief, became the same as her husband's, regardless of where she was born. By the time the census was taken, 30 March 1851, they were living at Preston Street, Exeter.

James' age is given as 36, 'late Lieut. Army, retired' born East Indies, his wife Elizabeth, 25, born St Martin's, Middlesex, with the infant Elizabeth, aged 1, born at Marylebone.

From research done in the first manifestation of this history, I knew that by 1861 they were in Brighton when their latest child was born. I had failed to find them in census records owing to a part of the census being officially 'missing', alleged 'stolen'! In fact their absence had nothing at all to do with the missing census.

The dates and places of the births of their children and the record of the 1871 census supplied details of their peregrinations between 1850 and 1862:

25 Feb. 1850: Spring Street, **Marylebone,** birth of Elizabeth.

30 March 1851: census night, Preston Street, **Exeter**.

11 March 1855, 87 King Street West, **Plymouth**, baptism of Emily Catherine.

10 June 1859, Preston Street, **Exeter,** birth of Frederick William.

7 Dec. 1860, King's Head Court, St Margaret's, **Westminster**, baptism of Frederick William.

I suspected that the journey up to London to St Margaret's, an Army church, was either a belated (failed) attempt to re-enlist, or to tap some former military chum for a loan.

By 8th September 1862 they were at **Brighton** Workhouse for the birth of Mary Adelaide.

What were they doing in Brighton? None of it made any sense until 2020 when an old acquaintance re-appeared, Elizabeth Lighton, last heard of in 1846 in London when brother Andrew was married. Elizabeth had been living in Brighton since at least 1851, when she is recorded at 49 Norfolk Road, Brighthelmstone (the archaic name for Brighton), 'born East Indies, aged 38'. She had never married. She was an 'annuitant' meaning that unlike James, she had certain investments on which she eked out a genteel existence.

It seems possible that the brother and sister had made contact at some stage, as otherwise James would surely have had no reason to believe she was in England, let alone have known her whereabouts. It seems an advertisement in the Brighton Gazette of 7 June 1860 may have somehow attracted his attention and consequently led him to trundle his long-suffering wife and children across the country:

MISS ELIZABETH LIGHTON.—All Persons having CLAIMS OR DEMANDS on the Estate of Miss Elizabeth Lighton, late of No. 29, Montpelier Crescent, Brighton, are requested to send the particulars to

COOPER AND WILLIAMS,
55, Middle Street,
Solicitors to the Executor. [8]

The outcome was another disaster. If anything good of it came at all, it was my gain. For the first time I can picture James in my mind. On 4 August 1860, he appeared in court. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now. It is a pathetic tale of despair, suspicion, meanness, and misunderstandings.

'James Lighton, 49, a tall gentlemanly man, but very seedily dressed, was charged with begging.....'

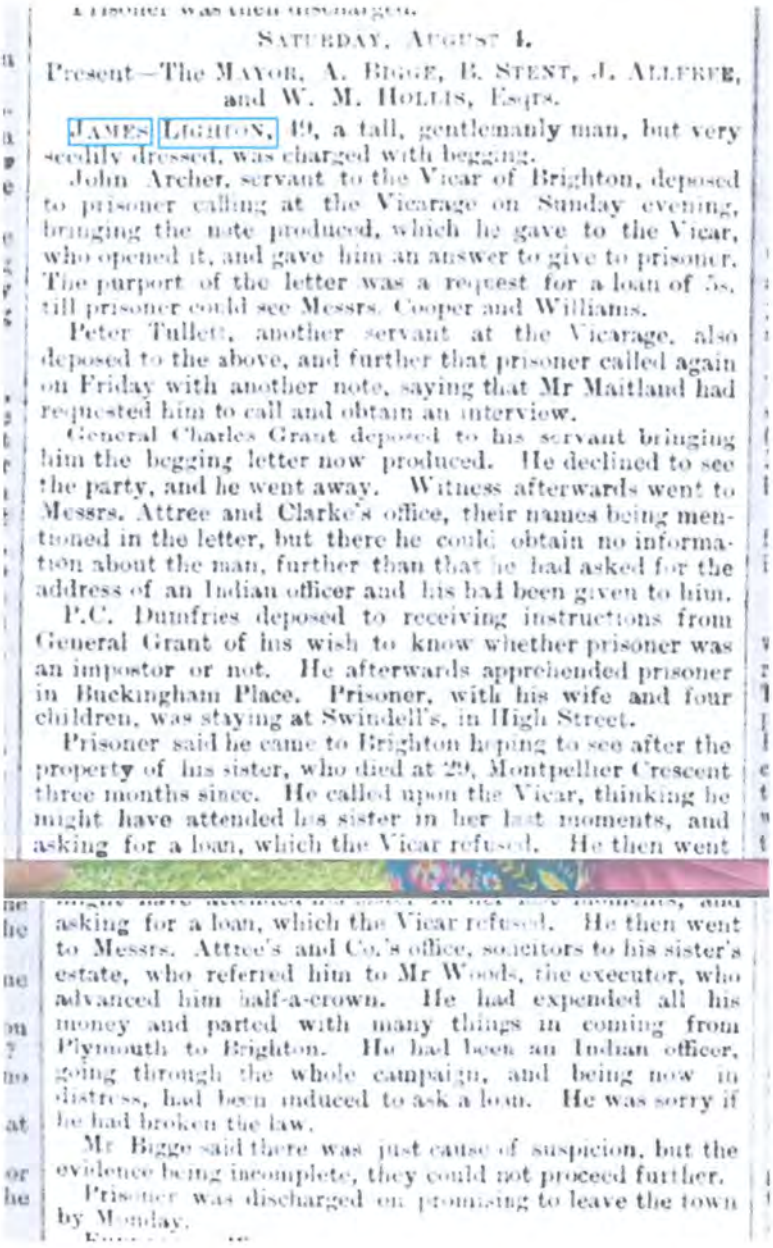
James had called at Brighton Vicarage on Sunday 29th July. He asked a servant to pass on a note for the Vicar which requested a loan of five shillings to tide him over until he could obtain an interview with Messrs Cooper & Williams. The vicar read the note, but without even seeing him, refused. James made another attempt to see the vicar the following Thursday saying that a Mr Maitland (otherwise unidentified) had advised him to do so. For the second time he received short shrift: the vicar was neither curious nor imbued with the milk of human kindness. James then called at the residence of a General Charles Grant, and handed Grant's servant the begging letter (now produced in court). Grant declined to meet the caller, who went away. As the names of Messrs Attree and Clarke had been mentioned in the letter, Grant turned sleuth and went to their offices, but could find no information about the mysterious stranger save that he had requested the address of an Indian officer. Grant of course was that Indian Army Officer. Suspecting fraud, Grant sent for Pc Dumfries and asked him to investigate. Dumfries apprehended Lighton who had been staying with his wife and four children at William Swindell's, a pub in the High Street.

[8] Brighton Gazette, 7.6.1860

first time I can picture James in my mind. On 4 August 1860, he appeared in court. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now. It is a pathetic tale of despair, suspicion, meanness, and misunderstandings.

'James Lighton, 49, a tall gentlemanly man, but very seedily dressed, was charged with

James politely told the court: "I came to Brighton to see about the property of my sister who died about three months ago. I went to see the Vicar as I thought he might have attended her in her last moments. I asked if the Vicar would lend me some money which he refused. I then went to the solicitors, Attree & Clarke's office, who referred me to Mr Woods, the executor. Mr Woods advanced me half a crown. I had spent all my money, and parted with a lot of things in coming from Plymouth to Brighton. I was formerly an officer in the Indian Army. I went through the whole campaign and being now in distress I have been induced to ask for a loan. I am very sorry if I have broken the law."



Prisoner was then discharged.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4.

Present—The MAYOR, A. BIGGE, E. STENT, J. ALLFREE, and W. M. HOLLIS, Esqrs.

JAMES LIGHTON, 49, a tall, gentlemanly man, but very seedily dressed, was charged with begging.

John Archer, servant to the Vicar of Brighton, deposed to prisoner calling at the Vicarage on Sunday evening, bringing the note produced, which he gave to the Vicar, who opened it, and gave him an answer to give to prisoner. The purport of the letter was a request for a loan of 5s. till prisoner could see Messrs. Cooper and Williams.

Peter Tullett, another servant at the Vicarage, also deposed to the above, and further that prisoner called again on Friday with another note, saying that Mr Maitland had requested him to call and obtain an interview.

General Charles Grant deposed to his servant bringing him the begging letter now produced. He declined to see the party, and he went away. Witness afterwards went to Messrs. Attree and Clarke's office, their names being mentioned in the letter, but there he could obtain no information about the man, further than that he had asked for the address of an Indian officer and his had been given to him.

P.C. Dumfries deposed to receiving instructions from General Grant of his wish to know whether prisoner was an impostor or not. He afterwards apprehended prisoner in Buckingham Place. Prisoner, with his wife and four children, was staying at Swindell's, in High Street.

Prisoner said he came to Brighton hoping to see after the property of his sister, who died at 29, Montpellier Crescent three months since. He called upon the Vicar, thinking he might have attended his sister in her last moments, and asking for a loan, which the Vicar refused. He then went to Messrs. Attree's and Co.'s office, solicitors to his sister's estate, who referred him to Mr Woods, the executor, who advanced him half-a-crown. He had expended all his money and parted with many things in coming from Plymouth to Brighton. He had been an Indian officer, going through the whole campaign, and being now in distress, had been induced to ask a loan. He was sorry if he had broken the law.

Mr Bigge said there was just cause of suspicion, but the evidence being incomplete, they could not proceed further.

Prisoner was discharged on promising to leave the town by Monday.

The magistrate, Mr Bigge, said there had been cause for suspicion but dismissed the case for lack of evidence. 'The prisoner was discharged on promising to leave the town by the next Monday.[9]

Charles Grant and Elizabeth Lighton were near neighbours. Grant, a retired Major-General 'in the East India Service' , born in the sub-continent in 1803 lived with his family at 6 Montpelier Crescent, Brighton. Elizabeth Lighton, James' late sister, had lived at No. 29.

Montpelier Crescent is a mid-19th century row of 38 houses in Montpelier, a 'salubrious' area of Brighton. The Crescent, its 'Great Showpiece', is currently protected by Grade II listed status. It was designed between 1843 and 1847 by a prominent local architect A.H. Wilds as a set-piece residential development in the rapidly growing seaside resort. Unlike

[9] Brighton Gazette, 9.8.1860

most other terraces and squares in Brighton it does not face the sea, and the original view towards the South Downs was blocked within years by a tall row of terraced houses opposite.

Did the two 'old India hands' Grant and Elizabeth Lighton know each other? Had Grant and James Lighton ever met? Is that why the General wondered whether he was an impostor? Could Grant have known James' father or uncle in India? At the very least down-and-out James must have thought the General would be sympathetic to a fellow officer and countryman down on his luck, but instead the latter man organised a hue and cry. 'The Campaign' the whole of which James claimed he had 'gone through' is myth or mystery.

No 6 Montpelier Crescent today.

....and no.29

SALES BY AUCTION.

Excellent Household Furniture, Two Pianofortes, and various Effects, removed from No. 29, Montpelier Crescent, Brighton.

MR ATTREE has received instructions from the Executors of the late Miss Lighton, to Sell by Auction, at the Estate Auction Mart, 126, North Street, Brighton, on Wednesday, 25th July, 1860, commencing at Twelve o'clock,

The EXCELLENT HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE & EFFECTS, including mahogany and japanned four-post, cornice, and Arabian bedsteads, hair and wool mattresses, beds and bedding, chests of drawers, usual chamber furniture, rosewood frame chairs and tables, a *fine-toned* 6¾-octave *cottage pianoforte*, in handsome rosewood case, by Broadwood and Sons, a few OIL PAINTINGS AND ENGRAVINGS, mahogany sideboard, reclining and other chairs, dining table, cottage pianoforte, in mahogany case, carpets, chimney glasses in gilt frames, plated goods, bed and table linen, china and glass, basement furniture, and effects.

May be viewed the day prior to the sale, and catalogues obtained at Mr Attree's Offices, the Estate Auction Mart.

Following Elizabeth's death, Frederick Wood, the executor, lost no time in getting the show on the road. Before James and his family even managed to get to Brighton Elizabeth's effects had been advertised for auction on 19 July 1860 in the Gazette:

A Mahogany & japanned four-poster, cornice and Arabian bedsteads

Hair & wool mattresses, beds & bedding

Chest of drawers, chamber furniture, rosewood framed chaires & tables

A fine-tined 6¾ octave cottage pianoforte in handsme rosewood case by Broadwood & Sons

Oil paintings and engravings and sundry other effects including amother piano, linen, china and glass, etc.

Frederick Wood, was a married man in his forties, a small businessman in the town, by trade an upholsterer. Presumably he had served Elizabeth as a tradesman. I can find no other point of contact between the pair, and can offer no explanation why she chose him as her executor.

ELIZABETH LIGHTON, DECEASED.—

Pursuant to the Act of Parliament 22nd and 23rd, cap. 35, intitled "An Act to Further Amend the Law of Property and to Relieve Trustees."

Notice is Hereby Given, that all creditors and other persons having CLAIMS against the estate of ELIZABETH LIGHTON, late of No. 29, MONTPELIER CRESCENT, BRIGHTON, in the County of Sussex, spinster, deceased, who died on the 13th day of April, 1860, are required to send in the same to the Executor, Frederick Wood, the younger, of Brighton aforesaid, upholsterer, at the Office of his Solicitors, Messrs. Cooper and Williams, No. 35, Middle street, Brighton, on or before the 3rd day of December next. And Notice is Hereby also Given, that in default thereof the said Executor will distribute the assets among the parties entitled thereto, and will not be liable for any part of such assets to any person of whose claim he shall not then have had Notice.

Dated this 30th day of October, 1860.

COOPER and WILLIAMS,
Solicitors to the Executor.

[10]

By the 15th November, the final notice concerning Elizabeth's affairs appeared. Wood requested creditors or anyone with claims against the estate to contact him 'otherwise he

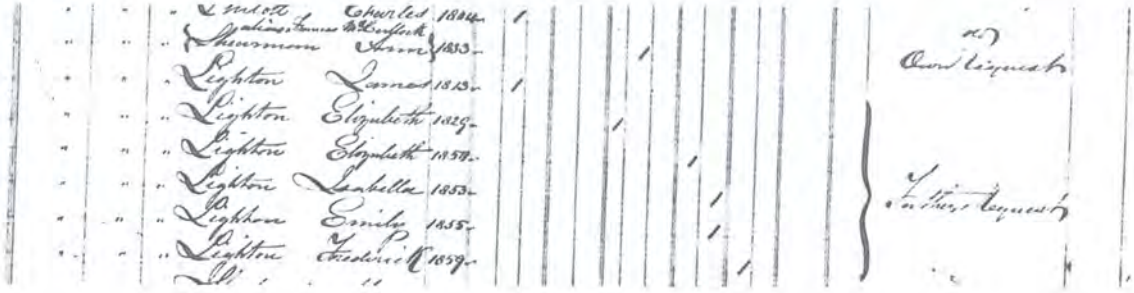
[10] Brighton Gaz 15.11.1860

will distribute the assets among the parties entitled thereto'. I wonder whether James received any of this largesse or if he had been dismissed long ago. I wouldn't be surprised if the half a crown which Wood had given him back in August was all he received.

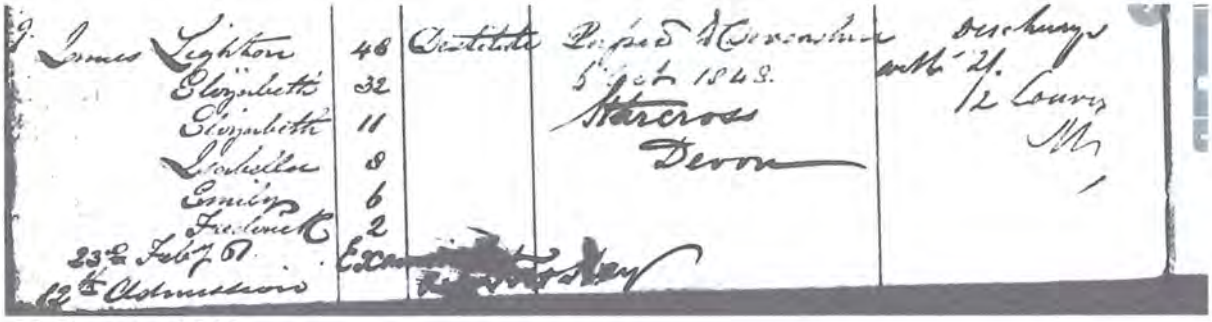
Despite all these shenanigans, I had never seen a copy of Elizabeth Lighton's will. I knew from the Probate Registry index that she had left 'effects under £1,000', that Frederick Wood was the executor, but nothing more. I needed to obtain a copy of the full will, for which the fee was £1.50. A bargain, I thought. I sent for it on the 20 September 2020. Despite it being digital, it would take several weeks to process. I was straight back to the days when I used to wait anxiously for the post!

Meanwhile, I remembered that after his court appearance in Brighton, James Lighton had promised to leave town 'by the following Monday'. It appears he had done so, and by the winter of 1861 the Lightons had taken to the road again. Westminster Workhouse records show that the family, James & Elizabeth, with Elizabeth, junior, Isabella, Emily and Frederick spent five nights in the Union House, having entered due to 'destitution' on 23rd February; the father made a request to leave on the 26th, and on the 28th the Guardians discovered he had been a previous resident, a throwback to his previous sojourns at Westminster in 1848,that he 'had been passed to Starcross, Devonshire'. They gave him two shillings, and two loaves of bread and sent the family on its way.

23 February 1861



26 February 1861



James Lighton	48	Destitute	Passed to Cornwall 5th Oct 1848. Starcross Devon	Discharged with 21/- 12 County M
Elizabeth	32			
Elizabeth	11			
Isabella	8			
Emily	6			
Frederick	2			
23rd Feby 61	Exam[illegible]			
12th Admission				

28 February 1861

By census night, 7th April 1861, they are nowhere to be found.

As can be seen from the above, young Elizabeth Lighton aged eleven, their eldest child, had been with them in February 1861, among the destitute list of paupers. This is my last sighting of her. She was not with the family in 1871. It is possible she went into domestic service aged ~~of~~ about 15, but I have not been able to trace her with any degree of certainty. It is more likely that she died. In 2020, I was able to eliminate Elizabeth Sophia Lighton of Stepney who married Jacob Fix in 1868 who I had suspected might have been her, but her full marriage certificate showed her father was Jonathan, a shipwright.[11]

But.....as we already know, by 18 September 1862, the Lighton family was back in Brighton when Elizabeth gave birth in the Workhouse to Mary Adelaide, though her address is given as 20 Derby Place. I suspect James was still in search of his lost legacy, though without success.

By 1864, the family was in Reading when their daughter, Mary Adelaide was belatedly christened.

On 24 January 1865, James' brother Andrew died at a hotel in Jermyn Street, London. According to his short obituary he had been a former resident of Exeter. [12]

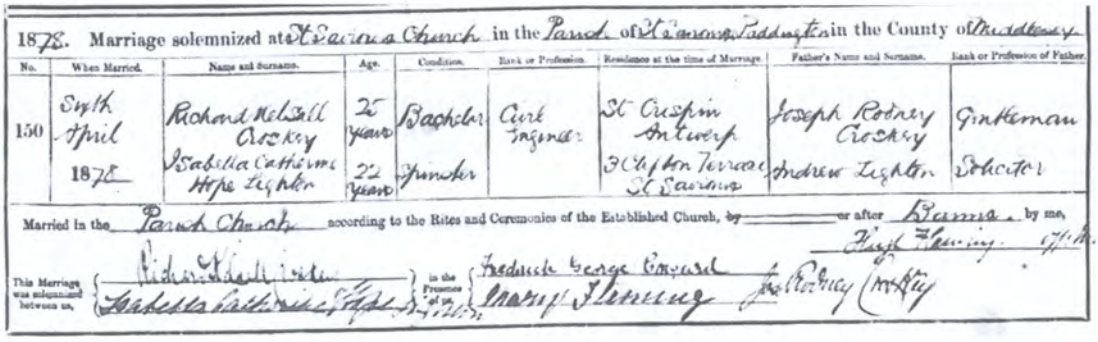
age.
LIGHTON.—Jan. 24, at the Hotel, Jermyn-street, London, Mr. Andrew Lighton, formerly of this city.

In the two decades since his wedding in London Andrew had lived in the USA where his daughter Isabella Catherine Hope Lighton was born in 1856. In 1878 this latest Isabella married a civil engineer Richard Kelsall Croskey at Paddington. The marriage record shows that Andrew, her father, was a solicitor.

[11] See Chapter 7

[12] Exeter & Plymouth Gaz 3.2.1865

The event was announced in the Evening Standard of 11 April 1878. The groom's late father had been the US Consul in Southampton. The bride's father was 'the late Andrew Lighton, esquire of London.' The couple requested 'No cards.'



1878. Marriage solemnized at St Barnabas Church in the Parish of St Barnabas Paddington in the County of Middlesex

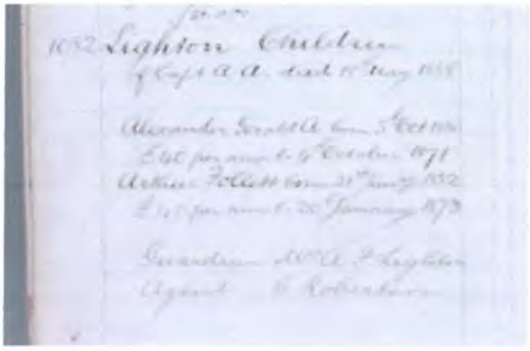
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
150	Sixth April 1878	Richard Nelson Crosby	25 years	Bachelor	Civil Engineer	St Crispin Antwerp	Joseph Rodney Crosby	Gentleman
		Isabella Catherine Hope Lighton	22 years	Spinster		3 Clifton Terrace St Barnabas	Andrew Lighton	Solicitor

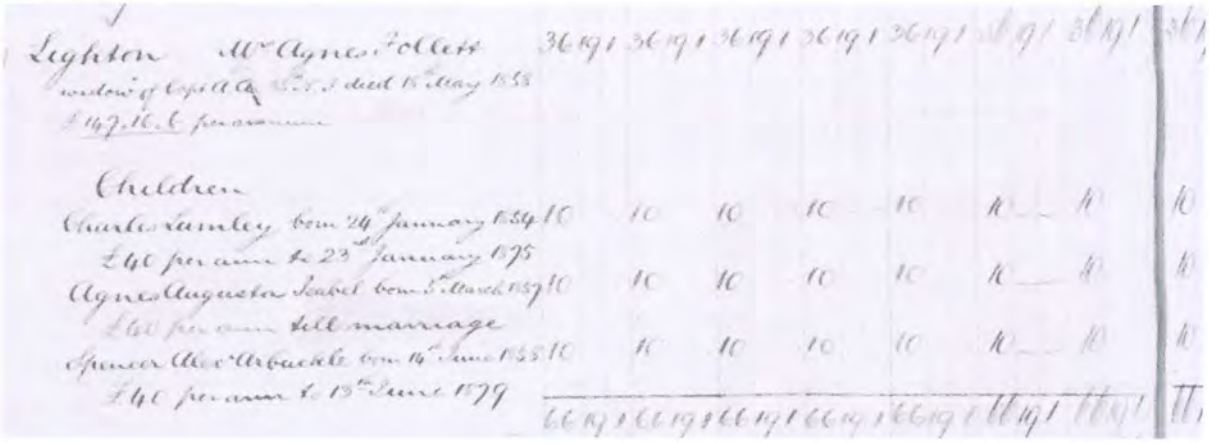
Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by ——— or after Banns by me, Hugh Fleming. Vicar.

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Richard Nelson Crosby / Isabella Catherine Hope Lighton. In the Presence of us, Frederick George Coward / Mary Fleming / Joseph Rodney Crosby (Father)

Elizabeth Lighton's will duly appeared on-line within the next few weeks as promised. I had been expecting a revelation, but all hopes were dashed. Mr Frederick Woods, the executor was paid 10 guineas for his trouble with the residue in trust to Mr Albert Baker of Dawlish, surgeon, 'for the benefit of my Godson, whose name I have forgotten, the second son of my brother, Alexander Arbuckle Lighton.'

Isabella's sister-in- law Agnes, the widow of Alexander Arbuckle, who died in India on 15 May 1858 received an army pension of £147.16s 6d annually until her death in 1884, as well as £40 p.a. for each of their five children until they reached the age of twenty one.





The second son, Arthur Follett Lighton, who was born in Dawlish, was the 'Godson whose name I can't remember'. In 1861 he was a schoolboy aged nine living at Chichester with his mother Agnes.

Poor James.

He had long since blotted his copy book in ways never forgotten or forgiven. As my husband remarked years ago – "he was the black sheep of the family."

I do not believe I shall ever find where he died and was buried.

This is the last Will and Testament of me Elizabeth Lighton of No. Montpellier Crescent Brighton in the County of Sussex Spinster I direct that my Executor do as as possible get in and convert my personal estate into money and after payment of my debts an funeral and testamentary expences and the Legacy of ten pounds and ten shillings which I b to my executor for his trouble do pay the residue to Mr Albert Baker of Dawlish aforesaid Surgeon by him or her disposed of for the benefit of my Godson (whose Christian name I do not remember second Son of my Brother Alexander Arbuckle Lighton in such manner and at such time or tim he or they may think proper and his or her receipt shall be a sufficient discharge to my Execu And I authorise my executor to settle and compromise claims for and against my estate as he n think proper And I appoint Frederick Wood the younger of Brighton Upholsterer my Exe and hereby revoke all former Wills In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this fourte day of April in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and sixty

Executor

E Lighton

Signed by the said testatrix as her last Will and Testament in the presence of us present at the same time who at her request in her presence and in the presence of each other have subscribed our names as witnesses

Wm I Williams Solr Brighton
Anne Sharman of Tunbridge Wells

On the 26th day of May 1860
The Will of Elizabeth Lighton late of No 29 Montpellier Crescent Brighton in County of Sussex Spinster deceased who died on the 15th day of April 1860 at No 29 Montpellier Crescent Brighton aforesaid was proved in the District Registry attached to Majesty's Court of Probate at Lewes by the Oath of Frederick Wood the younger of No Western Road Brighton aforesaid Upholsterer the sole Executor named in the said Will he having been first sworn duly to administer

Fixed place of Abode No 29 Montpellier Crescent Brighton aforesaid
Effects under £1000
Extracted by Messrs Cooper & Williams Solr Brighton

(B) Fols 3

I certify this to be a correct Copy

COURT OF PROBATE LEWES DISTRICT
DISTRICT REGISTRAR

ON the Twenty sixth day of May 1860.
THE WILL of Elizabeth Lighton late of No 29 Montpellier Crescent Brighton in the County of Sussex Spinster deceased

deceased, who died on the fifteenth day of April 1860.
at No 29 Montpellier Crescent Brighton aforesaid was
proved in the DISTRICT REGISTRY attached to HER MAJESTY'S COURT of PROBATE
at LEWES by the Oath of Frederick Wood the
Younger of No 36 Western Road Brighton
aforesaid Upholsterer the sole

EXECUTOR named in the said Will he having been first
sworn duly to administer.

No Leasehold

EFFECTS UNDER £1000.
Extracted by Messrs Cooper & Williams, Solrs Brighton

COURT OF PROBATE · LEWES
Pilbury Hunt
DISTRICT REGISTRAR

Appendix 2.

Timeline, James Lighton, 1813 - ?

1813. Bombay Presidency: born 12 Sept, christened 7 Oct. son of Captain James Lighton of the Artillery, and Isabella his wife. (one sister, Elizabeth, 2 brothers Andrew & Alexander)

1816. Death of father James.

1832. Bombay, 20 March; cadet, then commissioned Lieutenant, 2nd Reg. of Foot.

1834. Bombay.

20 June, Retired from Army after 2 years 93 days.

12 December, married Catherine Fullerton.

1835. Khatewaddy, Bombay.

5 March. In gaol for debt.

23 March. Birth of dau Isabella Catherine

1836. Bombay, 21 July, death of dau Isabella Catherine.

1837. Bombay, 24 November, birth of son James Alexander

1839. Bombay.

1 January, death of son James Alexander

29 November, birth of dau Catherine Anne Elizabeth

21 December, death of wife Catherine, three weeks after giving birth.

1840. Bombay, 26 September, death of dau Catherine Ann Elizabeth.

(1840. Death of mother Isabella at **Dawlish, Devon**. She left India about 1837.)

Circa 1840-1846. James left India for England. Date unknown.

1846. London, **Westminster,** 25 May, he was then in Westminster Workhouse.

1846-1848. Various short stays at same **Workhouse**.

1846. London, marriage of brother Andrew Lighton, 'gent', later a solicitor. (witnessed by their sister Elizabeth)

1848. Westminster, 6 October. Forcibly 'removed' by Westminster Union to **Starcross, Devon** supposedly his legal parish of residence.

1849. London, Marylebone. 3 September. Married 2nd wife Elizabeth Legg

1850. London, Marylebone, 25 February, dau Elizabeth born. Child registered at the Rectory 3 April

1851. Exeter, 30 March. Recorded in Census with wife and daughter

(1851. Stoneham, Hants, brother Captain Alexander Arbuckle L. resident with wife & children)

1855. Plymouth, Devon. 11 March. Christening of dau Emily Catherine

(1858. Bangalore, Madras, India, 18 May, Death of brother Alexander A. L.)

1859. Exeter, Devon. 10 June. Birth of son Frederick William

(**1860. Brighton**, 15 April. Death of sister Elizabeth [1812-1860]. She had been in England since at least 1846 when she witnessed bro. Andrew's wedding in London. Brighton. Will proved 26 May. 7 June: Notice in Brighton Gazette re claims to her estate.19 July, Elizabeth's effects auctioned by executor.)

1860.

Brighton 4 August. James in Brighton making claim to his inheritance. Arrested, charged with begging and fraud. Case dismissed on his promise to leave Brighton immediately.

Westminster, London. 7 Dec. christening of son Frederick William.

1861

23 -28 February, Family in **Westminster Workhouse**. Sent packing when order of 1848 is discovered.

7 April. Census. No trace of family.

1862. Brighton, Sussex. 8 September, birth of dau Mary Adelaide . James still seeking 'rights' to inheritance? Too late. Estate had been settled, with residual legatee Elizabeth's Godson, Arthur, 2nd son of their brother, Alexander Arbuckle Lighton, [Indian Army officer, b. 1816, deceased 1858]

1864. Reading, Berks. 10 January. christening of dau Mary Adelaide

(1865, 24 January, death of brother Andrew, Jermyn Street, London, born India 1814.)

1867.

Gosport, Hants. 19 January. Birth of son James Alexander

Woolwich, London, 11 August, christening of son James Alexander

1871.

Plymouth, Devon. 1 April, Census. James & Elizabeth with four children, Emily, Fredk, Mary, James. No trace of eldest, Elizabeth.

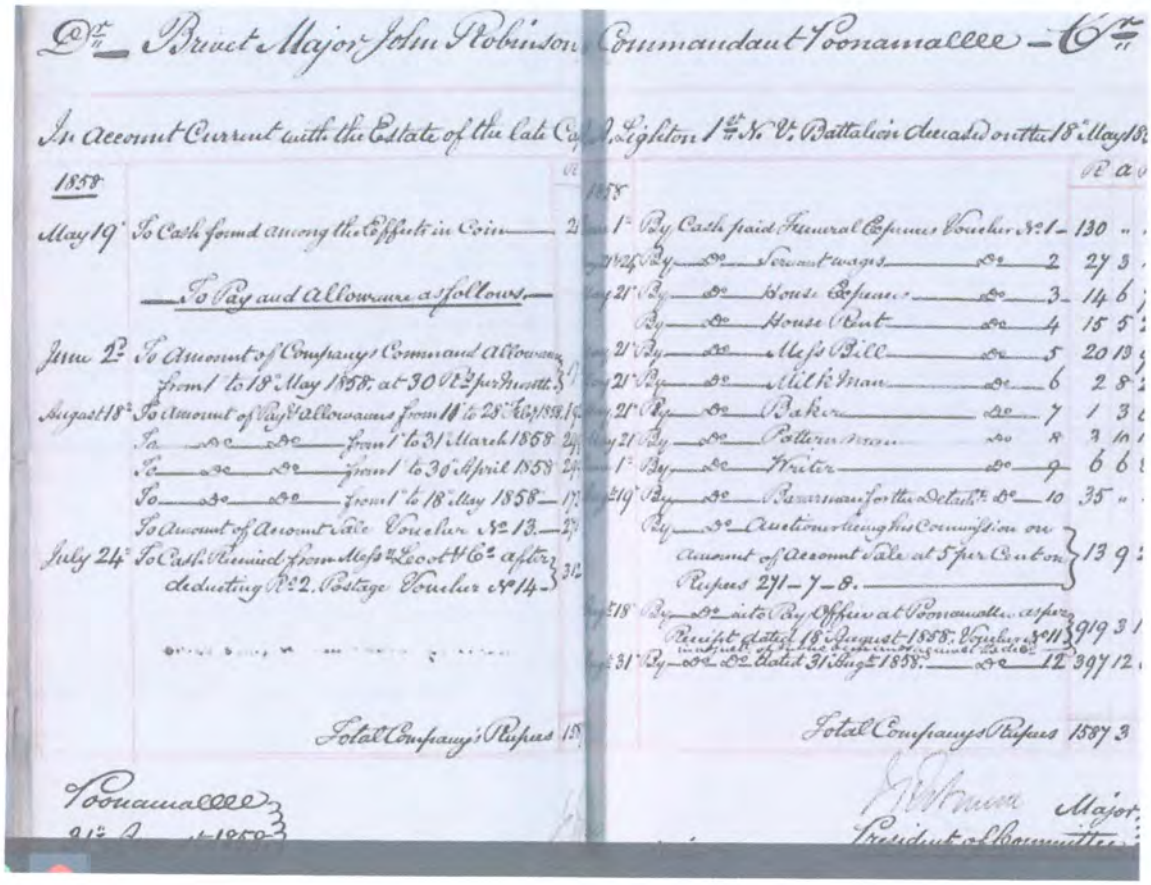
Gosport, Hants, 6 August, death of son James Alexander.

1878. 22 May, Swansea, Glamorgan, (alleged). Named NOK on Enlistment of son Fredk. William.

1881. No sign in census

1891. 5 April. Elizabeth Leighton (sic) widow, 63, aka Lightning, deputy lodging house keeper, Lamb Street, Bristol. She stayed in Bristol until she died until her death at Eastville Workhouse in 1913 aged 87.

James' is last known to have been alive on census night 1 April 1871. Elizabeth must have been widowed between then and the census of 5 April 1891.


Dr. Brevet Major John Robinson Commandant Poonamallee — Cr.

In Account Current with the Estate of the late Capt. Alexander Leighton 1st N. V. Battalion deceased on the 18th May 1858

1858

May 19 To Cash found among the effects in Coin — 2

To Pay and Allowance as follows —

June 2 To Amount of Company's Command Allowance from 1 to 18 May 1858 at 30 Rs per month

August 18 To Amount of Pay & Allowances from 18 to 28 May 1858

To do do from 1 to 31 March 1858

To do do from 1 to 30 April 1858

To do do from 1 to 18 May 1858 — 17

To Amount of Account Sale Voucher No 13. — 2

July 24 To Cash Remitted from Messrs Leo & Co after deducting Rs 2. Postage Voucher No 14 — 30

Total Company's Rupees 15

1858

May 1 By Cash paid Funeral Expenses Voucher No 1 — 130

24 By do Servant wages do 2 — 27 3

21 By do House Expenses do 3 — 14 6

By do House Rent do 4 — 15 5

21 By do Mess Bill do 5 — 20 13

21 By do Milkman do 6 — 2 8

21 By do Baker do 7 — 1 3

21 By do Pottermen do 8 — 3 10

1 By do Writer do 9 — 6 6

19 By do Peramman for the details do 10 — 35

By do Auctioneering his Commission on Amount of Account Sale at 5 per Cent on Rupees 271-7-8. — 13 9

18 By do into Pay Office at Poonamallee as per Receipt dated 18 August 1858 Voucher No 11 — 919 3

31 By do do dated 31 Aug 1858 — 12 307 12

Total Company's Rupees 1587 3

Poonamallee 31st A 1858

Major President of Committee

A Chronicle of Events in Mary's Story (2006)

The investigation of Mary's ancestry was like going on a journey without a map. All I had to go on was the stark information that she herself told my mum and me – that her father had killed her mother. I had a few ideas of which paths to take at the start, and some proved false trails, but the very last thing I would have anticipated was a trip to India at the time of the Raj.

A journey in ancestry is never complete, and there is definitely much more to come, especially when hopefully I can spend some time in London at the Army Museum and India House personally investigating more secrets of the Raj and the part that the Lighton and Aitchison families played in that exciting era. It is worth mentioning that two people on the periphery of the story were Governors of Bombay: James Farish who filled the position 1838-39 and Sir Evan Nepean, 1751-1822, a notable politician, who looms large not only in Indian affairs but in the founding of Australia and was Bombay's Governor 1812-1819. Certainly Andrew Nepean Aitchison was named after him in the glory days and I wonder if the great man stood as godfather to the boy?

It is interesting to speculate what might have happened if Major James Lighton had not died aged 42. Would he have gone on to make a spectacular army career like his brother officer and brother in law, Andrew Aitchison? Clearly the life of James Lighton, junior, his son, might have been very different. Surely he would not have sunk to the point where one of his children was born in the Brighton Workhouse and his grandchildren, who included Mary, fell even lower in the social scale? Contrast this with the life as lived by Andrew's granddaughter, Caroline Nepean Aitchison, James's first cousin once removed, who lived in style with her Tory MP husband, George Arbuthnot, surrounded by servants.

I have traced Mary's ancestry through the male line, but all along I have been haunted by the spectres of the women in the story whose lives were tragic in their various ways: the Memsahibs, Isabella, who was left a young widow with four babies and Catherine whose children died and who lost her own life in childbirth; Elizabeth, the daughter of an Army private, who married "up" but went rapidly down to the utmost poverty and misery; grandmother Mary Davies, the Welsh pedlar woman, who took the child Mary away from the contemptible Frederick and last of all, Mary Ann Matilda, Mary's mother, who died aged about thirty, whose circumstances were the most abject of all.

It intrigues me that I know very little about Mary's life in service with the Hardy family and obviously I shall keep my ears and eyes open in this respect.

Family History discoveries are made in fits and starts, hence I have treated my story as one of detection with clues which took me along different paths, sometimes at simultaneous times. Inevitably, this will cause confusion to any reader who will not be as immersed in the doings of Mary's family, as I have become, and therefore I append a brief list of events in chronological order which I hope will prove helpful:

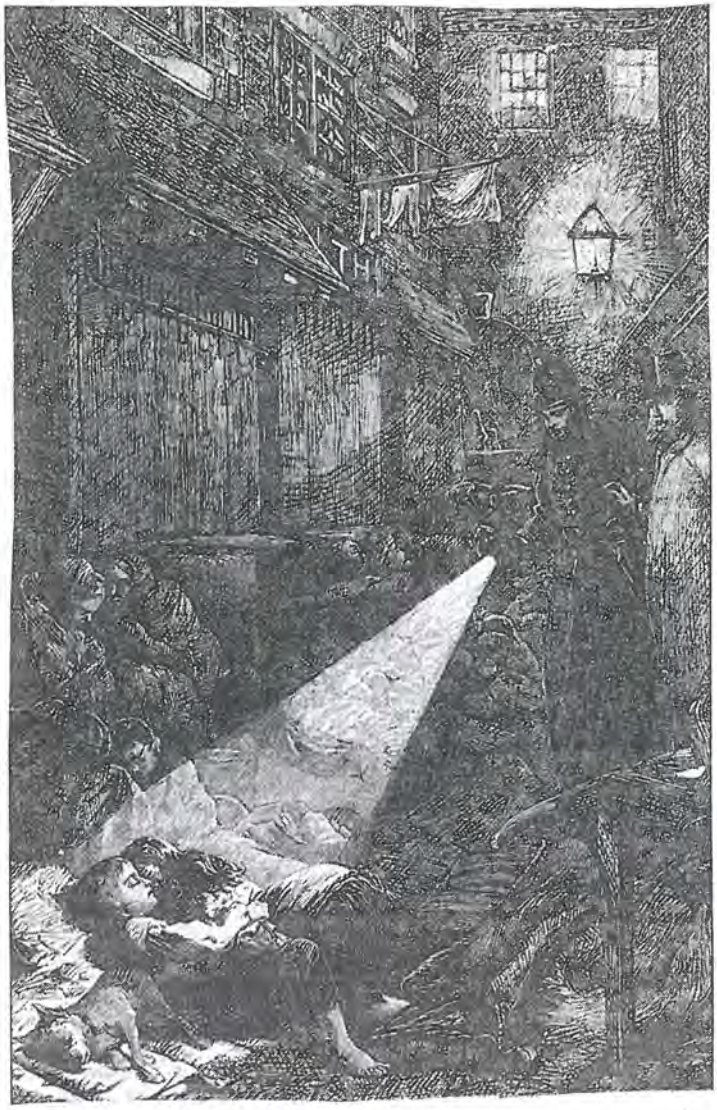
1772: Birth of James Lighton, son of John Lighton of Rossferry Hill, Co. Londonderry, Ireland
?c1774: Birth of Alexander Lighton, son of John Lighton of Rossferry Hill, Co. Londonderry, Ireland
1791: James Lighton enlisted as a cadet with HEIC
1792: James Lighton promoted to Ensign
1793: James Lighton embarked for Bombay
1797: James Lighton, Lieutenant Fireworker
1799: James Lighton wounded at Sedaseer during Battle of Seringapatam against Tipu Sultan
1803: James Lighton promoted Captain Lieutenant
1808: James Lighton promoted Captain
?1809-10: James Lighton and Andrew Aitchison, his brother officer, in Devon buying cloth for HEIC uniforms.
1810: James Lighton and Isabella Aitchison, married at Kenton, Devon. The marriage was witnessed by Andrew and Mary Aitchison, the bride's brother and sister.
1811: Andrew Aitchison married Martha Charlotte Charlton at St Olave's, London James Lighton witnessed Andrew's will
1811: Isabella and James Lighton departed for India, as did Andrew and Martha Aitchison
1812: Birth of Elizabeth Lighton, daughter of James and Isabella
1813: Birth of James Lighton, son of James and Isabella
?c1813: Birth of Andrew Nepean Aitchison, son of Andrew and Martha
1814: Birth of Andrew Lighton, son of James and Isabella
1816: James Lighton and Andrew Lighton both shown as "Major, Local Rank, East Indies" in Army List.
1816: Death of Major James Lighton, of Bombay Light Horse Artillery, aged 42, leaving Isabella with three children aged 4, 3 and 2, and pregnant with her 4th child.
1816: Posthumous birth of Alexander Arbuckle Lighton, son of James and Isabella
1825: Birth of Charles Terrington Aitchison, son of Andrew and Martha
1829: Alexander Lighton, (brother of Major James Lighton) married Rebecca Terrington in London
1834: James Lighton, son of James and Isabella, married Catherine, the widow of William Fullarton, ~~in Bombay~~ CALCUTTA – (HE WAS her 3rd husband)
1835: death of Alexander Lighton on campaign in India, leaving all to his widow Rebecca.
23/5/1835 1835: Birth of Isabella Lighton, daughter of James and Catherine, Bombay } SAME BABY
21/7/1836 1836: ~~Birth and~~ death of a daughter of James and Catherine Lighton, Bombay }
24/11/1837 1837: Birth of James Alexander Lighton, son of James and Catherine, Bombay
1837: Isabella Lighton, widow of James Lighton living at Dawlish, DEVON
1837: Rebecca Lighton nee Terrington, widow of Alexander Lighton married James Farish in Bombay
1837: Alexander Arbuckle Lighton enlisted as a cadet, HEIC, recommended by his uncle, Colonel Andrew Aitchison, then on leave in Ryde, Isle of Wight.

1838: Andrew Aitchison appointed Major-General
1838: James Farish, temporary Governor of Bombay
1/1/ 1839: Death of James Alexander Lighton, son of James and Catherine, aged thirteen months, in Bombay
21/12/1838 1839: Death of Catherine Lighton, wife of James, in childbirth, in Bombay
29/4/1839 1839: Birth of Catherine Anne Elizabeth Lighton, daughter of James and Catherine, in Bombay having survived death of her mother in childbirth bp. 5-1-40
26/9/ 1840: Death of Catherine Anne Elizabeth Lighton, daughter of James and Catherine aged 10 months, in Bombay
1840: Death of Isabella Lighton at Dawlish aged 52, from heart disease
1840-49: Some time during these years, after the death of his wife, Lieutenant James Lighton came to England
1842: Andrew Nepean Aitchison married Frances Matilda Farish (daughter of James Farish and step daughter of Rebecca Farish, nee Terrington, formerly Lighton) at Bombay
1845: Birth of Elizabeth Frances Aitchison, daughter of Andrew Nepean and Frances Matilda
1848: Birth of Caroline Emma Nepean Aitchison, daughter of Andrew Nepean and Frances Matilda
1848: Death of General Andrew Aitchison at Hastings. Will proved by Martha his widow: the same will which was witnessed by James Lighton in 1811.
1849: Alexander Arbuckle Lighton married Agnes Follett.
1849: James Lighton, widower, married Elizabeth Legg in London. James described himself "Gentleman, son of James Lighton, Colonel". Elizabeth, the daughter of a private soldier was four months pregnant.
1850: Death of Captain Andrew Nepean Aitchison in Cairo.
1850: Birth of Elizabeth Lighton, daughter of James and Elizabeth in London: father James described as "a soldier"
1850: Birth of Alexander Gerald Lighton, son of Alexander Arbuckle and Agnes
1851: James, Elizabeth and baby Elizabeth Lighton, living at Exeter. James shown on census as "late Lieutenant, Army, retired, born East Indies."
1852: Birth of Arthur Follett Lighton, of Alexander Arbuckle and Agnes, registered at Newton Abbot
c1853: Birth of Emily Lighton daughter of James and Elizabeth
1854: Birth of Charles Lumley Lighton, son of Alexander Arbuckle and Agnes
1857: Birth of Agnes Isabel Augusta Lighton, daughter of Alexander Arbuckle and Agnes
1858: Birth of Spencer Alexander Arbuckle Lighton, son of Alexander Arbuckle and Agnes
1858: Death of Alexander Arbuckle Lighton aged 43
1859: Birth of Frederick Lighton, son of James and Elizabeth at Exeter. His father James shown as "canvassing agent in the book trade".
1861: James Lighton and family probably at Brighton – but not found because much of the Brighton census is missing.

1838: Andrew Aitchison appointed Major-General
1838: James Farish, temporary Governor of Bombay
1/1/ 1839: Death of James Alexander Lighton, son of James and Catherine, aged thirteen months, in Bombay

1861: Eliza, 80, and Mary Aitchison, 68, "gentlewomen" presumed sisters of Andrew Aitchison and Isabella Lighton, living at Dawlish with a visitor Jane Thompson, born East Indies.
1861: Agnes Lighton, aged 40, widow, living on an Officer's pension, E.I. Army, at Bognor with her five children and a maid. Alexander aged 10, born Southampton, Arthur, 9, born Dawlish, Charles, 7, born South Africa, Agnes, 4, born Portchester, Hampshire, Spencer, 2, born Woolwich, Kent. Agnes herself says she was born Kenton! (Some of these places of birth differ from those in 1871, shown in the narrative). Kenton and Dawlish – there must surely have been additional connections between Isabella and Agnes, besides their being aunt and niece by marriage. The obituary of a Lieutenant Frederick Follett who died at Topsham, Devon in November, 1841 appears in the Gentleman's Magazine. He may have been in the HEIC and would bear further research.
1862: Birth of Mary Adelaide Lighton, daughter of James and Elizabeth at Brighton Workhouse. Father James shown as "travelling agent."
1867: Birth of James Alexander Lighton, son of James and Elizabeth at Gosport: father James shown as "lately a merchant's clerk".
1870: Death of Rebecca Farish at Marylebone, London
1870: Caroline Nepean Aitchison married George Arbuthnot at St George, Hanover Square, London
1871: George Arbuthnot, elected MP for Hereford
1871: James Lighton with Elizabeth his wife, Emily, Frederick, Mary and James, living at Plymouth at time of census. His occupation: "book canvasser"
1871: Death of James Alexander Leighton aged 4, at Gosport. Father James described as a "book hawker".
1873: Death of James Farish, a magistrate, and sometime Governor of Bombay at Marylebone
c1876: Frederick Leighton/Lighton enlisted in the British Army as a private soldier
1878: Frederick Leighton married Mary Ann Matilda Davies at Cardiff
1878: Birth of Thomas Leighton/Lighton, son of Frederick and Mary Ann Matilda
1880: Birth of Elizabeth Leighton/Lighton, daughter of Frederick and Mary Ann Matilda
1881: Frederick Leighton serving in Afghanistan
1881: Mary Ann Matilda Lighton, living at Trevethin, Monmouth at census making a living as a pedlar with her children Thomas and Elizabeth, and her mother Mary Davies,
1881: Death of Frances Matilda Aitchison, widow of Andrew Nepean Aitchison at Taynton House, Gloucestershire, aged 61.
1882: Frederick Leighton discharged from the Army
1884: Birth of Mary Ann Leighton, daughter of Frederick and Mary Ann Matilda at 7, Great Ann Street, Bristol.
1884: Death of Agnes Lighton, widow of Alexander Arbuckle, aged 66,
1887: Elizabeth Leighton admitted to Carlton House, Industrial School, Bristol, due to illness of mother and fecklessness of father.
1887: Death of Mary Ann Matilda Leighton, at Bristol, aged 27 according to her death certificate, but actually aged about 30.
1891: Mary Ann Leighton living with grandmother Mary Davies in a lodging house at Temple, Bristol. Elizabeth Leighton, her sister, among inmates at Carlton House.

1891: Mary Ann Leighton admitted to Carlton House, Industrial School, Bristol, when her grandmother could no longer keep her.
1891: Mary Davies, grandmother of Mary Ann Leighton probably entered the Workhouse.
1894: Death of Elizabeth Leighton aged 14 at Bristol
1897: Death of Frederick Leighton aged 38 at Bristol
1899: Mary Ann Leighton went to the "Mary Carpenter" Home, St Paul's, Bristol
1899: Death of Agnes Isabel Augusta Lighton, daughter of Alexander Arbuckle and Agnes Lighton aged 42, at Epsom
1901: Mary Ann Leighton at St Mary's, Fishponds, (a Mary Carpenter Home), aged 17, general domestic. Described "simple minded", alleged born "Cardiff".
c1902-1939: Mary Ann Leighton in service with the Hardy family at Downend
1912: Death of George Arbuthnot, Colonel, Royal Artillery, MP for Hereford 1871-74 and 1878-1880, JP for Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, Deputy Lieutenant for Herefordshire
1919: Death of Major General Charles Terrington Aitchison, Companion of the Order of the Bath, aged 94, veteran of the Indian Mutiny, first cousin of Lieutenant James Lighton
1927: Death of Caroline Nepean Arbuthnot, nee Aitchison
1939: Mary Ann Leighton and Samuel Britton married at Christchurch, Downend.
1973: Death of Mary Ann Britton and cremation at Arno's Vale, Brislington, Bristol.



FAMILY TREE

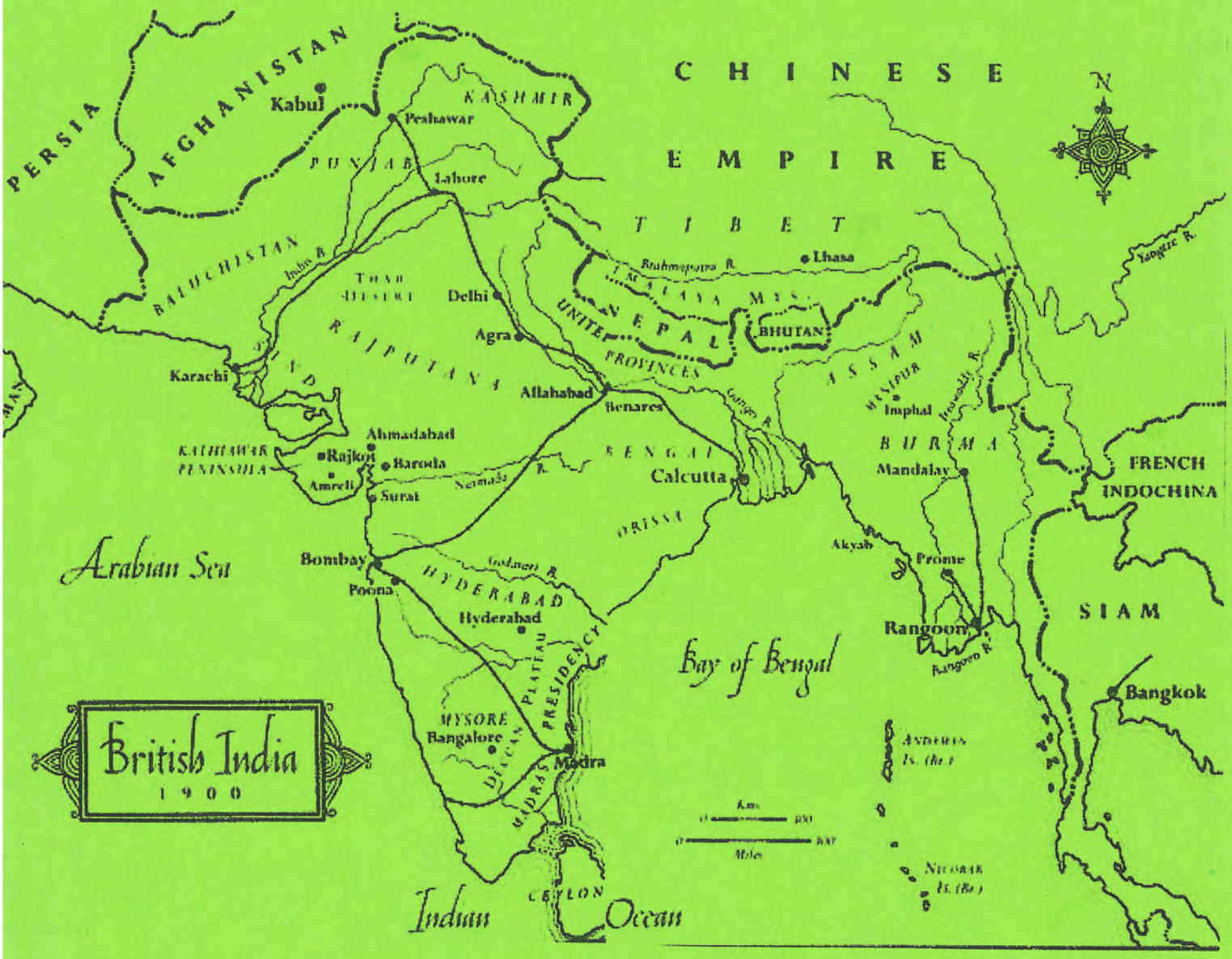
JOHN LIGHTON = ?
of Rossferry Hill, Co. Londonderry

- Alexander
  d1835
  = Rebecca Terrington, 1829
  who married (2) 1837
  James Farish, (1792-1873)
  whose dau Frances =Andrew N. Aitchison *qv*
- **JAMES** married Kenton, Devon, 1810
  1772-1816

---- **AITCHISON** =

- **ISABELLA** c1788-1840
- Eliza bc1781
- Mary bc1793
- **ANDREW** d 1848
  = Martha Charlton 1811

- Elizabeth 1812 -
- **JAMES** 1813 -
  (1) mar **CATHERINE** Fullarton 1834 she died 1839
  (2) mar **ELIZABETH** Legg 1849
  - Isabella Catherine 1835-
  - dau b&d 1836
  - James Alexander 1837-9
  - Elizabeth Ann Catherine 1839-40
  - James Alexander 1867-71
  - Mary Adelaide 1862-
  - Emily 1854-
  - Elizabeth 1850-
- Andrew 1814 -
- Alexander Arbuckle 1816-58
  mar Agnes Follett 1849 1818-84
  - Alexander 1850- GERALD
  - Agnes + 3 others
  - Isobel 1857-92
  - ARTHUR b 1852
  - **FREDERICK** 1859-97 married Cardiff, 1878 **MARY ANN MATILDA** c1857-87
    - Thomas c1878-?
    - Elizabeth 1880-94
    - **MARY ANN MATILDA** 1884-1973 = Samuel Britton, 1939
- Andrew Nepean d1850 mar Frances Farish d.o. James, *qv*
  - Elizabeth 1845-
  - **JOHN DAVIES** = **MARY**
- Charles Terrington 1825-1919
  - Caroline 1848-97 mar George Arbuthnot 1870


PERSIA
AFGHANISTAN
Kabul
KASHMIR
Peshawar
PUNJAB
Lahore
CHINESE
EMPIRE
TIBET
Lhasa
Brahmaputra R.
Yangtze R.
BALUCHISTAN
Indus R.
THAR
DESERT
Delhi
Agra
RAJPUTANA
UNITED
PROVINCES
NEPAL
BHUTAN
ASSAM
MANIPUR
Imphal
Irrawaddy R.
BURMA
Mandalay
Karachi
Allahabad
Benares
Ganges R.
Ahmadabad
KATHIAWAR
PENINSULA
Rajkot
Baroda
Amreli
Surat
Narmada R.
BENGAL
Calcutta
ORISSA
FRENCH
INDOCHINA
Arabian Sea
Bombay
Poona
Godavari R.
HYDERABAD
Hyderabad
Akyab
Prome
Rangoon
Rangoon R.
SIAM
Bay of Bengal
Bangkok
British India
1900
MYSORE
Bangalore
DECCAN
PLATEAU
MADRAS
PRESIDENCY
Madra
Andaman
Is. (Br.)
Nicobar
Is. (Br.)
Miles
CEYLON
Indian
Ocean