



The Life and Times of Captain William Flack

The story of a remarkable man who survived and prospered despite the momentous odds he and his wife Lucy faced in their lives.



The Life and Times of William Flack (1810-1892)

How can we begin to understand the lives of our ancestors without knowing something of the social and economic conditions in which they lived?

In the following story (with family history records included), I hope to visit the life and times of my Great Great Grandfather, William Flack so as to gain some insight into his life in the context of the social conditions and historical events of his times. This essay tours the social and political environment in which he lived in the County Cavan community in the early 1800s and then describes the events that impacted on his 21 years in the British Army and his “retirement” years in Burnley, Lancashire. The sources are noted where appropriate and a Bibliography is included at the end.

William Flack came from Bailieborough, County Cavan, Ulster

William Flack was born on 1 April 1810 in or near the town of Bailieborough in Cavan, then a part of Ulster which had been under British rule since the 17th Century and governed through an Irish Parliament based in Dublin. In 1800, the Act of Union abolished the Irish Parliament and allowed for the election of 100 Irish members to the Westminster Parliament.

Before the Plantation of Ulster, the area that became Bailieborough was known as Killechally, Killycolly and Killycollie (Irish: Coill an Chollaigh, meaning "forest of boar"). William Bailie, a Scottish "Undertaker", was granted the lands of Tonerogie (Tandragee) in East Breffnie by King James I. By 1613 he had built a fortified house and enclosed the demesne by 1629.

William Bailie (died c. 1648) was a native of Ayrshire, Scotland. In 1610, under the Ulster Plantation, William was given a grant of 1,000 acres (4.0 km²) in the proportion of Toneregie, now Tandragee, in the Barony of Clankee in County Cavan. He built Bailieborough Castle close to what was to become the town of Bailieborough and settled a number of Scottish families in the area. He is credited as the founder of the town of Bailieborough, although the present town did not develop until the 19th century when Colonel William Young of Loughgall, County Armagh owned the estate. (Wikipedia)

In the early nineteenth century many Cavan towns presented a paradox. Their dirty, shop- and tavern-lined streets were often ringed by shanty-towns, not unlike the barrios of contemporary Latin America. And yet some landlords were determined to beautify “their” towns as best they could.

For example, in the second decade of the nineteenth century the then Lord Farnham set about Cavan Town’s “boulevardisation”. A long, wide street (which still bears his name) was laid out. It was partly lined on one side by tasteful buildings, (some of which still survive), including a hotel for passing travellers, and comfortable town houses. On the other side of the street a park was planted with walkways and fountains for the recreation of Cavan’s leisured classes. A handsome parish church stood at the top of the street. Nearby, at the end of Church Street were miserable hovels. The Farnhams also provided for the commercial activity of the town, rebuilding the market house, as well as providing a dispensary and school.

The juxtaposition of gentility and dire penury was repeated in many other towns in Cavan, such as Belturbet, Bailieborough and Virginia. (“Irish Identity” by Allan Hogan)

From an 1837 description of Bailieborough:

BAILIEBOROUGH, or MOYBOLOGUE, a market and post-town, and a parish, partly in the barony of LOWER KELLS, county of MEATH, and province of LEINSTER, and partly in that of CASTLERAHAN, but chiefly in that of CLONKEE, county of CAVAN, and province of ULSTER, 11 ½ miles (N. W. by N.) from Kells, and 42 ¼ miles (N. W.) from Dublin; containing 10,480 inhabitants, of which number, 1085 are in the town. This town is situated on the road from Cootehill to Kells, and consists of only one street, containing 165 houses. The market is the largest in the county, and is on Monday. Fairs are held on Feb. 17th, May 17th, June 15th, Aug. 14th, Oct. 14th, and Nov. 17th. The Hilary and Midsummer general quarter sessions are held here: the court-house was enlarged and improved in 1834. The bridewell [watch house] was built in that year, and contains five cells and two yards, with separate day-rooms and yards for female prisoners. A manorial court is held yearly; and there is a station of the constabulary police.

In the incumbent's title this parish is denominated Moybologue, otherwise Bailieborough: it was formed by act of council in 1778, by separating from the parish of Killan, now called Shercock, 29 townlands, including the town of Bailieborough, and uniting them to the parish of Moybologue.

It comprises 17,152 statute acres, as apportioned under the tithe act. [This refers to a tax levied to support the Church of Ireland.] The land is generally of good quality: that part of the parish which is in the county of Meath is cultivated for all kinds of grain. Several small bogs are scattered over its surface, which are diminishing in extent either by draining or digging for fuel. There are some quarries of an inferior kind of stone, chiefly used for building, and about a mile from the town is an extensive bleach-green, with a comfortable house and small demesne, the residence of W. Spear, Esq. Bailieborough Castle, the seat of Sir William Young, Bart¹., is situated in a fine demesne, and occupies the site of an ancient fortress described in Pynnar's Survey, under the head of Tonregie, as a vaulted castle, with a bawn 90 feet square, and two flanking towers, attached to which were 1000 acres of land: this ancient castle remained standing till within a few years, when it was pulled down to make room for additions and improvements in the present house. Near the town also are Bexcourt, the seat of the Rev. E. Mahaffy; and the glebe-house, the residence of the Rev. J. Gumley.

The living is a united rectory and vicarage, in the diocese of Kilmore, and in the patronage of the Bishop. The tithes amount to £553. 1., of which £314. 1. is payable by the Moybologue portion of the parish, and £239 by the townlands added to it. The old church being a dilapidated building, a new one is in course of erection. The glebe-house was built by a gift of £100 and a loan of £900, in 1811, from the late Board of First Fruits; the glebe consists of two farms near the church, comprising 117 acres, and 43 acres of bog.

In the R. C. divisions the parish is partly in the union or district of Killan or Shercock, and partly in that of Kilmainham and Tivorcher: the chapel of the former is situated in the town of

¹ Sir William Young, 1st Baronet (died 1848) was a British baronet. He was the son of the Reverend John Young and Anne McClintock. On 20 September 1806, he married Lucy Frederick (died 8 August 1856), daughter of Sir Charles Frederick and Hon. Lucy Boscawen. They had two daughters and five sons. In 1814, William Young bought the Bailieborough Castle estate in County Cavan, Ireland, from Thomas Charles Stewart Corry.] Young laid out the town of Bailieborough in its present location and was created 1st Baronet Young of Bailieborough Castle on 28 August 1821. In the 1830 United Kingdom general election, he was an unsuccessful candidate for the Cavan constituency. He died on 10 March 1848, and he was succeeded by his eldest son, John Young, as 2nd Baronet.

Bailieborough; and that of the latter, which is in the county and diocese of Meath, at Tivorcher. There are two meeting-houses for Presbyterians; one in connection with the Synod of Ulster, of the third class; and the other in connection with the Seceding Synod, of the first class.

The Wesleyan Methodists have also a place of worship, in which divine service is performed every alternate Sunday. The parochial school, at Lisnalea, is supported by the incumbent; and there are three other public schools, in which 180 boys and 110 girls are taught, and a school is in progress at Kellan. There are 13 private schools, in which are about 500 boys and 250 girls. A dispensary was established in 1822. (A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, 1837.)

The house built in the 17th century by William Bailie, was damaged by fire in 1918 and eventually completely demolished in the late 1930s. (Wikipedia)

The population and the economy.

Throughout the second half of the 18th century, Cavan and other counties in Southern Ulster had enjoyed a rapid rise in the standards of living due mainly to the successes of the domestic linen and cattle industries. Increasing numbers of native Irish Catholic families were able to make sufficient money to purchase or lease small land holdings, whereas in the past, protestant families had been the dominant land-holders.

But two major events impacting both Protestant and Catholic transformed the economy in rural Cavan in the early part of the 19th Century. First, the introduction of linen weaving machines in Belfast and other big cities in the north and their more industrial-scale manufacturing practices undermined the market for the cottage-based linen industry. The rise of popular support for the “Peep o’ the Day Boys”², the “Defenders”³ and the revolutionary ideals culminating in the 1798 Rebellion need to be understood in the context of this deterioration in the economic situation in Ireland.

Second, the end of the Napoleonic War in 1815 brought on a major economic recession that was experienced throughout Britain and which further eroded employment in Cavan as the prices for both linen and beef plunged. By 1820, there was widespread poverty and lawlessness in many areas in Ireland, made the more volatile by evictions and confiscations by landlords, Tithe Collectors and the re-emergence of sectarian tensions. The British government responded to the disorder and violence with the deployment of troops.

The historic tensions between the established Anglican Church of Ireland, the notoriously fractious Presbyterians and the Catholic majority in Cavan were complicated by the influence of the politics of

² The Peep o’ Day Boys was an agrarian Protestant association in 18th century Ireland. Originally noted as being an agrarian society around 1779–80, from 1785 it became the Protestant component of the sectarian conflict that emerged in County Armagh, their rivals being the Catholic Defenders. After the Battle of the Diamond in 1795, where an offshoot of the Peep o’ Day Boys known as the Orange Boys defeated a force of Defenders, the Orange Order was instituted, and whilst repudiating the activities of the Peep o’ Day Boys, they quickly superseded them. The Orange Order would blame the Peep o’ Day Boys for “the Armagh outrages” that followed the battle.

³ The Defenders were a Roman Catholic agrarian secret society in 18th-century Ireland, founded in County Armagh. Initially, they were formed as local defensive organisations opposed to the Protestant Peep o’ Day Boys; however, by 1790 had become a secret oath-bound fraternal society made up of lodges. By 1796, the Defenders had allied with the United Irishmen, and participated in the 1798 rebellion. By the 19th century, the organisation had developed into the Ribbonmen, which was a 19th-century popular movement of poor Catholics in Ireland. It was active against landlords and their agents, and was ideologically and sometimes violently opposed to the Orange Order.

the French Revolution. The English establishment viewed the popularity of republican philosophies amongst the Irish intelligentsia as subversive and treasonous and gravely threatening. Many Presbyterians on the other hand had some sympathy for these egalitarian ideals particularly because they also rejected the "old order" hierarchy of the Church of Ireland and shared the revolutionaries' antipathy towards the Church of Rome. Yet the Presbyterians were fearful of any re-empowerment of the Catholic majority, harbouring long folk memories of the atrocities committed by both sides in the events leading to and following the Williamite War in Ireland 1688-91.

The Williamite victory in the war in Ireland had two main long-term results. The first was that it ensured James II would not regain his thrones in England, Ireland, and Scotland by military means. The second was that it ensured closer British and Protestant dominance over Ireland. Until the 19th century, Ireland would be ruled by what became known as the "Protestant Ascendancy", the mostly Protestant ruling class. The majority Irish Catholic community and the Ulster-Scots Presbyterian community were systematically excluded from power, which was based on land ownership.

If we accept that William Flack was from a Presbyterian family (he christened his first son, William Henry Douglas Flack, in a Presbyterian church), his family's traditional loyalties would have been torn between the strong anti-establishment sentiments of the Presbyterian tradition in Cavan and the antipathy many Presbyterians felt towards their Catholic neighbours. Members of his family may well have worshiped in the local Presbyterian churches alongside the families of those who shared with their Catholic neighbours the memories of the clashes with the City of Limerick Militia Regiment which had seen 40 local people killed in 1794⁴.

If, on the other hand, we concede that William Flack was from a Church of Ireland (C of I) family (he married in a C of I church and his son would later become a warden in the C of I) then this would also explain the family's choice of Christian names. His name was "William", his mother's name was "Elizabeth" – both names would have had a strong English Protestant association in Ireland in the early 1800s. It is also noteworthy that when Elizabeth Flack died, she is recorded as being the "widow" of "William Flack, a soldier", further suggestive of a loyalist background.

Many of the Cavan Presbyterian families had already begun the great migration that was to reach its peak in the Irish Famine between 1845 and 1852. As early as 1764, Rev. Thomas Clark and 300 people, most of them members of his congregation, boarded a ship and sailed to New York where they all landed safely to begin a new life as pioneer settlers. There was extensive emigration of textile workers to Britain during the thirty years before the Great Famine in 1845. The prospects for a safe and prosperous future in Bailieborough for a Protestant young man growing up in Cavan in 1830 were not good. It is not possible to determine what circumstances made William Flack enlist in the British Army but there are several factors that might have influenced his decision.

First, in 1814 the ownership of the Bailieborough Castle estate changed hands with Sir William Young purchasing the estate from Thomas Charles Stewart Corry. Sir William was active in modernising both the estate and the tenancies he owned in and around Bailieborough and this, together with the economic recession following the Napoleonic War, may have made the small scale tenancies for people like William Flack's family unviable. As a consequence, there were "clearances" to make way for broad-acre farming during the period.

Second, a detailed study of the incidence of the surname Flack in County Cavan prior to 1850 reveals that the numbers of people sharing our surname fell dramatically. The research suggests that there

⁴ "The Irish Militia 1793-1802", 2007. By Ivan F Nelson.

were at least seven (7) families living in Cavan at the time of William Flack's enlistment in 1831, whereas by 1901, there were only 3 families still resident in the County. There were no Flack families listed in the telephone book for County Cavan in 1997. This finding is in contrast with the trend in neighbouring County Monaghan, where there the numbers of Flack families increased during the same period and continue to be present to this day.

Whilst it is possible that this long term trend reflects the effects of the Great Irish Famine between 1845 and 1852, one explanation might be that as a part of the agricultural reforms introduced by Sir William Young, William Flack's parents' tenancy was terminated and the family was left without the option of being able to offer their son, William continuing employment on the land.

Third, we know that William's father was a ex-soldier since, when his mother, Elizabeth, died in 1863, William provided the information for the death registration reporting that his mother was the "widow of William Flack a soldier". It seems possible therefore that William's father may have already been deceased in 1831 when William enlisted. Since William's father was a soldier, it seems at least possible that William's mother and father were not on the land but rather Bailieborough town residents, living on an Army pension. In such circumstances it would have been natural for William to follow in his father's footsteps and join the Army.

The Army

In the difficult economic times in the early 1800s, large numbers of young men joined the British Army. Ever since the Militia Act of 1793, Britain had been very successful in recruiting those who had been militia men into the regular army. Catholics, (including Irish men), had been allowed join the British armed forces following the passage of the Catholic Relief Act of 1778. Whilst there is modern amnesia on the subject, it was the Irish Militia, made up largely of Catholic men and mostly protestant officers⁵ that had been responsible for the defeat of the Irish Rebellion in 1798. Many of these Catholic men had gone on to serve their 20 years in the regular British Army. Noted military historian, Lt Col Harvey estimates that 40 per cent of the soldiers who fought with Wellington in the Peninsular War between 1807 and 1814 were Irish and made up some 30% of the army that fought Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

For young men like William Flack, there were plenty of opportunities to join the Army. At any one time there were several regular army regiments stationed in Ireland and many local "Fencibles" – British army units raised locally from time to time for local defence. Recruiting Sergeants would commonly set up stalls at local town market days and "beat the drum" offering young men the "Kings shilling" to sign up for 20 years.

William Flack was in Bailieborough Town on Market Day, 17 February 1831 where he was "attested" (recruited) by Private Phillip McKiernan of the 63rd Regiment of Foot. Whether he had come to Bailieborough on that day to enlist or whether it was an "on-the-spur-of-the-moment" decision we cannot tell. There are however some indications that William Flack deliberately chose the 63rd Regiment in which to enlist.

Following an extensive search of the military service records available online from the National Archives in London, the records of three William Flacks have been located that could be those of William's father. Perhaps the most likely, Corporal William Flack of the Wexford Militia, was discharged on a pension in 1808 aged 36 years old after 14 years of service following his being

⁵ "The Irish Militia 1793-1802", 2007. By Ivan F Nelson

wounded whilst on duty in Carlow in 1807. His papers state that he was born 1772 in “Bailiebro, Cavan and discharged “a fit object of his Majesty’s Royal Bounty of Kilmainham Hospital⁶”.

Second, a search of the Muster Rolls of the Wexford Militia for the period 1800 to 1807 revealed that during 1807-08, many rank-and-file of the Wexford Militia transferred to the regular British Army and in particular to the 63rd Regiment of Foot prior to that Regiment’s deployment to the West Indies in 1808. Enquiries at Jersey Archives and in the National Archives in London revealed that when the Wexford Regiment returned from Jersey on 4 July 1800 they were 655 rank-and-file strong, and had 232 wives, and 236 children with them. Unfortunately, the records of the redeployment do not contain the names of accompanying family members.

It is not unreasonable to speculate that there were family connections between Cpl William Flack of the Wexford Militia and the William Flack who enlisted in the 63rd Regiment of Foot in 1832. It is most unlikely that William Flack’s father was a serving member of the 63rd Regiment when William was born in 1810, since the Regiment was posted in the West Indies at the time. The proposition that William’s father was a disabled pensioner living in Bailieborough during William’s childhood seems to fit the known facts.

This conclusion contradicts the family oral tradition which is based on William Henry Douglas Flack’s (William’s son and our Great Grandfather) story that his father had said that he was born in Ireland, not because the family was Irish, but rather because his father happened to be serving in the Army in Ireland at the time. Is it possible that William Flack’s family, making a new life in semi-retirement in Burnley, Lancashire in the 1850s, were keen to distance themselves from the large influx of poorly educated Irish immigrants being drawn to the jobs created by the industrial development in Lancashire of the time? (See Great Aunt Lucy’s letter at the end of this story.)

When our William Flack enlisted, the form “Unlimited Service - Attestation for Regiments” was filled out by Private McKiernan and signed by William Flack with a “X” indicating that he could not read or write. Private McKiernan would have questioned William about his age (21), place of birth (In the Parish of Killan in or near the Town of “Balyburrow” in the County of Cavan) and his occupation (Labourer) and had him swear his allegiance. On making the oath, he was paid a sum of three pounds.

The records show that on the next day, 18th February 1831, he was examined by the Regimental Surgeon, Thomas Horan at Cootehill and found to be 5ft 9ins tall, of sallow complexion, grey eyes and light brown hair. His fitness for service and his documentation were checked in Chatham, Kent, the Regimental Depot, on 16 March 1831 and confirmed as correct. Just how he travelled to Chatham from Cootehill is not known.

Since there was no established barracks either in Bailieborough or in Cootehill, it can be assumed that he would have been billeted with other private soldiers in the Inns and larger homes in the area for a few days until transport to Belfast and on to Liverpool could be arranged. Whether he got a chance to say farewell to his family or not is not known, but the Recruiting Sergeants would have been keen to hustle new recruits away as quickly as possible to avoid any last minute changes of mind. Upon arrival in Liverpool, the batch of new recruits would have been again billeted in local inns before setting off on the long march to Chatham in Kent, the location of the Regimental Depot.

⁶ The Royal Hospital Kilmainham was established in 1681 to house sick and veteran troops from the British Army.

The Depot of the 63rd Regiment of Foot at Chatham in 1831 was the place where new recruits such as William Flack would have been provided with their uniform and kit and given their basic training. Much of the training would have been drills, such marching in "column of route" and changing formation "into line" which were the basic military manoeuvres, and weapons training with the standard "Brown Bess" musket of the day. Sandra-Fayne Nagy in her book "Brompton, The Smith Legacy" provides a description of barrack life in Chatham at the time.

Upon first entering barracks in the regiment's depot, the private soldier would be shown his cot. It was just a wooden pallet and each man had to take the bag sitting on the cot to the commissary where he would obtain fresh straw for his mattress. The old soldiers would show the new recruit around the compound. In the evenings First Post would be sounded and each man had to be in the barrack and answer their name at Tattoo (roll-call). By the Last Post sounding they had to be in bed. Fifteen minutes later Lights Out was sounded. The Orderly Sergeant got another fifteen minutes to make a final check before he too had to put out his light.

The day began for a soldier when reveille sounded at sunrise. The men arose, made up their beds, dressed quickly, tidied personal items into place and assembled on the parade ground. They drilled for an hour and a half. Those on a duty day paraded later. New recruits were drilled more frequently and at least two years would be required for a soldier to master all the drills.

Drill was to train a man's mind on his movements and help keep him focused and obedient to authority; an essential requirement on active service. Three drills each day was normal while in barracks. Rudimentary drills consisted of methods on how to assemble for drill, the correct step to use, numbering off, forming 'four deep' and commands for 'quick march'. Breakfast was served after drill ended when the men were given a pound of bread and a mug of coffee. When on active duty, the barracks discipline for a soldier was less stringent, but in peacetime meticulous attention was given to 'spit and polish'. To turn out on parade in top condition took a great deal of effort. The soldier spent hours preparing his gear for inspection. All the equipment and uniform pieces of buttons and badges, boots, musket and bayonet handles, cartridges and weights had to be shined and oiled. Hair brushes, blackening brushes, wash basins, even the backs of bibles were brought to a high luster. Water bottles, cutlery and ration tins all had to be scrubbed clean and kept tarnish free. Their uniform trousers were kept pressed by soaping the inside crease, dampening the outside and laying them under the mattress. Tunics and great coats had to be folded in a particular way to avoid creasing, shelves and kit boxes were washed and kept very clean. It would not take new recruits too long to appreciate how many hours all this was going to take and they followed the example of old soldiers. As soon as they could afford to acquire a second set of such items as cutlery and tins, brushes and even clothing items, the army issue was kept spotless ready for inspection and the second set used daily with less care.

The bounty was paid when the recruit settled in the barracks. Here he was surrounded by well-meaning companions offering to shine his boots, dust his coat or any such nicety. He was informed that tradition in the regiment allowed each new recruit to stand drinks for everyone in his barracks room. This usually led to riotous drinking, dancing and drunken quarrels. The sergeant at arms required his 'present' and bunkmates would beg for loans, until the recruit wondered where all his money had gone, as did those well-meaning friends.

After the Restoration the ordinary soldier's pay was set at eight pence per day. From the men's daily pay, stoppages were deducted for rations, washing supplies and any barracks damage. Sixpence went to the Captain of the troop for subsistence and two pence to the Regiment for 'off-reckonings'. The pay remained that until 1783 when an increase of two pence was approved for the Captain's stoppage. After deductions, the men were given the residue that amounted to just pennies. They could use these funds to purchase any additional food stocks or beer for themselves. In 1797 pay was increased to one shilling per day, seven shillings a week, of which four shillings each week was guaranteed to the soldier.

A great many came into the army as poor, wretched, uneducated refugees from labour intensive and unhealthy factories, mines, barges or unproductive rural areas. Young or old, men frequently saw enlistment as the only alternative to the workhouse. Once they were accepted by a regiment, the recruits were provided with stability, self worth, and education and for some, promotion.

Before continuing Private William Flack's story, it is useful to know something about the recent history of the Regiment William Flack had joined. Although the Regiment had not been involved in the Battle of Waterloo, it had a proud history of action against the French in the West Indies.

The 63rd Regiment of Foot in West Indies

In James Slack's book, *The History of the Late 63rd, West Suffolk Regiment*, the author states that in

"1807 the 63rd Regiment having been reinforced by about 400 men from the militia, embarked at the Cove of Cork on the expedition against Madeira. The island (French garrison) capitulated without resistance. The 63rd was sent on for active service to Barbados, where it landed in the following year.

1808. In December the Regiment sailed with an expedition against the French occupied Island of Martinique."

"In January 1809, Martinique capitulated, and the Regiment continued in garrison until the island was restored to Louis XVIII in 1815."

"In 1816 the Regiment garrisoned the islands of St Christopher, Antigua, Monserrat, St Martins; and Nevis."

"On 6th May 1819, the Regiment left Barbados for England, after eleven years of very active service in the West Indies, leaving behind only 3 sick."

“Upon return to England the Regiment was for short period at Gosport, Winchester and Plymouth Docks and arrived at Liverpool in December 1819.”

“On 20th January 1820, the Regiment left for Ireland finding garrisons for Mullingar, Athlone and Castlebar, Enniskillen, Bir, Dublin and other towns in Ireland.”

“In 1826 the Regiment left Ireland and arrived at Windsor in May and June where it was stationed until December of that year.

Private William Flack’s introduction to military life.

In December 1831, when Pte William Flack arrived at Chatham, Chatham in Kent was a town with a reputation for “boisterous behaviour” and immortalized by Charles Dickens when he summed up Chatham as “soldiers, sailors, Jews, chalk, shrimps, officers and dockyard men”. Chatham was a real melting pot of humanity and known throughout the Empire.

One of Dickens’ writings gives a graphic description of a military parade in Chatham.

At length that low roar of many voices ran through the crowd which usually announces the arrival of whatever they have been waiting for. All eyes were turned in the direction of the sally-port. A few moments of eager expectation, and colours were seen fluttering gaily in the air, arms glistened brightly in the sun, column after column poured on to the plain. The troops halted and formed; the word of command rang through the line; there was a general clash of muskets as arms were presented; and the commander-in-chief, attended by Colonel Bulder and numerous officers, cantered to the front. The military bands struck up altogether; the horses stood upon two legs each, cantered backwards, and whisked their tails about in all directions; the dogs barked, the mob screamed, the troops recovered, and nothing was to be seen on either side, as far as the eye could reach, but a long perspective of red coats and white trousers, fixed and motionless. (from Pickwick Papers by Charles Dickens 1837)

In December 1831, when Private William Flack arrived at Chatham, the Headquarters and main body of the 63rd Regiment was already in Australia, having received orders in 1829 to proceed by detachments as “guards aboard convict ship”.

But before exploring aspects of William Flack’s travel to and service in Australia in 1832, it is important for later aspects of our family history to know something about the 63rd Regiment’s recent deployment to Portugal in 1827.

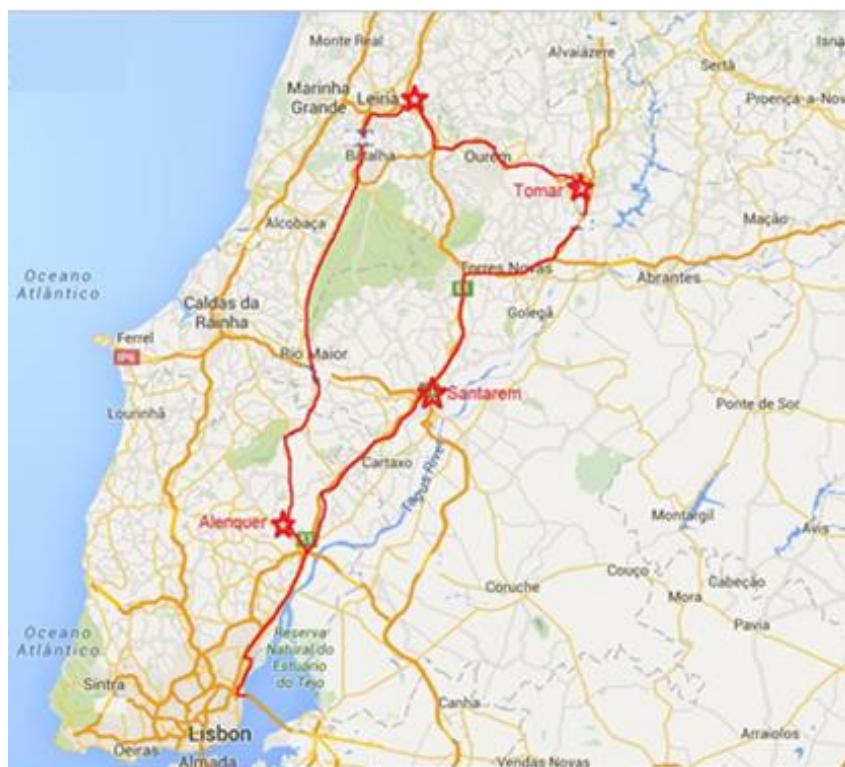
The 63rd Regiment of Foot in Portugal 1827-1828

The 19th century was a time of comparative peace and most regiments spent their years on garrison duty through the empire. Following the successful conclusion to the Peninsular Wars, Britain had exited Portugal, but despite the fact all European Powers had agreed to the Congress of Vienna Act of 1815, in 1826 revolution broke out in the north of Portugal, supported by Spain. Portugal’s Ambassador in Britain asked the British Government for assistance. Once more, the Treaty of Windsor of May 1386, which was a part of perpetual friendship between the two countries, ensured that Britain would come to Portugal’s aid. With the possibility of hostilities and fears of an impending insurrection in Portugal, Britain dispatched troops to maintain order in the Country.

On the 17th December 1826, the first troops departed England. On Christmas Day 1826, the first detachment of the five thousand strong British Expeditionary Force anchored in the River Tagus off Lisbon. They landed in Portugal in January 1827. The British Expeditionary Force also included troops of the 4th, 10th, and 63rd Regiments of Foot, the 10th Hussars, the 12th Lancers and the 60th Rifles.

They set up quarters at the Convent de Graca and the quick dispatch and visibility of these troops into Portugal subdued any large scale rebellion. Receiving their marching orders, the 63rd Regiment left Lisbon on the 27th January 1827 and marched to Sacavem, northeast of Lisbon. Sacavem, between the Rivers Tagus and Tranco was strategically important as the gateway into Lisbon. People have lived in this area since Neolithic times but the town rose to prominence as the Romans extended their magnificent road system throughout the empire. The roads from both north and east leading down the Iberian Peninsula connected at Sacavem.

The 63rd Regiment trooped on to Alhandra, a pleasant village on the River Tagus, eventually reaching Alenquer with its many vineyards, orchards and forest lands spreading out from the ancient hillside castle. Here they stayed until the 15th February 1827. Near the ruins of the castle is the Franciscan monastery, founded in the Saint's lifetime and a possible bivouac for the Expeditionary Force. The 63rd Regiment then continued on to Leiria on a march that took them through the tiny villages of Alcoentre, Rio Maior amongst the pines and eucalyptus forests and Carvalos De Figueiredo, two miles outside of Tomar. The terrain was brutal and mountainous. The 11th Regiment, already in Leiria, joined troops from the 63rd and 43rd Regiments. Together these were the combined regiments of the 2nd Brigade. Quarters were set up at the hilltop castle in Leiria before their return march south into the historic town of Tomar. The troops were quartered in the ancient and architecturally beautiful Convent de Cristo, built within the castle walls.



The 2nd Brigade left Tomar on the 2th July 1827. The sweltering summer weather forced their daily march to be undertaken during the night hours. Continuing south from Santarém, the 2nd 2nd Brigade trooped to Loures via Cartaxo, Alhandra and Bucelas.

They arrived in Loures on the 2nd August 1827. In Loures is the Quinta do Conventinho (Little Convent Farm).

The old farm is the part of the Convent of the Holy Ghost built in 1575 by the

Capuchin friars who lived there until 1834. The object of the Order was to provide charitable services to the local population and it is quite likely the British Expeditionary Force was camped in the tranquil Convent grounds, surrounded by immaculately kept gardens and an olive orchard. They stayed in Loures for a month and on the 2nd September, continued south to Belem (Santa Maria de Belem), six miles east of Lisbon where the river Tagus meets the Atlantic.

Belem would be the last stop in Portugal for the British Expeditionary Force before leaving for England. The troops had marched over half the country, with heavy packs of rations and arms, sleeping on the roadside between towns, or in accommodation when made available, but frequently

in unhealthy establishments. Many became ill and some may have died. However, the British Force put down the revolution insofar as their mere presence was sufficient to bring order to the country.

The 63rd Regiment received their marching orders from Portugal in February 1828, leaving from Belem and embarked for England aboard the Melville on the 3rd April 1828. The Melville made Spithead by the 11th April, arriving back at Deal on 14th April.

The relevance of the 63rd Regiment's deployment to Portugal to our family history is that Lucy Turner, whom William was to marry in 1844, was the daughter of John Turner, formerly Drum Major, H.M 63rd Regt., who died at Tomar in Portugal on 23 July 1827. As a young girl, it is possible that Lucy and her mother Catherine (who died at the age of 56 in Bellary India) may have been with the Regiment in Portugal, but more likely, the families of the 63rd Regiment would have remained in England at the Chatham Depot.

The following is an excerpt from Sandra-Faye Nagy's book "Brompton – The Smith Legacy" which describes the conditions under which the families of the soldiers lived in the period.

Women on overseas postings

By 1800 the Duke of York, Commander in Chief of the Army at the time, formally permitted six women per company of one hundred men or four per company of sixty men as the maximum allowed to go on Foreign Service. The Peninsular Army, 1808– 1814, was allowed six wives per company of one hundred men and these were selected by lot.

These arrangements were varied for those deployments that were likely to not involve combat. For deployments to Australia and India, it appears more liberal arrangements were made for families and children.

Officers' wives were not restricted and many followed their husbands on foreign postings, but they had to provide for themselves. It was very common for wives and family to follow husbands into battle. Washing was their main task, although some acted as nurses and others were employed as seamstresses. The women also gathered firewood, obtained and prepared food supplies and generally made themselves useful and available to anyone else needing necessities. On campaign, it was expected that the women would nurse any soldier needing care.

Irish regiments were always 'much married' and while at home, caused no problems. But matters became serious when a regiment was posted overseas. All regiments would be trooped to one of the outposts at some point. In the case of the Tarbert Fencibles based in Ireland, all the women trooped over to England with the men. However, when the order came to continue to the overseas post six wives per company were all that were permitted to travel on active duty. Nearly four hundred women had to walk back from Botley, Hampshire to Bristol where they were shipped home to Ireland.

When regiments were posted to overseas bases, men were forbidden to marry local girls under threat of the whip so soldiers dallied without much commitment wherever they went. If a regiment remained in one base for a very long time, loose alliances frequently became permanent relationships with the inevitable children being born. After a number of years, it was easy to forget these arrangements were tenuous. Whenever an order came for a regiment to move on, it always meant tragedy for the families left behind.

Even if a husband died, women frequently stayed on with the regiment because there was no other choice. It was simply a question of survival. The women who lost a husband in battle had little time to grieve before being sought by numerous other suitors. It was not unusual for a recent widow to be with a new husband within a couple of hours. It was also not unusual for young women still in their twenties and known to be good industrious women, to be on the second or third husband.

Women had to be strong and healthy to withstand primitive conditions so anyone known to be at least six months pregnant by embarkation would not be included on the troop ship. Giving birth during a passage was fraught with danger. Unsanitary conditions and lack of medical care meant the mother frequently died. However, many babies were born on board ship so the rule of pregnancy term was not always strictly observed.

When women and children never having been out of their home villages arrived in strange countries, any number of maladies hit them hard. The price a family paid in the service of their country was very high. It was especially hard on infants constantly being moved and always in contact with disease and sickness. Before their immune systems could fully function many did not survive. Postings to tropical climates sounded exciting but were hazardous.

Following the drum at least had one advantage. No matter how tough the conditions, and they could be horrific, at least the authorised wives received fifty percent rations and a little money in return for their services of laundry and nursing. Children too were allowed to accompany their mothers and received twenty-five to thirty percent rations according to their age. By age ten, boys were able to enter the regular force as bandsmen and received full rations. The women born into hardship fared best for their entire lives had been a day-to-day struggle. Many wives lost their lives on active duty along with their men as disease and deprivation took a huge toll, but massacres also took place and enemies made no exceptions.

63rd Regiment of Foot in Australia

When the 63rd Regiment returned to England from Portugal in April 1828, those returning learned that the Regiment had received orders to proceed by detachments to New South Wales to serve first as “guards aboard convict ships” and then as part of the garrison in Van Diemen’s Land.

An advance party, under the command of Lt Dexter, left in the convict transport “Harcourt” in April 1828 and the rest of the Regiment began to deploy in small detachments, taking almost 18 months for the whole Regiment to reach Van Diemen’s Land.

By 1829, Hobart was a bustling, prosperous port for whaling, sealing and for the export of local wool and crops. Many of those who had arrived earlier were now wealthy landowners. The town had grown to over twenty four thousand persons by 1830; some eighteen thousand men and six thousand women. It was still in infant town and public houses, with inevitable drunkenness the popular means of relaxation.

As the population of convicts grew, after 1826, a full Regiment of Foot was landed with six hundred and seven rank-and-file soldiers and a better control of the convicts was managed. Thereafter, it was the norm for a full regiment to be posted to Australia for their rotation of garrison duty. Only six per cent of the most hardened convicts in Hobart were held constantly in goals. Upon arrival, male convicts were employed in work gangs in and around the towns. Although their daily lives were still harsh in Van Diemen’s Land, a prisoner fared much better while working outside in the temperate

climate than of those still confined in the stifling prison hulks back in England. Depending on the “character” of the male prisoners, and most female convicts were soon released as assigned servants and laborers.

The Regiment was responsible for providing the guards at the Port Arthur and Macquarie Island Prisons and on public buildings in Hobart. Many small detachments also patrolled inland European settlements to provide protection from “bush-rangers” and run-away convicts.

Guards provided escorts for the work details stood watch as convict teams loaded wood planks, hides and wool, ox and cow horns and seal skins, all much in demand in the old country. Later in the year when he physically inspected the Regiment, Colonel George Arthur was suitably impressed with the professional appearance, drill and marksmanship. He noted that all men seemed healthy and their barracks kept very clean. The Regiment was in good order and well-disciplined in the face of difficult duties.

For a more complete description of the 63rd Regiment’s tour of duty in Australia, see my separate “History of the 63rd Regiment in Australia”.

In 1832 the Regiment had received orders to make preparations for a move to India, but did not leave until 28th December 1833. It was not uncommon for soldiers, once arrived in the colony, to see greater opportunities than the home country offered and in the hope of making a small fortune, many chose to stay rather than return home when regiments rotated or were posted further afield.

The first elements of the 63rd Regiment embarked on the Lord Lyndoch leaving on the 23rd December 1833 in preparation for the voyage out to Madras, India. The Second Division of the 63rd Regiment embarked the Isabella in Hobart also on 23rd December 1833. Both vessels sailed for India on the 28th December 1833.

The Aurora departed Portsmouth on the 4th July sailing direct to New South Wales. The ship arrived at Port Jackson on Sunday 3rd November 1833. Embarked in Portsmouth were three hundred male prisoners under guard of an officer, one soldier and two boys of the 4th Regiment and twenty nine rank and file of the 21st Fusiliers, seven adult passengers and four children. The voyage took one hundred and twenty two days and there were no deaths during the passage. After disembarking prisoners and passengers in Port Jackson, the Aurora continued on to Hobart and embarked the remainder of the 63rd Regiment stationed in Van Diemen’s Land. They sailed for India a few days later on 1st January 1834.

The 63rd Regiment of Foot in India

The Isabella arrived in Madras (in what is today Chennai) on the 25th February, the Lord Lyndoch on the 4th March and the Aurora on the 7th March. The Regiment marched to Fort St George and took up quarters, with Lieutenant-Colonel Logan in command. The last of the Regiment, No 2 Company that had been posted in Swan River (what is now Perth, Western Australia), re-joined the Regiment in May 1834. Pte William Flack’s Regimental Record indicates that William disembarked in Madras on 26 February, indicating that he probably travelled aboard the Isabella with the HQ Company.

The establishment of the Regiment upon landing in India was 9 service companies and one depot company with 61 officers, 45 sergeants, 40 corporals 13 drummers and 700 private soldiers, totaling 859 in all. However the Regiment was below establishment strength by some 150 personnel and commanders were constantly battling to make up the numbers lost through sickness and death by disease by training fresh recruits from home. The records indicate that more than 50 officers and men had chosen to take their discharge in Hobart.

By 1st April 1834, the 63rd Regiment was well established at Fort St George. At that time of the year, the heat was oppressive. On 16th May when the Regiment was turned out for a funeral ceremony, fifteen men fainted and the following day, three men died from heat exhaustion. The Regiment was finding their state of health was wholly unequal to the ravages of an Indian climate.

The 63rd Regiment on manoeuvres left Fort St George on 23rd August 1835 for Guindy. They were camped at Guindy, four miles south of the Fort, with several other Regiments with Colonel Logan in command. Sir Henry Fane GCB Commander-in-Chief in India, reviewed the Corps expressing "the perfect soldier like appearance of the men".

The Regiment returned to Fort St George by the 5th October where ninety men had arrived from the Chatham depot to join the Regiment. Another sergeant and forty six men joined the Regiment from Chatham the next year in October. From the 13th December 1836, the regiment marched the 3 hour trek several more times to Guindy where field exercises were taking place. Each time, they returned after a couple of days to Fort St George. These exercises continued through 1837 as 'sham fights' and while they were still training exercises, they were also great sport for the troops. The regiment stayed in Fort St George until September 1837.

Since, the record shows that Corporal William Flack was promoted Corporal on 11 December 1836, it can be assumed that he was involved in these "sham fights" in Guindy, an area of large open ground, South West of Fort St George.

Regimental historian, James Slack writes that:

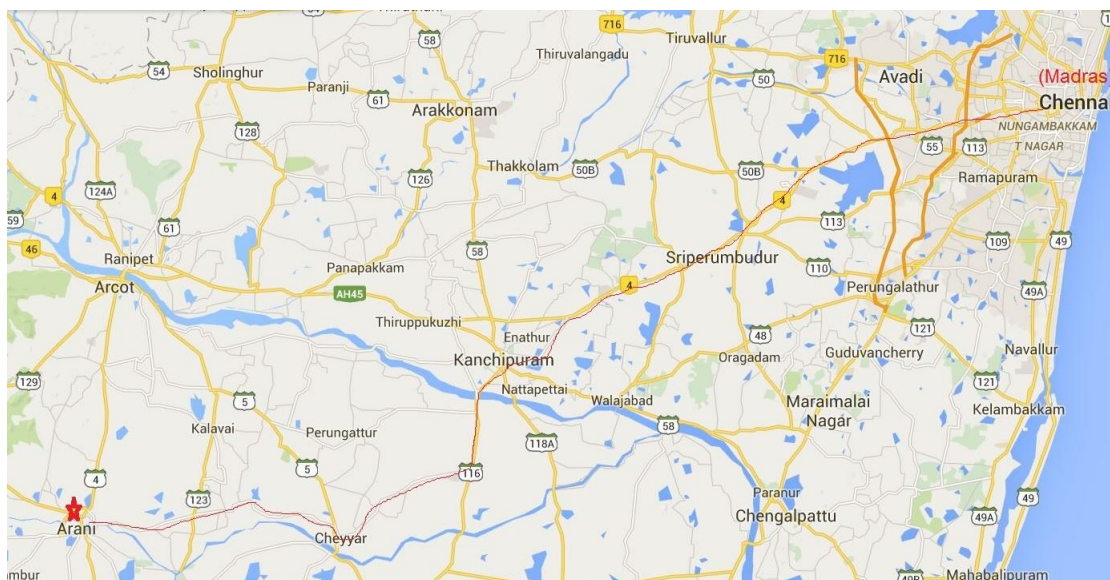
"During one of these grand sham fights a very amusing incident occurred. Colonel Logan, of the 63rd, who commanded a Brigade, was directed to storm St Thomas's Mount, on which the Commander in Chief had taken his station. Colonel Logan ordered an attack to be made in front, which was a false one, and led the real attack himself with the 63rd Regiment, which was entirely successful, taking the Commander in Chief in India, and his staff, prisoners of war. For several years afterward, the men made themselves very merry over the incident; they often told the story that the Commander in Chief, not at all pleased with the position of himself and staff, called to the Brigadier-General. "Colonel Logan, you have taken us treacherously"; when the old warrior replied, "Ah! General, treachery is the art of war."

Eighty six more rank and file arrived from the depot on 8th October 1837 then on 14th October, the regiment marched to "Arnee" (probably modern Arani), a small town about 100 kilometers WSW of Madras. It's not clear why the Regiment was ordered to Arani but it can be speculated that the Arani Fort south of the old regional capital of Arcot may have been considered a strategic position. The spectacle of Regiment and its very numerous camp followers and baggage train may also have been intended to impress the local people.

The approaches to the town and its surroundings were low-lying ground and in the autumn heat, the deployment was to have tragic consequences.

Cholera had been present in Madras prior to the departure and infection was spreading through the troops before the regiment was able to leave. By 15th October it hit the troops with the first deaths being reported. The regiment reached Arni by 22nd October and took up quarters in the Fort.

By January 1838, cholera broke out with a vengeance. The Madras newspaper reported on 3rd January the first nine cases. Four proved fatal and the hospital was quickly overwhelmed with the sick. No measures were taken to prevent the spread of cholera until thirteen men had succumbed. How many European and native civilians or women and children were afflicted was not recorded.



Modern Map of India showing the locations of Bellary and Arni in relation to Madras (Chennai)

The 63rd Regiment's deployment to the Tenasserim Provinces.

In 1838, when the 63rd Regiment was posted to the Tenasserim Provinces, this area was a part of British India. Today they are part of Burma. The history of British interests in Burma provide the background for the deployment.

The Treaty of Yandabo was the peace treaty that ended the First Anglo-Burmese War. The treaty was signed on 24 February 1826, nearly two years after the war formally broke out on 5 March 1824, by General Sir Archibald Campbell on the British side, and the Governor of Legaing Maha Min Hla Kyaw Htin from the Burmese side. With the British army at Yandabo village, only 80 km (50 mi) from the capital Ava, the Burmese were forced to accept the British terms without discussion.

The treaty ended the longest and most expensive war in British Indian history. Fifteen thousand European and Indian soldiers died, together with an unknown (but almost certainly higher) number of Burmese. The campaign cost the British five million pounds sterling (roughly 18.5 billion in 2006 dollars) to 13 million pounds sterling; this expenditure led to a severe economic crisis in British India in 1833.

Across the Bay of Bengal from Madras tensions between natives and Europeans were rising. With the threat of renewed invasion, additional troops were rapidly needed to maintain the boundaries prescribed by the Treaty of Yandaboo, 1826 and strengthen the forces already posted in the Tenasserim Provinces (the southern coastal strip of Burma). In March 1838 the 63rd Regiment received orders to march with all possible speed back to Madras, to prepare for departure to the Tenasserim Provinces in Burma.

The 63rd Regiment quickly folded camp at Arnee, leaving there on 11th March 1838 and headed back to Madras. After an arduous march from Arnee, an advance of three companies of the Regiment arrived back in Poonamallee (an army depot, just outside Madras) on 20th April 1838 and then left on the Resolution for Moulmein. More of the regiment followed the next day on the Bombay with Lieutenant-Colonel Logan in command. However, the rainy season had already started, so the

remaining troops had to wait temporarily in Poonamallee. All of the 63rd Regiment eventually deployed to Burma and landed at Moulmein on 9th May, which by 1838, was rapidly taking shape as an important town site.

During preparations for this deployment, on 23 March 1838, Corporal Flack was promoted Sergeant.

From Moulmein, the troops marched to a new cantonment at Tavoyzoo where they joined three other regiments in the vicinity; the 62nd; the 13th; the 40th; and a detachment of artillery.

William Flack's Regimental Record shows that on 4th May 1839, Sergeant William Flack was promoted Colour Sergeant of the 63rd Regiment of Foot.

Historically, colour sergeants of British line regiments protected ensigns, the most junior officers who were responsible for carrying their battalions' colours to rally troops in battles. For this reason, to reach the rank of colour sergeant was considered a prestigious attainment, granted normally to those sergeants who had displayed courage on the field of battle. This tradition continues today as colour sergeants form part of a colour party in military parades.

In his book "History of the Manchester Regiment (Late 63rd and 96th Foot) by H.C Wyllie it is reported that in September 1842, shortly before the regiment left Moulmein for India, there was an important ceremonial parade for the presentation of new Regimental Colours by the Queen's Representative Brigadier General Logan. The author provides the following description of the proceedings:

"The regiment was drawn up in line on the parade ground at Moulmein when the Grenadier Company, under Lieutenant Harries, marched to the main guard, the band and drums playing "The British Grenadiers." The Colours were received from the guard by Major Pole and Captain Sedley, who marched with them at the head of the escort to the centre of the line, the drums playing "The Point of War." Brigadier-General Logan, the Bishop of Calcutta, the Commissioner and the staff arrived, when the regiment gave a general salute and then formed three sides of a square. The presentation ceremony then began.

After a blessing and dedication the Colours were handed by Major Pole and Captain Sedley to the Brigadier General, who in turn presented them to Lieutenants Carter and Lees. After another speech by the Bishop, the line was now reformed, the Grenadier Company wheeled to the right. and preceded by the Colours and Band, marched to the left of the line, marched along it, and on reaching a place again on the right of the Regiment presented arms, formed column, and marched past."

It seems highly likely that Colour Sergeant William Flack would have played a prominent role in the Presentation of the Colours Ceremony.



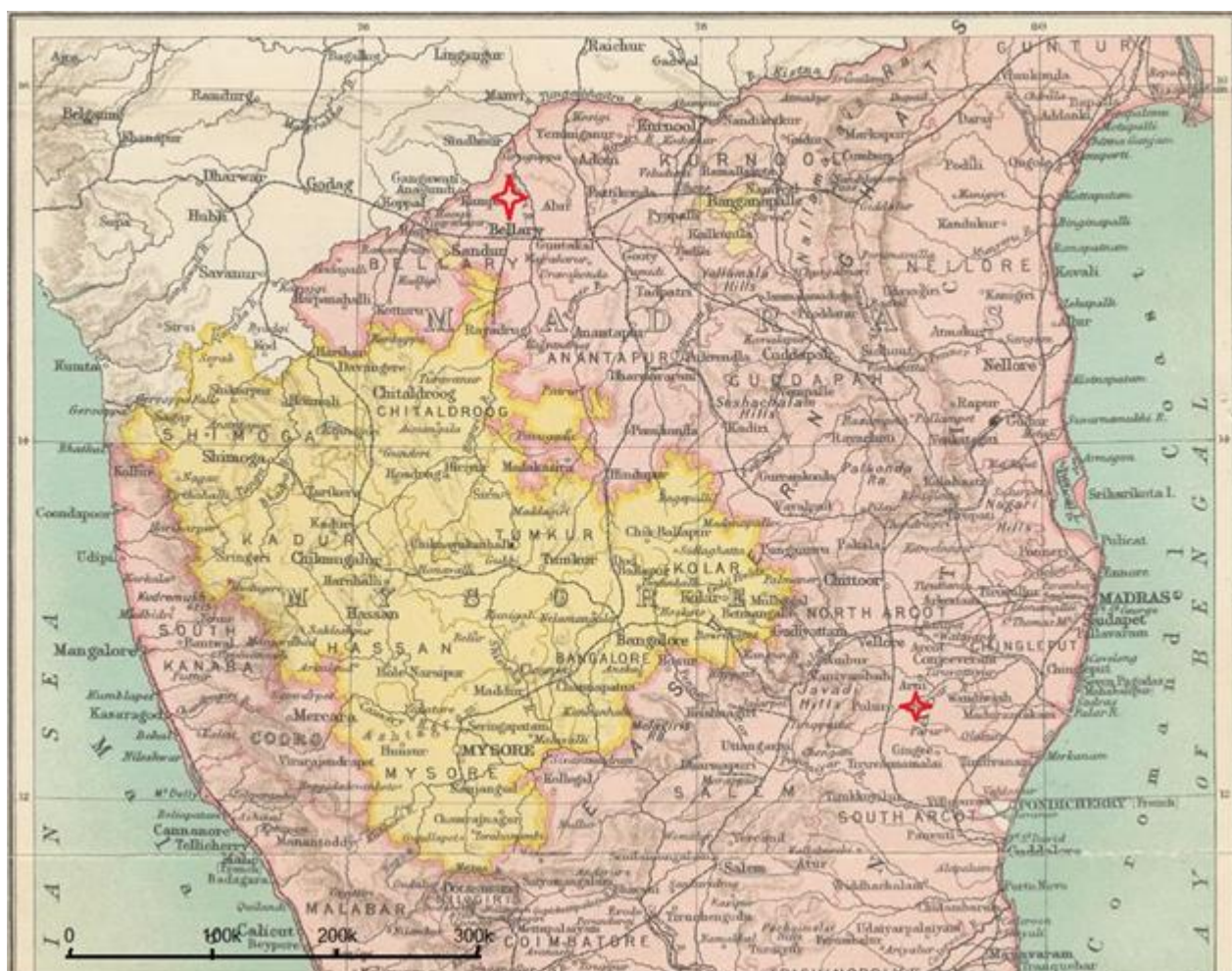
A colonial era map of Tenasserim Province.

Continual outbreaks of disease were of serious concern while the Army was employed in the East Indies and many men succumbed. Conditions were brutal and men had to endure long marches. Through the hottest period of the summer or during the monsoon season, the tropical climate accounted for a considerable number of casualties among the troops in both Burma and India. Ships arrived at regular intervals with fresh recruits from the depot in Chatham.

Return to India

After deployment in Burma for almost two and a half years, on 27th September 1842, the 63rd Regiment embarked for the voyage back across the Bay to Madras and was stationed at Poonamallee depot where all incoming / outgoing troops transferred before transiting back to Madras.

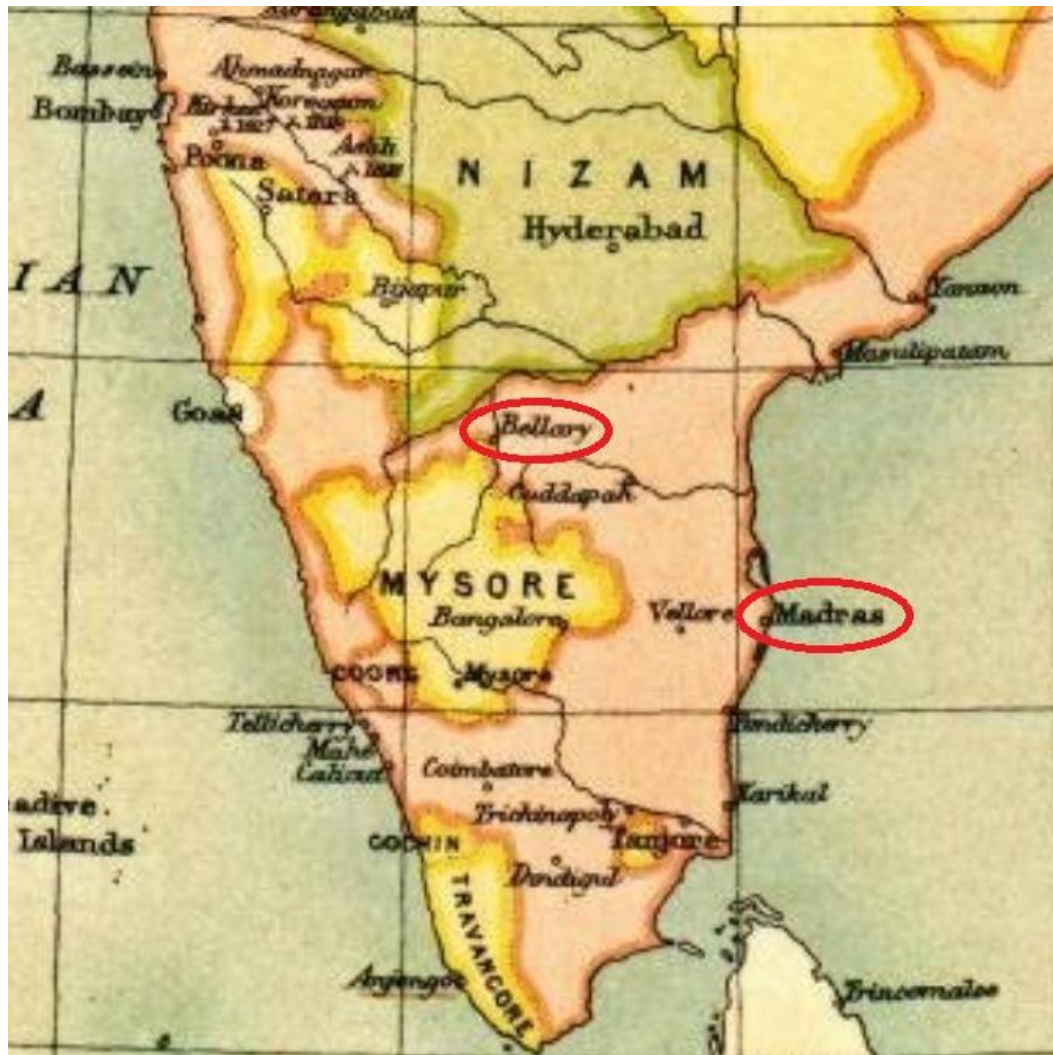
Within a few months of arriving back in Madras, in early December 1842 the Regiment was ordered to Bellary, some 600 kilometers to the North West of Madras where they arrived in mid-January 1843.



It's difficult to imagine how a Regiment of some 700 men, about 200 women and children, numerous native servants and all the regiment's equipment managed the 400 km journey between Madras and Bellary in December-January 1842-43. There are few detailed accounts of journeys of this kind, however, in Stephen Foster's book "A private empire", the transport available to a military officer in India is described and includes coaches, four-wheeled vehicles described as "chariots" and "phaeton", also "palanquins" and carts. Foster also notes that every use was made of river transport including pinnace and punts. An estimate of the rate of travel, using the recorded dates of departure from Madras and arrival in Bellary indicates that the Regiment travelled approximately 25 km per day.

Deployment to Bellary

Bellary was an important frontier town in British India in 1842, located near the borders of British controlled Bengal and the India States of Mysore and Nizam. The presence of a British Army regiment in Bellary was politically important because the British had fought four wars with the rulers of Mysore and had treaty obligations with Nizam.



Map of Southern India in 1837

The Indian kingdom of Mysore had reached the height of its military power and dominion in the latter half of the 18th century under the de facto rulers Hyder Ali and his son Tipu Sultan. After Tipu Sultan's death in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War in 1799, the kingdom was distributed by the British to their allies of the Fourth Mysore war. The landlocked interior of the previous Mysore Kingdom was turned into a princely state under the suzerainty of the British Crown. The former Wodeyar rulers were reinstated as puppet monarchs, now styled Maharajas.

The Nizams of Hyderabad, had secured their dynasty in 1768 by signing the treaty of Masulipatnam with the British East India Company following a period of political unrest caused by a family feud and threats from neighboring states. The treaty meant that Nazim surrendered the coastal region to the East India Company in return for a fixed annual rent.

In 1769 Hyderabad city became the formal capital of the Nizams, but further political unrest followed and as a consequence the Nizam signed a subsidiary alliance with the East India Company in 1798, allowing the British Indian Army to occupy Bolarum (modern Secunderabad) to protect the state's borders, for which the Nizams paid an annual maintenance to the British.

Bellary became the headquarters of the Bellary District, in the Southern Division of Madras, in 1840.

So, in December 1842, the 63rd Regiment of Foot began the long march to Bellary. The records indicate that the marching columns of men and the long line of transports carrying women and children, tents for the journey and all the Regiment's equipment took six weeks to make the 600 km journey.

Life in Bellary



The Indian flag painted on a modern picture of the fort wall is visible from many parts of the city.

Bellary Fort is located on top of Ballari Gudda ("Fort Hill"). The fort was built around the hill during Vijayanagara times by Hande Hanumappa Nayaka. Hyder Ali, who took possession of the fort from the Hande Nayaka family in 1769, renovating and modifying it with the help of a French engineer. The lower fort was added by Hyder Ali around the eastern half of the hill. Legend has it that the

unfortunate French engineer was hanged for overlooking the fact that the neighboring Kumbara Gudda is taller than Ballari Gudda, thus compromising the secrecy and command of the fort. His grave is believed to be located near the east gate of the fort, though some locals believe it to be the grave of a Muslim holy man instead.

The fort was ranked as 1st class by the British Administration. This fort gave Bellary its ancient importance, and led to its selection as the site for a cantonment. The fort is divided into the Upper Fort and the Lower Fort. The upper fort is a polygonal walled building on the summit, with only one approach, and without accommodation for a garrison. It consists of a citadel on the summit of the rock at 1,976 feet (602 m), guarded by three outer lines of fortification, one below the other. It contains several cisterns excavated in the rock. Outside the turreted rampart a ditch and covered pathway are present. The main turret on the east currently features a huge mural of the Indian Flag facing east. There is only one way up to the fort, which is a winding rocky path amongst the boulders. On the top, outside the citadel. There is a small temple, the remains of some cells, and several deep pools of water. Within the citadel there are several strongly constructed buildings, and an ample water supply from reservoirs constructed in the clefts of the rocks. Muzzaffar Khan, the Nawab of Kurnool, was confined here from 1823 to 1864 for the murder of his wife.

The lower fort lies at the eastern base of the rock and measures about half a mile in diameter. In 1840 it contained an arsenal and barracks. It consists of a surrounding rampart with numerous bastions, faced by a deep ditch and glacis. The entrance to the lower fort is via two gates, one each on the western and eastern sides. The lower fort included a commissariat store, Protestant church, orphanage, Masonic lodge, post office, and numerous private dwellings.

For Colour Sergeant Flack, garrison duties in Bellary would have been more tolerable than his more junior duties during the Regiment's four years in Burma. Bellary enjoyed a more continental climate, with a very hot dry climate in summer and relatively cool temperatures dropping down to near freezing temperatures at night in winter. The major problem for the men and women of the Regiment in Bellary was the water supply. In the hot dry summer months the water had to be stored in the large cisterns built into the hill on which the fort was built and this proved to be the a much polluted source of deadly disease.

The Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal (1847) stating, 'About 100 yards from the fort on the south side is a large tank, which when full is upwards of three miles in circumference; but during the dry season is reduced to half that size, and the ground thus exposed is said to give rise to noxious exhalations'. Bellary Cantonment, situated to the west of the fort, encompassed accommodation for those stationed there and their families.

Sadly, from Wyll's history of the 63rd Regiment, we know that during the march from Arcot to Bellary, there was an outbreak of cholera and by the time the column had reached Bellary, Captain Pratt, Ensign Kennedy, the wife of Captain Carew (of "The Piratical Seizure of the Brig Cyprus" fame), 89 non-commissioned officers and men, 7 women, 5 children and from 200 to 300 camp followers had died.



The sepia-toned postcard above, whose Bellary Cantonment postmark gives a date of 11 July 1909, is labelled 'Fort Tank Bellary India 1809 108° in the shade', this being one of the water stores that served Bellary's inhabitants.

The barracks were well designed for the climate and built of stone.



Modern picture of the Barracks at Bellary

Upon arrival the Regiment was placed in quarantine and the spread of the disease began to abate and by 9th May 1843 had disappeared. Toward the end of the summer, as fresh water became scarce, cholera again appeared in November and during the next month a further 16 men died of the disease.

William Flack's Marriage to Lucy Moran

On 17th January 1844 Colour Sergeant William Flack was married to Lucy Moran in the garrison Church of England in Bellary, by Chaplain Taylor in the presence of P.A. Turner and J. Stewart as their witnesses.

The Church of England in the Bellary Cantonment as it is today



An Entry in the Army Register Book of Births, Deaths and Marriages		CERTIFIED COPY OF		AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE		SA 076451	
Registration of Births, Deaths and				Marriages (Special Provisions) Act 1957			
MARRIAGES solemnized at Bellary in the Diocese and the Archdeaconry of Madras in the year of Our Lord 1844							
When Married	Names of Parties Christian Surname		Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage	Father's Name & Surname
On this Seventeenth day of January one thousand eight hundred and forty four	William Lucy	Flack Moran	30 24	Bachelor Widow	Color Sergeant H.M. 63 rd Regiment	Bellary	William Flack John Turner
This marriage was solemnized between us			By Licence				
Names of Witnesses Present:			By Whom Married				
In presence of us P.A. Turner I. Stewart S. Stewart			Signed Henry Taylor Chaplain				

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of *the certified copy of** an entry made in a Service Departments Register.
Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 26th day of November 2009

*If the certificate is given from the original Register the words "the certified copy of" are struck out.

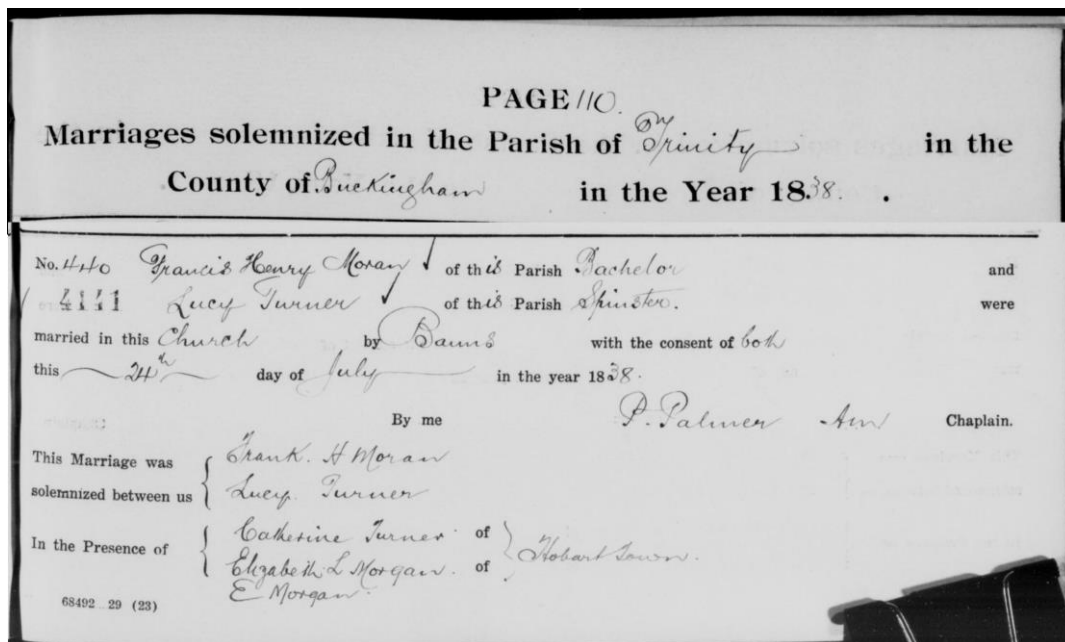
Section 3(2) of the above mentioned Act provides that "The enactments relating to the registration of births and deaths and marriages in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (which contain provisions authorising the admission in evidence of, and of extracts from, certified copies of registers and duplicate registers) shall have effect as if the Service Departments Registers were certified copies or duplicate registers transmitted to the Registrar General in accordance with those enactments."

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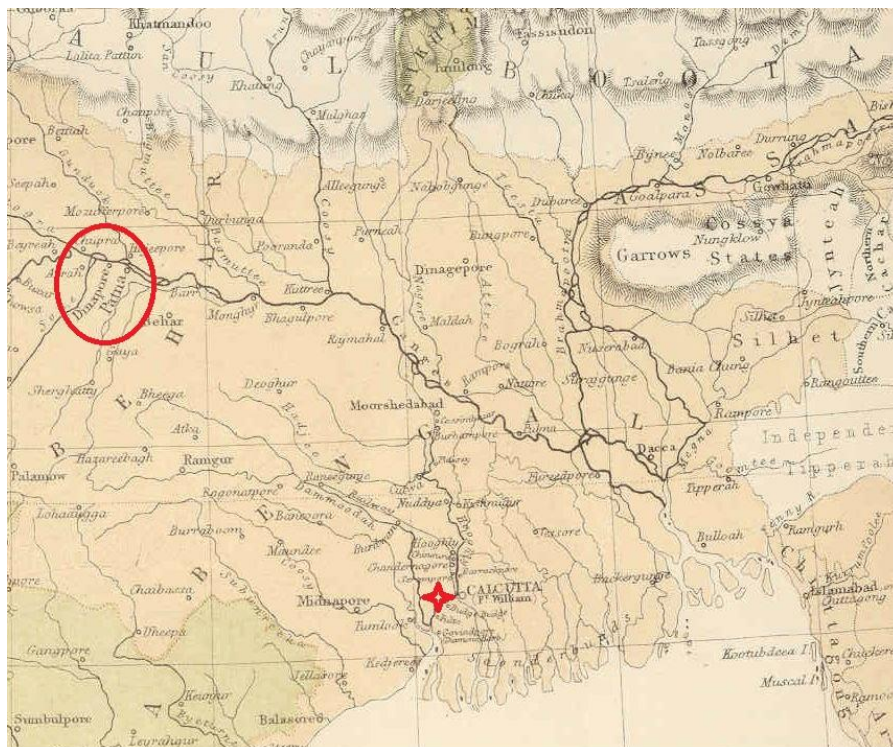


Just how Lucy Moran had come to be in Bellary in 1844 is a bit of a mystery.

We know that Lucy Turner had married Private Francis Henry Moran of the 21st Regiment of Foot in Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land on 24 July 1838, four and a half years after Pte William Flack and the 63rd had left for India.



We also know that in 1839 the 21st Regiment of Foot had followed the 63rd Regiment to India but had been posted to West Bengal Province stationed at Dinapore, more than 2,000km north of Bellary.





Contemporary painting of a British Army Regiment on the march in the 1830s

The 21st Regiment of Foot departed Hobart for India in several ships between December 1838 and January 1839 arriving in Calcutta. So the question arises – How and why did Lucy Moran, nee Turner travel to Bellary in 1844?

Since Lucy Moran was recorded as a “widow” at the time of her wedding to Colour Sergeant William Flack in 1844, a search of the death registers in Van Diemen’s Land and India for a record of the death of Francis Henry Moran, was conducted without result. However the burial records for the Archdeaconry of Madras revealed a record of the burial of a Francis Henry Moran, aged 2 years, son of Private F.H. Moran, 21st Fusiliers, the child is recorded as having died of Dysentery and buried at Bellary on 23 May 1845 aged 2 years.

Searches of the War Office Records for a Private Francis Henry Moran who served with the 21st Fusiliers during the relevant period revealed that 917 Private Francis H Moran is recorded in the Muster Roll of the 21st Regiment of Foot (21st (Royal North British) Fusiliers Regiment of Foot) .

Again in March 1845, cholera took a heavy toll on the men and the families of 63rd Regiment with a further two officers and 33 men, women and children lost.

One other source provides relevant information about Lucy Flack’s family. A search of the memorials on tombs in the graveyards of Bellary recorded in the publication “List of European Tombs in the Bellary District” (see <http://tinyurl.com/lt3lc8m>) provided the following details:

“Church of England Cemetery

“1844 – 3 September. – Peter Augustus Turner, late Leader of the Band, HM’s 63rd Regt., aged 29 years and 5 months.”

1845 – 23 May. – Francis Henry Moran, aged 2 years and 9 months. Nephew of P.A. Turner, Band, 52rd Regt.

1845 – 19 June. – Elizabeth Catherine Flack, aged 1 month and 12 days. Niece of P.A. Turner

Roman Catholic Cemetery

1845 – 27th May. – Catherine, aged 56 years, wife of John Turner, formerly Drum Major, H.M 63rd Regt., who died at Thomar in Portugal on 23 July 1827, leaving 4 sons and 2 daughters.”

Army Returns – Births – 1796-1880 at Madras 1844-46 Page 343 does list the birth of the Elizabeth Catherine Flack, whose memorial is listed above.

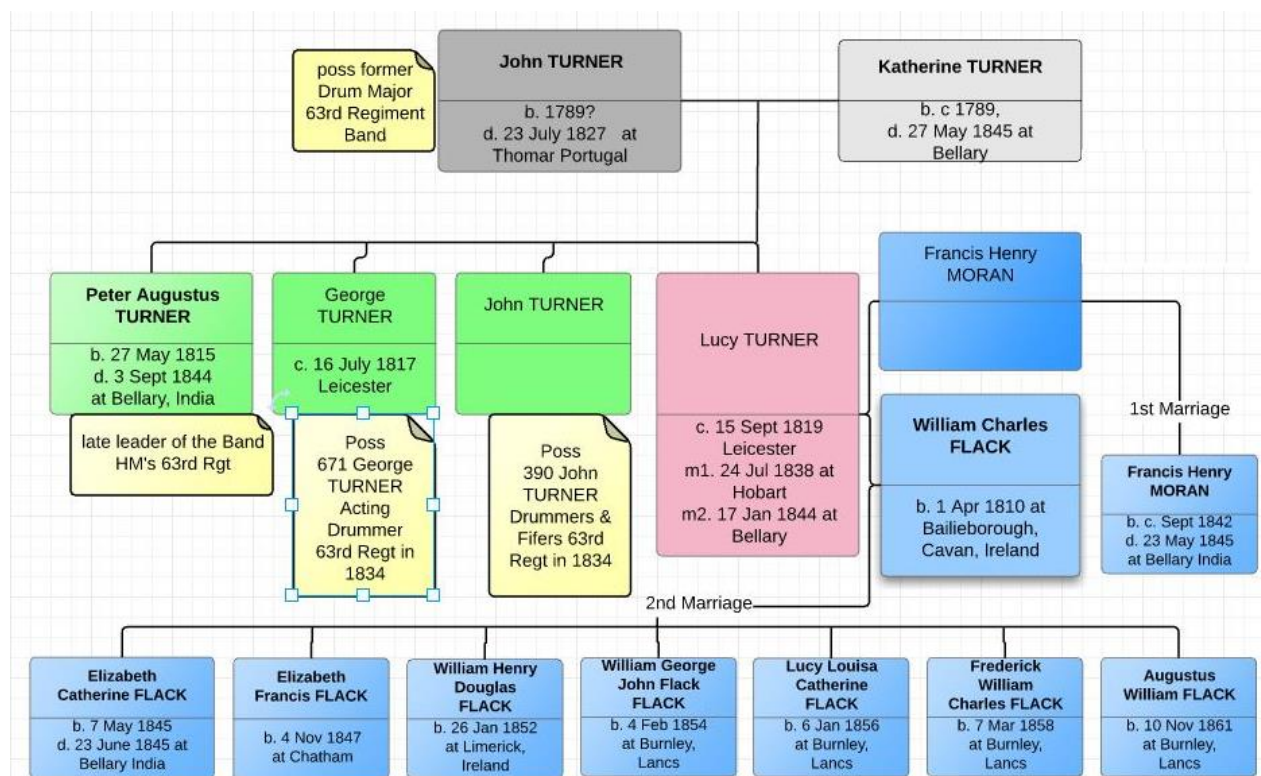
These inscriptions from the Church of England cemetery in Bellary are a sad reminder of the grief that Colour Sergeant William Flack and his new wife Lucy would have experienced.

From these records, it is possible to construct the picture of a military family of Turners who had served in the 63rd Regiment of foot for two generations. It seem possible that, Lucy Turner travelled with the 63rd Regiment to Van Diemen's Land as a 10 year old minor with her mother Catherine Turner and at three of her brothers, Peter Augustus Turner, John Turner and George Turner, were men serving in the band. Her father, the late "Leader of the Band" John Turner had died in Portugal in 1827.

After her marriage to Pte. Francis Moran of the 21st Regiment in Hobart at the age of 18, she had stayed in Tasmania and then accompanied her husband to India in 1838 where their son, Francis Henry Moran was born on 29 September 1842 and baptised on 30 October 1842 in Dinapore. Tragically, 917 Private Francis Henry Moran had died just a month prior to the birth of their son at Dinapore in 1842.

Did our new mother and widow, Lucy Moran, nee Turner now apply to the military authorities to be reunited with members of her Turner family serving with the 63rd in Bellary?

The following Turner Family Tree is based on a number of assumptions and is yet to be completely proven but does fit the known facts.



On 18th December 1846, after 3 years in Bellary, the 63rd Regiment was ordered to redeploy 350km to Secunderabad (close to Hyderabad) and then on 1st February 1847 the 670 km to Poonamallee (on the outskirts of Madras).



Poonamallee is a former garrison town for the British Army just west of Madras where a hospital and ordnance depot were located there, along with accommodation for several British Army units. The barracks were large enough to house up to three Regiments and were used as a transit depot for troop movements in the area. Many pensioned British soldiers elected to live in Poonamallee when they retired.

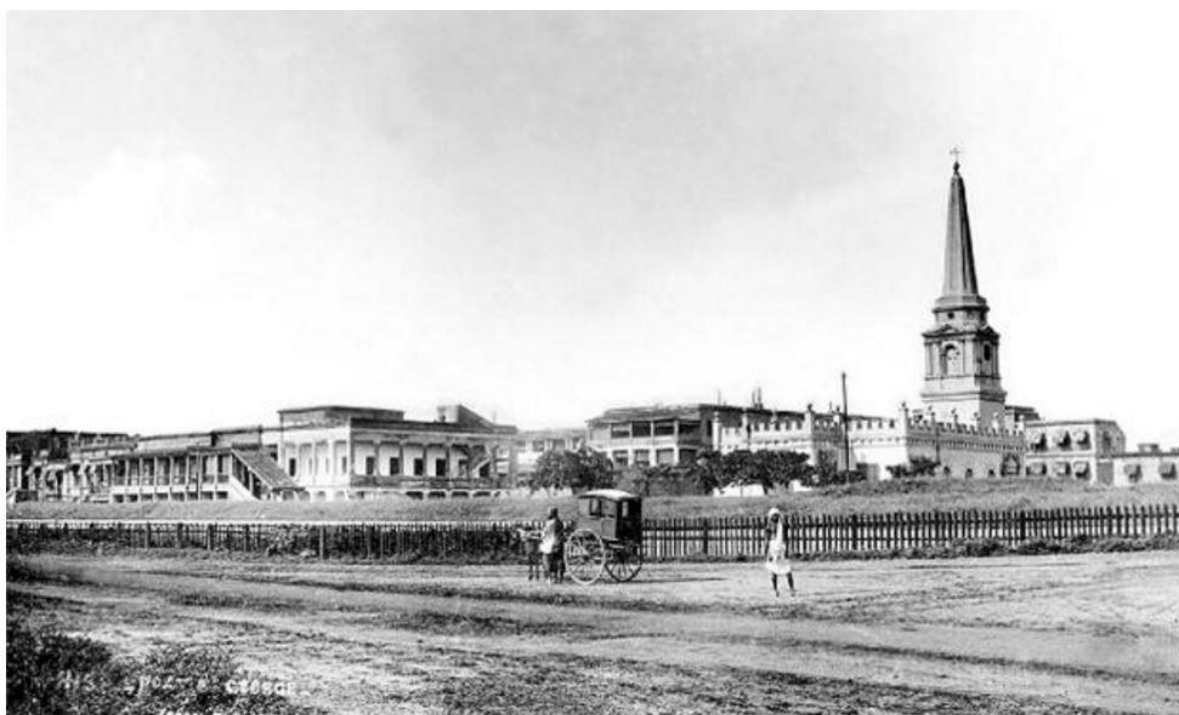
And so on the 20 April 1847, after 13 and a half years in India, the now Sergeant Major Flack and his pregnant wife Lucy Flack, formerly Moran, nee Turner and 267 other ranks, 11 women and 16 children of the HQ Company of the 63rd Regiment, boarded the *Larkins* at Madras bound for Chatham and home.

Wylly records that during their tour of duty in India and Burma, the 63rd Regiment of Foot had lost 24 Officers, 51 Sergeants, 24 Corporals, 6 Drummers and 604 other ranks.

Before continuing William and Lucy's story, a summary of the 63rd's postings in India is set out below.

Summary of the postings of the 63rd regiment of Foot in India 1833-1847

Posting	Country	Year(s)
Fort St George Madras	India	1833
Madras	India	1833
Bellary	India	1834
Fort St George Madras	India	1834
Guindy	India	1834
Fort St George Madras	India	1835 to 1837
Arnee	India	1837
Arnee	India	1838
Madras	India	1838
Poonamallee	India	1838
Taroy-Yo	Burma	1838
Moulmein	Burma	1839 to 1842
Arcot	India	1843
Chittore	India	1843
Madras	India	1843
Bellary	India	1845
Secunderabad	India	1846
Madras	India	1847
Poonamallee	India	1847
Secunderabad	India	1847



An early photograph of Fort St George, Madras c. 1900

Return to England and Ireland

The rest of the Regiment followed the *Larkins* which landed at Gravesend on the 28th, 11th and 29 of August and 3rd September 1847. After a brief stop, the Regiment then marched to Chatham.

On 4 November 1847, Elizabeth Francis Flack was safely delivered to Lucy and William at Chatham.

Early in 1848 the Regiment relieved the Coldstream Guards at the Tower of London and provided guards at the Royal Mint, and Mansion House. This deployment was part of the security measures taken by the government during a period of civil disturbances created by the Chartists, however the 63rd was not called upon and on 14 April proceeded by rail to Manchester, being quartered in Salford Barracks. After a short stay, to the end of June, when the Regiment marched to Newcastle-on-Tyne with Companies stationed at Carlisle Castle and Tynemouth Castle.

In 1849, Queen Victoria visited Newcastle-on-Tyne on her way from the Isle of Wight to Scotland and formally opened the new high-level bridge over the Tyne. The 63rd Regiment provided the guard on the road ways in the approaches to the bridge, with the 63rd's Grenadier Company with Queen's Colour, providing the Guard of Honour.



Modern photograph of the Tyne Bridge

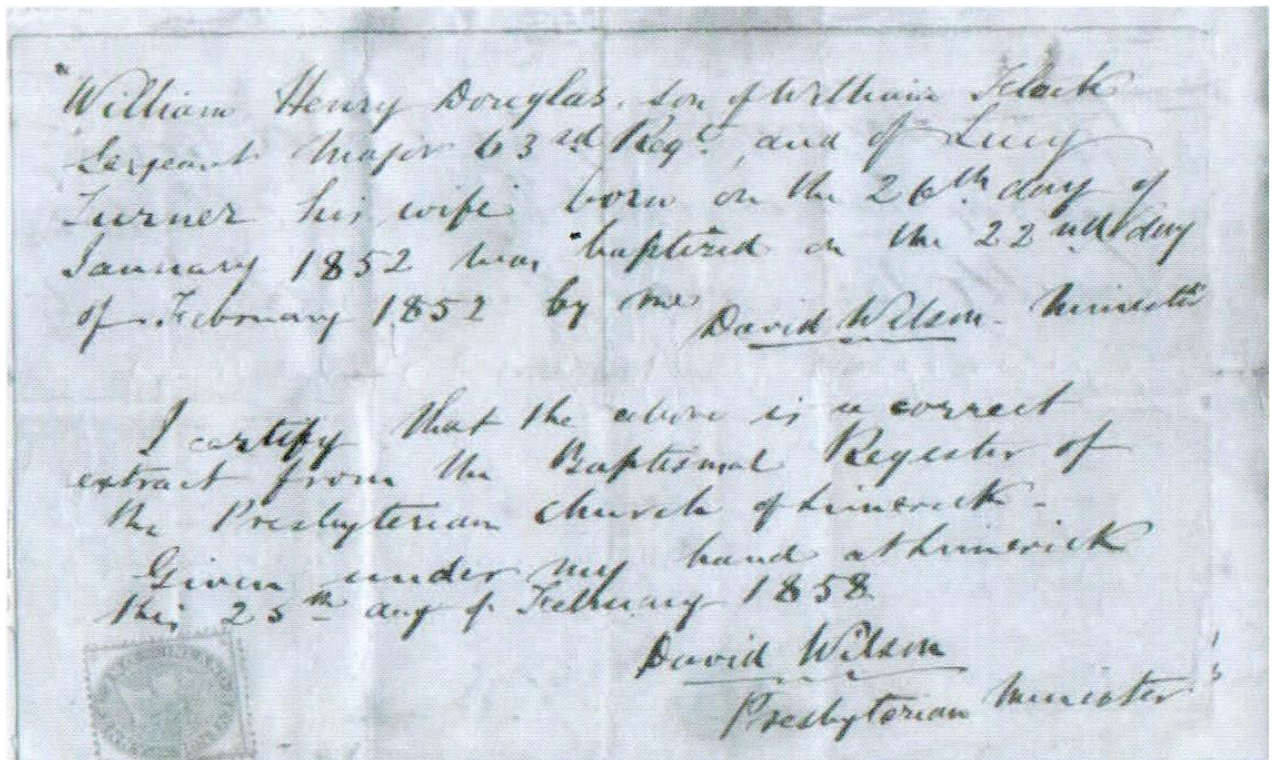
A local historian records that when Queen Victoria officially opened the High Level Bridge on 28 September 1849, apparently without a formal ceremony, her train simply came to a halt on the new bridge and the Queen did not get out of the Royal train carriage. A nod to the waiting town dignitaries and on with her journey!

On 29 December 1849, whilst in Newcastle, Sergeant Major William Flack and his wife Lucy were blessed with the birth of their third daughter Mary Anne Flack. She was christened at St Andrew Church of England on 13 January 1850.

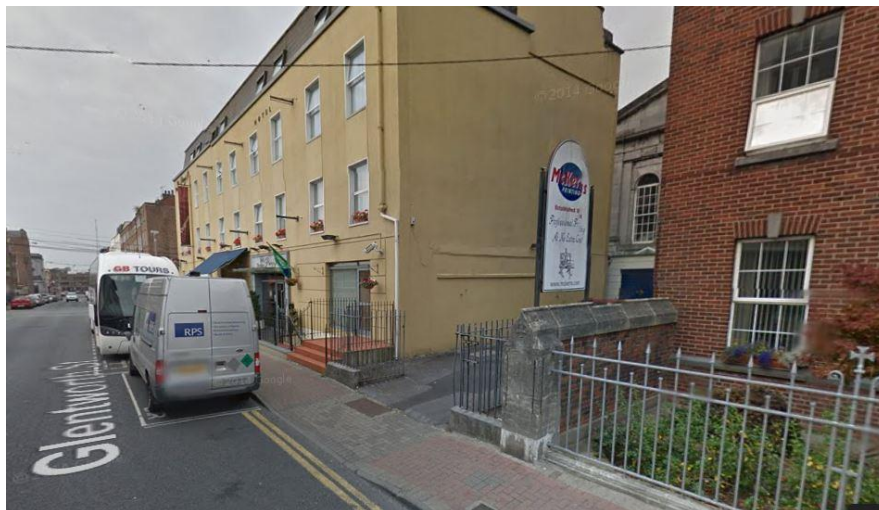
In April 1850 the Regiment moved from Newcastle to Preston, with detachments to Bury, Burnley and Blackburn. Later in June, Headquarters moved to Ashton-under-Lyne, with detachment in Burslem, Stockport and three companies remained in Burnley.

On 29 January 1851, the 63rd Regiment moved to Liverpool and embarked for Limerick, with three Companies quartered at Clare Castle, one to Kilrush and one to Killaloe.

Whilst stationed in Limerick, William and Lucy welcomed the arrival of their first son, William Henry Douglas Flack on 26 January 1852 born at the Castle Barracks. They arranged his baptism at the Presbyterian Church in Limerick on 22 February 1852 by the Minister David Wilson.



Why William and Lucy chose the Presbyterian Church in Limerick for their first son's christening is not known. Was the choice significant, suggesting that that this choice reflected his family's religious traditions? Or was it something to do with the expectations of his friends in the Regiment?



The building, which is no longer in use as a church (down the alley in the picture) was the Limerick Presbyterian Church in 1858.

The Regiment's stay was short and by the end of May 1852 all four Companies were stationed in Dublin, being quartered at Richmond and Bridge Barracks.



Photograph of Richmond Barracks in Dublin c. 1910

On 22 September 1852, Sergeant Major William Flack took his discharge from the regular Army after 21 years of service.

Whether William and Lucy visited William's birthplace in Bailieborough, Cavan is not known. Nor is it known whether he had any living relatives still living in Ireland. What is known is that by early 1854, William and Lucy were living in Burnley, Lancashire where their second son, William George John Flack was born on 4 February 1854. When William George John was baptised at St Peter, Burnley on 12 March 1854, the parents' address was recorded as "The Queens Buildings", Burnley.

Just why William and Lucy decided to settle in Burnley is unknown, however it is known that both had been in Burnley during the latter half of 1850 with the Regiment and it seems possible that they had friends and contacts there. It is also noted that Sergeant Major Flack may have had connections in the 5th Battalion of the Royal Lancashire Militia, in which he was later commissioned. There is no evidence that Lucy had any family connections in Burnley. The Births, Deaths and Marriages records suggest that her family came from Leicestershire and her brother John Turner was a Chelsea outpatient living at Derby in 1847.

5TH ROYAL LANCASHIRE.

[EMBODIED.]

Head Quarters, Aldershot.

LIEUT.-COLONEL COMMANDANT.

Charles Townley, DL, JP.....16 Mar. 53

MAJORS.

John Towneley, DL.....14 Apr. 53

Alan Chambre (10), JP. *late*

Capt. 17 Lancers.....15 Aug. 54

CAPTAINS.

James Greenwood.....19 Apr. 53

John Weld, DL.....19 Apr. 53

John Joseph Middleton.....20 Apr. 53

Thomas Goulburne Parker, DL.....21 Apr. 53

Edward Petre.....21 Apr. 53

George Deeks Skingley.....22 Apr. 53

William Lister Sagar, JP.....22 Apr. 53

John Pickup Lord.....23 Apr. 53

Frederic Broadbent.....23 Apr. 53

Daniel Grant Breerton.....16 Feb. 54

Antony Buck Creek.....16 June 54

Edward Dwyer.....23 July 55

LIEUTENANTS.

Arthur Holden.....18 Feb. 54

Abraham Alfred Tweedale.....20 Feb. 54

Thomas Dunbar Quinlan.....18 Nov. 54

James Edw. Ford.....25 Jan. 55

Richard Fenton.....1 Feb. 55

Thomas Arthur Mills.....21 June 55

Fred. Jas. S. Brocklehurst.....22 June 55

John Bomford.....21 June 55

Richard P. Ridley.....9 July 55

Fred. A. C. Macdonald.....10 July 55

Charles Miller.....24 July 55

ENSIGNS.

James Nolan.....26 Jan. 55

Cornelius Russell Cruise.....2 Feb. 55

Alfred Lawless.....27 Feb. 55

Wm. Henry Ogden.....13 Apr. 55

333

Mi

Anthony Sidney Bicknell.....21 June 55

Sumner Mitchell S. Brockhurst.....22 June 55

Richard Horley.....22 June 55

Robert de Visme.....9 July 55

James Gunning Plunkett.....26 July 55

Fra. Edw. Hassard.....27 July 55

Walter Sydney Tucker.....28 July 55

Adj. & Capt.—Chas. Hamilton

Fenton, (6) *late Capt. 9 F.* 16 Mar. 53

Captain.....18 Apr. 53

Paymaster.—John Holder,

late Lt. 12 F......12 Jan. 55

Qr.-Mast.—William Flack.....12 Jan. 55

Surgeon.—Edward Jackson,

M.D. 19 Feb. 55

Assist. Surg.—Henry Hancox,

M.D. 13 Apr. 55

Blue Facing.

Agents, Messrs. C. R. & W. McGrigor.

Perhaps a combination of circumstances encouraged William and Lucy and their three children to settle in Burnley. The 18th century also saw the rapid development of coal mining and employment opportunities in the area. The shallow bell-pits of earlier centuries were replaced by deeper shafts, meeting industrial as well as domestic demand locally, and by 1800 there were over a dozen pits in the modern-day centre of the town alone. By 1830 there were 32 steam engines in cotton mills throughout the rapidly expanding town.

Perhaps William had been promised a position in the permanent military presence that had been established in Burley with the completion of Burnley Barracks in 1820?

Perhaps there were relatives or friends who had moved to Burnley during the Irish Potato Famine that had led to an influx of Irish families during the 1840s. At one time, the Park district (modern-day town centre, around Parker St.) was known as Irish Park?

Perhaps the most likely explanation is that he re-enlisted in the 5th Royal Lancashire Militia when that Militia Regiment was embodied at Aldershot in April 1854. The records show William Flack as the Quarter Master in Aldershot from 12 January 1855. It seems the most likely explanation is that he and his family travelled with the 5th Royal Lancashire Militia to Burnley Barracks to continue in the role of a civilian Quarter Master.

When Lucy Louisa Catherine Flack was baptized on 27th July 1856, at Holy Trinity, Habergham Eaves, the address of her parents was recorded as "New Barracks" Burnley. When Frederick William Cadmore Flack was baptized at Holy Trinity on 23 May 1858 the address was recorded as "Barracks Burnley".

Whatever the reasons the Flacks chose Burnley by 1861 were living at 3 West Gate Habergham Eaves.

It is not clear at what stage William's mother, Elizabeth joined the family in England

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the

[Page 1

Parish (or Chapelry) of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Hamlet or Tything, &c., of	Ecclésiastical District of			
Habergham Eaves						Holy Trinity			
No. of Schedules	House No. or Name of House	MOUSES for the year ending 1911	Name and Surname of each Person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, or Deaf and Dumb
1	West Gate -	1	William Willey	Head	Mar	44	Publican	Yorkshire, Grassdale	
			Mary	Wife		42		Yorkshire, Grassdale	
			John Ashworth		Mar	12	House Servant	St. Mary's	
2			Henry Brown	Brother	8	53	Labourer	St. Mary's	
			John Green	Head	Mar	50		St. Mary's	
			Eliza	Wife	8	39		St. Mary's	
			Charles	Son	4	6	School Boy	St. Mary's	
3		1	William Flack	Head	Mar	59	Quarter Master 5th Royal Lancashire Militia	St. Mary's	
			Lucy	Wife		41	Out of Chelsea	St. Mary's	
			Francis Elizabeth	Son		13	Scholar	St. Mary's	
			Mary Ann Jane	Daughter		11		St. Mary's	
			Wm Henry Douglas	Son		9		St. Mary's	
			Wm Henry	Son		7		St. Mary's	
			Frederick	Son		11		St. Mary's	
			Augustus	Son		8		St. Mary's	
4		1	Richard Flack	Head	Mar	32	Blacksmith	St. Mary's	
			Ellen	Wife		32		St. Mary's	
			Wm Henry	Son		6		St. Mary's	
			John William	Son		4		St. Mary's	
			Thos Henry	Son		2		St. Mary's	
Total of Houses...		5							
PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE									
Reference:- R.G. 9/3072									
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON									
R.G. - Sheet 11.									

The 1861 Census suggests that West Gate Habergham Eaves would have been a lower middle class neighbourhood in 1861 with a publican (with household servant), a blacksmith and a clerk as near neighbours of the Flacks.

At number 3 West Gate, William Flack is listed as "Quarter Master 5th Royal Lancashire Militia and Lucy Flack as an "Out p of Chelsea". Francis Elizabeth, Mary Ann Jane, William Henry Douglas, Lucy Louisa, Frederick William and Augustus William, all listed as "Scholar". It is noteworthy that Elizabeth Flack, William's mother, then aged 69, is not recorded as being resident with the family.

In May 1862, Lucy Flack gave birth to Isabella Eugene Flack at new address at 3 Rose Terrace, Accrington Road, however just eight months later the little girl died and was buried at Burnley Cemetery on 25 January 1863. William Flack purchased the burial plot and this became the first of two family graves in that cemetery. This may have been a premature birth, since Augustus William is recorded as having been born just 8 months earlier.

On 29th May 1865, Elizabeth Flack, William's mother, aged 73 died at the family home in Accrington Road and was buried in Burnley Cemetery. Her death certificate recorded that she was the "widow of William Flack, Soldier" and that the informant was William Flack also of Accrington Road. It will be noted that Elizabeth Flack, William's mother, was not listed in the 1861 Census as living with her son and family. Searches of the available records in both England and Ireland have failed to find where Elizabeth Flack might have been living in 1861.

On Census day in 1871, William and Lucy's family were still living at 3 Accrington Road (Rose Terrace) Habergham Eaves. It is noted that Rose Terrace is within 500 meters of what was the site of the Burnley Barracks for which a special railway station was opened to facilitate troop movements. (By 1898 the barracks were in a poor state of repair and were sold; the site finally being cleared during the 1960s and 70s. The construction of the M65 motorway in 1981, greatly changed the landscape of the area.)

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the

[Page 1.]

Civil Parish (or Township) of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Village or Hamlet, &c., of	Local Board, or (Improvement Commissioners District) of	Ecclesiastical District of		
Hareborough Lane			Burnley				Holy Trinity		
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES No. of dwelling houses (as of 1871)	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON- DITION	AGE of Males Females	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	Whether 1. Deaf-and-Dumb 2. Blind 3. Imbecile or Idiot 4. Lunatic
1	Aspington Road Rose Terrace	1	Jane Rawcliffe	Head	W	52	Retired from Business	Lancashire, Radcliffe	—
			Sarah Roberts	Wife	Widow	54	—	Lancashire, Burnley	—
2	Do	1	John Poulton	Head	Mar	40	Portrait Painter	Do Do	—
			Mary Poulton	Wife	Mar	35	—	Yorkshire, Hebden Bridge	—
			Mary Do	Daughter	Widow	7	Scholar	Lancashire, Salford	—
			Eliza Do	Daughter	—	7	Scholar	Do Do	—
			Kate Do	Daughter	—	4	—	Yorkshire, Hebden Bridge	—
			Ann Do	Daughter	—	2	—	Do Do	—
3	Do	1	William Flack	Head	Mar	61	Gen. Pensioner from Chelsea	Do Do	—
			Lucy L. Flack	Wife	Mar	51	—	Lancashire, Leicester	—
			Eliza L. Flack	Daughter	Widow	23	Banker's Clerk	Do Chatham	—
			Wm. H. D. Flack	Son	Widow	19	Banker's Clerk	Do Do	—
			Wm. G. C. Flack	Son	Widow	17	Pupil Teacher	Lancashire, Burnley	—
			Lucy L. C. Flack	Daughter	—	14	Pupil Teacher	Do Do	—
			John W. C. Flack	Son	—	13	Scholar	Do Do	—
			Augustus W. C. Flack	Son	—	11	Scholar	Do Do	—
4	Do	14	John Walmley	Head	Mar	45	Cotton Manufacturer	Lancashire, Church	—
			Sarah Do	Wife	Mar	41	Employing 122 males and 125 females	Do Burnley	—
			George Do	Son	Widow	19	Book Keeper	Do Do	—
			John Do	Son	—	16	Do Do	Do Do	—
			Selina Do	Daughter	—	9	Scholar	Do Do	—
			Emma Do	Daughter	—	7	Do	Do Do	—
			Thomas Do	Son	—	6	Do	Do Do	—
			Minnie Do	Daughter	—	3 mos	—	Do Do	—
Total of Houses..		14	Total of Males and Females..		10	14			

* Draw the pen through such of the words as are inappropriate.

Eng. Sheet E.

* Draw the pen through such of the words as are inappropriate.

Eng- Sheet E.

By this time, this address appears to have been a more prosperous neighbourhood, with a "Retired from Business" man and a "Cotton Manufacturer (employing 122 males and 125 females)" as neighbours. Rose Terrace, would have been directly opposite Holy Trinity Church of England. Trinity Terrace is a little further down the road and opposite where Rose Terrace was located before it was demolished in the 1960s. Trinity Terrace has recently been restored and provides an insight into the neighbourhood in which the Flack family lived (see the picture on the next page).

Nineteen years on from taking his discharge from the Army, William Flack and his family were doing well in Burnley. Their oldest son, William Henry Douglas, aged 19, is listed in the 1871 Census as a "Banker's Clerk" and second son, William George John, aged 17, and Lucy Louisa Catherine, aged 14, are both listed as "Pupil Teachers".

It is interesting to note that many years later in William Henry Douglas Flack's Obituary published in the Burnley newspaper in 1936, it was stated that he had been "educated at Carlton-road School and the Burnley Grammar School where he was Head Boy for two years". His schooling would have been in the period 1865-1870, suggesting that the family had been able to afford to pay private school fees.

In a Directory published in 1867 entitled "Our Schools and Colleges. Containing the principal particulars respecting endowed Grammar Schools" by Herbert Fry, the two schools are described as follows:

Burnley (Lancashire), Carlton Road School. Instructs in Latin, Mathematics, and English course, 90 boys, all day pupils, at Four to Nine Guineas per ann. W. M. Grant, Master.

Burnley (Lancashire) Grammar School. Prepares for University Local Examinations. Rev. J. Butler, Master.

Given that Sergeant Major Flack and Lucy Flack were both approved as Chelsea “out pensioners” upon discharge from the Army with a gratuity of £15, it seems that William Flack’s employment as Quarter Master of 5th Royal Lancashire Militia during that period must have allowed him to generate sufficient income to afford to purchase or rent the house in Rose Terrace and send his sons to good schools.



A modern view of Holy Trinity Church of England and Accrington Road, Burnley

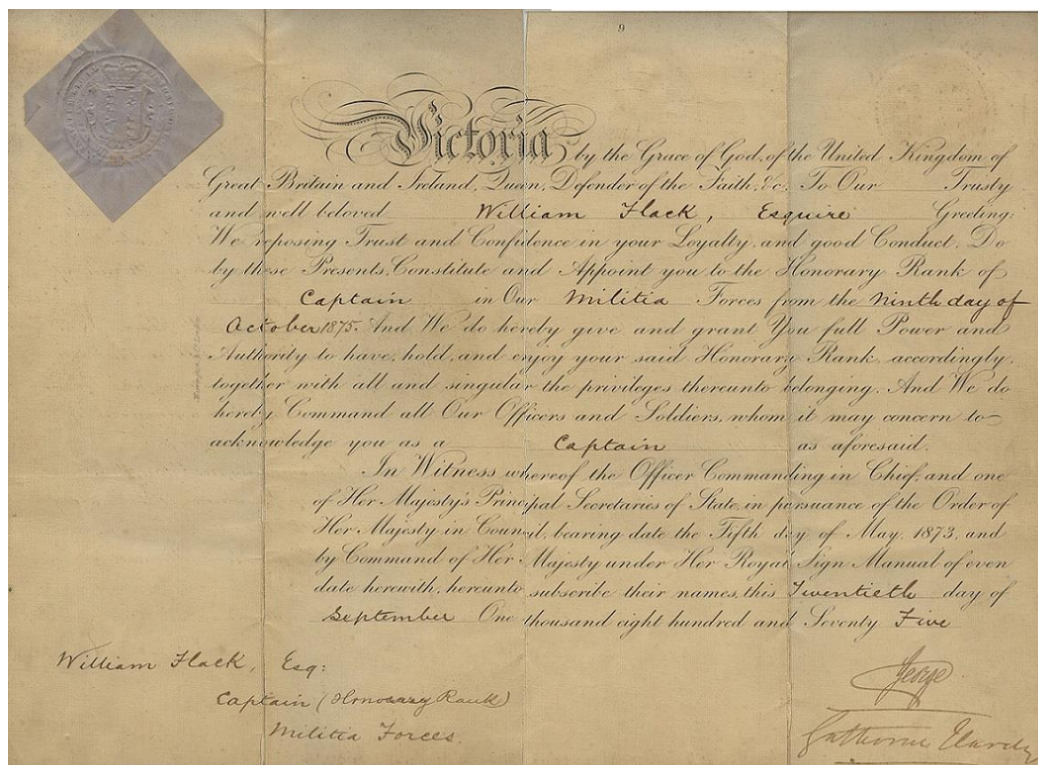
William and Lucy’s eldest daughter, Elizabeth Francis married John Moore, a school master, on 8 July 1874 at the Holy Trinity Church opposite their home. This happy event was followed with further sadness with the death of their son, Augustus William in 1876.

William’s new son-in-law, John Moore, had been born and brought up in the Isle of Man. He was a respected teacher at the Holy Trinity Day School, just across the road from the family home. There was a memorial plaque in the Church’s Chancel in memory of John Moore for his teaching services and to Frederick William Charles Flack, for his service as a Church Warden. Perhaps this Isle of Man connection was the origin of the families’ subsequent association with the Isle of Man in later generations?

(Holy Trinity Church of England has now been decommissioned as a church and is converted into apartments. The memorial plaques have been lost but a contemporary Burnley newspaper notice mentions the memorial.)

On 9th October 1875, “William Flack, Esquire” was “appointed to the Honorary Rank of Captain in Our Militia Forces..” of the 5th Royal Lancashire Militia. This must have been a wonderful award for William, now aged 65. He would never have imagined during his early years in Australia and India at a Private soldier that he might one day receive the Royal Commission!

A facsimile of the original Certificate is reproduced below:



On 25 June 1878, Lucy Flack, William's wife and the mother of their eight children, died at their home in Accrington Road of Bronchitis and Lung Congestion, at age just 59. She was buried alongside their two earlier deceased children, Isabella, who had died at 8 months in 1863, and Augustus, who had died in 1876 at 15 years of age.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF DEATH

THE BURNLEY UNION
 in the County of Lancaster

1878 DEATH in the Sub-district of Burnley

Application Number 1801790-2

No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
1	25th June 1878 Accrington Road Burnley	Lucy Flack	Female	59	Wife of William Flack	Bronchitis and Lung Congestion	Mr. Flack, 18 Accrington Road, Burnley	18th Nov 1878	John Lubbock, Registrar

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 18th day of November 2009

DYC 510797

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See note opposite

MAC

As the children grew up and made their own way in the world, William continued to live in Accrington Road. The 1881 Census shows him living with William George Flack, aged 27, "teacher in Public School" and Lucy Louisa Flack, aged 24, "Housekeeper" and Frederick William Flack, aged 23, Bankers Clerk.

Further tragedy followed however and on 21st February 1889, Frederick William Charles Flack, his third son died unmarried aged just 30 years. William purchased another burial plot in Burnley Cemetery, close to the headstone for his wife Lucy for the burial.

The 1891 Census documents show that William Flack, Army Captain, Retired, aged 81 years was living at the same address in Accrington Road with his daughter Lucy Louise, aged 34.

Captain William Flack died on 5 February 1892, aged 82 years at his home at 113 Accrington Road, Habergham Eaves. His death registration was completed by his son, William Frederick Flack the following day, certifying that his father had died of "Hepatic Congestion and Cerebral Apoplexy" while he was present. It is noteworthy that William Frederick Flack's usual place of residence is recorded as Victoria Terrace Darlaston, Staffordshire. This is likely to have been the address of the vicarage occupied by his brother, Rev William George John Flack, who had been ordained in September 1883. Sadly, the local history of All Saints, Darlaston, where Rev Flack was stationed for 10 years, records that a bomb from an air raid in 1942 destroyed the church and made a crater in the ground 50 feet deep and 40 feet across and also destroyed the parish hall.

The death of William Flack brought to an end an inspiring life that is an example to us all that people can overcome poverty, lack of early education, disadvantage, prejudice, years of arduous service in the military, disease and terrible grief to provide for your wife and family, to give your children good starts in life and to contribute to the community.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF DEATH					GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE				
REGISTRATION DISTRICT					THE BURNLEY UNION				
1892 DEATH in the Sub-district of Burnley					in the Counties of Burnley and Lancaster				
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
87	5th February 1892 113 Accrington Road Habergham Eaves	William Flack	male	82 years	Retired Captain 5th Royal Lancashire Militia (Pensioner)	Hepatic congestion 4 days. Cerebral Apoplexy 2 days. Certified by J. Hodgson M.D.	Wm Fred Flack son Present at death Victoria Terrace Darlaston Staffordshire	5th February 1892	William Thomas Begg Deputy Registrar

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 18th day of November 2009

DYC 510822

See note overleaf

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IPS 037108 21542 04/09 3MSPSL 03264

SRM

There is no evidence that William Flack was a particularly religious man, but there are suggestions that he was a member of the Masonic Lodge movement both whilst in the Army and afterwards in Burnley. Perhaps his Presbyterian family religious affiliations; or perhaps his father's association with a Lodge in the Wexford Militia or later the various Lodges in the British Army in India, encouraged him to continue in this tradition.

There are references in Burnley newspapers to his family attending Masonic fundraising functions and certainly his son, William Henry Douglas Flack, rose to senior levels in the Lodge. Perhaps his granddaughter's (Lucy's Flack – my Great Aunts) footnote in her letter - "No Catholics in our family!!" is a reflection of the her family's Ulster Protestant traditions.

Perhaps it was through the Masonic Lodge that William was able to attract funds for the private education of his children? We know that the Masons were active funders of education for "deserving poor" families in Burnley in the latter half of the 19th century and this may explain how an ex-army, uneducated, Irish "labourer" was able to overcome what must have been strongly held class and ethnic prejudices in late Victorian Britain to achieve what he did.



The grave in Burnley Cemetery of William Flack, his wife Lucy Flack, his mother Elizabeth Flack and his two children who pre-deceased him – Isabella Eugene and Augustus William Charles Flack.

Letter from Great Aunt Lucy dated 26th January 1975.

1 Endcliffe Court, Meads
Eastbourne, E. Sussex.

Jan. 26th

Dear Edmund

My father was born in St John's Castle Limrick, now in ruins, the oldest domain in the Ticeus Country + where his father was stationed at the time. His 3 brothers + 3 sisters were all born in Burnley. Their father was strict + they were all very well educated. They admired him tremendously + and ^{an} old friend who remember him told me that he had never seen a handsomer Soldier. I think my father was a bit annoyed he was born in Ireland. I gave your father years ago a crest of William Flack.

originally I should think they were farmers in Ireland + grew Flax but I'm not at all sure on this point. My father's early life was spent at Aldershot. His brother was Vicar of a Parish in Woolver-Lampton. All I do know is that all were very estimable men who never owed a penny + there were no drinkers among them. Our solicitor always maintained that Flackus was a Roman name. I have arthritis in my fingers + can hardly hold my pen, hence the bad writing. I am very sorry indeed you are here during the Arctic Spell but hope you have all kept well. I'm sorry this is all I can tell you Edmund. With all best wishes, Lucy. No Catholics in our family!!

...a very estimable man.

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