

FROM: AN ARABIAN DIARY BY GILBERT FALKINGHAM
CLAYTON (edited and reprinted in 1969 by University of
California Press) Copy by Lin Watterson

Gilbert Falkingham Clayton the son of William
LN Clayton and nephew of our late diarist,
was born on 6th April 1875 at the family
home, Eastfield, Upper Dover Street, Ryde,
Isle of Wight. *"At the time of Gilbert's
birth, the Clayton family had risen by common
sense, prudent management, devoted naval and
military service, and plain good luck from
obscurity in early eighteenth-century England
to a respected position among the gentry of
the Isle of Wight in the nineteenth."* He
served in a number of key positions in the
Army and especially in Army Intelligence and
died in Baghdad on 11th sep 1929

He gives us further insight into the history
of his family and would have had access to
the Green Book used widely in this research.
SAMUEL CLAYTON (d 1735)
Five generations before, Samuel Clayton
reputedly an Irish Gentleman w, emigrated to
Barbados where in 1729 he married Thomasina
Wittewronge. She was heiress of a well to do

Dutch or Belgian family (some sources state
Ghent) that had settled in England
during the sixteenth century. She was the
grand daughter of Sir John Witteronge, second
Baronet.

THOMAS WITTEWRONGE CLAYTON (1730- 1795)
Samuel and Thomasina's only child Thomas
Wittewronge Clayton lost his father at the
age of five and was sent to England at the
age of eight in the care of the family
chaplain to enter the Royal Navy as a
midshipman. This was the equivalent of
officer cadet. He survived the vigorous
training and served for sixty years in the
Royal Navy.
During the 1780 campaign against the French
he was the Captain of HMS Victory, at that
time flagship of the Grand Fleet and the ship
on which Nelson was later killed in action.

THOMAS WITTEWRONGE WHIT(E)WELL CLAYTON 1766-
1806
His eldest son Thomas Wittewronge Whitwell
Clayton (1766) followed his father to sea and
was Captain in the Royal Navy when he died at
Dingle on the west coast of Ireland. At that
time he was in command of the "Fencibles" a
local force organised to defend the Irish

coast from invasion during the Napoleonic wars.

PHEBE (PHOEBE) FALKINGHAM (1766-1841)

Thomas Clayton(1766-1806) had married Phoebe Falkingham*, the only surviving daughter and sole heiress of a distinguished naval family. (Footnote "*Phebe Falkingham's Grandfather John Falkingham (1707-1777) was a Captain in the Royal Navy,, his brother Edward Falkingham (1709-1783) was a Rear Admiral and their uncle Edward Falkingham (1697-1757) was an Admiral and Comptroller of the Navy*")

In 1830 she and her son, Samuel Wittewronge Clayton (1803-1875), Gilbert Clayton's grandfather, came to live in Ryde , Isle of Wight, where he built Eastfield in Dover Street as a family home. This started as a well-proportioned George III residence but as the family increased later and larger buildings were added with linking doors which have been found in recent refurbishments. The original Eastfield is now the Dorset Hotel and the second and subsequent extensions have been used as holiday and residential apartments.

SAMUEL WITTENWRONGE CLAYTON (1803-1875)

Samuel Clayton (1803-1875) lived as a Gentleman, and *"appears to have been content to manage the family estates rather than to continue the naval tradition begun by his grandfather."* Many retired Naval families saw Ryde as an attractive option for their families. *"Located across the Spithead from the great harbour and dockyard of Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight had long been a refuge where the off-duty naval officer could enjoy a change from service conditions in the beauty of the island and the hospitality of its inhabitants."*

In 1843 Samuel Clayton (1803-1875) married Anna Maria Nicholl. Anna was from an old Welsh family, most of whom remained in Wales but her father had worked in Madeira as a Physician. This is where Anna Maria was born as a British Subject. The Nicholls had come to Ryde in the same year as the Claytons (1830) and the two families became close friends.

WILLIAM LEWIS NICHOLL CLAYTON

Their first son William (Willie) Lewis Nicholl Clayton (1845-1927) was expected to remain at home to manage the family affairs and care for his widowed mother. Phebe later lived with her daughter Susannah and her

husband William Jaques. This is the "Uncle Jaques" of the diary. Other sources show that his father became profoundly deaf and was unable to manage in society gatherings. He was also prone to depression, perhaps due to the isolation of deafness, therefore needed Willie to assist in managing the family assets.

Willie and Edward's three younger brothers, Iltyd Frank, Arthur and Charles, (all mentioned in the 1863 diary) were sent off to Oxford and Cambridge and two were subsequently ordained in the Church of England. Arthur and Charles returned to the Island as ordained priests as seen in excerpts from the Green Book (page!

Although he had wanted to join first the Navy and then the Army, Willie had to compromise with a role as officer in the local Militia. Like his father, Willie became romantically involved with the daughter of a neighbour and married Maria Martha Pilkington in the New Forest in a somewhat secretive ceremony. Their first child was born fairly soon after and this and later became knighted as Sir Gilbert Falkingham Clayton.

Maria was from a family with military and naval traditions going back to the Crusades as the footnotes indicate:

"Maria Martha Pilkington's father Edward Williams Pilkington (1803-1867) was a Captain in the Royal Navy, and her two brothers Edward (1840-1904) and Henry (1846-1930) were Captain in the Royal Navy and Major in the British Army respectively.)

Willie's enthusiasm for the military life never waned and "he sought to satisfy his passion through his own activities in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Artillery Militia and by watching with obvious satisfaction the military careers of his sons."

The militia regiments evolved from groups of citizens instructed to bear arms in times of danger. In times of war or threat of invasion they would be called to serve in the standing army. *"The Militia Act of 1757 provided for annual training for service in the United Kingdom only, but later in the eighteenth century the sovereign was empowered to accept voluntary offers from militiamen to serve outside the British Isles."*

Royal Artillery Units and well as the infantry trained part time with regular soldiers . In July 1867 Willie joined the Isle of Wight Artillery Militia, was promoted to Lieutenant and after twenty years service retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (*Footnote WLN Clayton was promoted to Captain in May 1871, Major in August 1885 and Lieutenant Colonel in August 1887*)

In the early 1880s the Isle of Wight Artillery Militia held its annual four-weeks training period in May when it marched daily from its headquarters in Newport to Carisbrooke Castle. The Isle of Wight Rifles did its marching and musket drill on the Bowling Green, and its artillery practice from several small field guns stationed on the Tudor ramparts. Willie's children remembered proudly standing by the roadside to see their Father in action.

Gilbert attributed their willingness to sign up for active military service to their early experiences of their father's role as an Officer on the Isle of Wight.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

The published diary of Sir Gilbert F Clayton has been long out of print but is available to read via [googlebooks \(REF\)](#) and [used 1969/1970 copies are available from the USA](#) This is the personal diary of six months of diplomacy and travel in Arabia by one of Britain's leading officials in the Middle East in the 1920s. The extract used started at page 45.

Quotations used are in italics.

ORIGINAL EXTRACT FROM: AN ARABIAN DIARY BY GILBERT FALKINGHAM CLAYTON

Gilbert Falkingham Clayton was born on 6th July 1875 at the family home, Eastfield at Ryde, Isle of Wight. At the time of Gilbert's birth, the Clayton family had risen by common sense, prudent management, devoted naval and military service, and plain good luck from obscurity in early eighteenth-century England to a respected position among the gentry of the Isle of Wight in the nineteenth.

Five generations before, Samuel Clayton (?-1735) described only as an Irish Gentleman, emigrated to Barbados where in 1729 he married Thomasina Wittewronge, heiress of a well to do Dutch family that had settled in England during the sixteenth century, and granddaughter of Sir John Witteronge, second Baronet. Their only child Thomas Wittewronge Clayton (1730 - 1795) was sent to England at the age of eight in the care of the family chaplain to enter the Royal Navy as a midshipman. He served for sixty years in the navy. During the 1780 campaign against the French he commanded as Captain the HMS Victory, at that time flagship of the Grand Fleet on which Nelson was killed twenty-five years later at Trafalgar. His eldest son Thomas Wittewronge Whitewell Clayton (1766-1806) followed his father to sea and rose to the rank of Captain in the Royal Navy before he died at Dingle on the west coast of Ireland where he was in command of the "Fencibles" a local force organised to defend the Irish coast from invasion during the Napoleonic wars.

Thomas Clayton had married Phoebe Falkingham*, the only surviving daughter and sole heiress of a distinguished naval family. (Footnote Phebe Falkingham's Grandfather John Falkingham (1707-1777) was a Captain in the Royal Navy, his brother Edward Falkingham (1709-1783) was a Rear Admiral and their uncle Edward Falkingham (1697-1757) was an Admiral and Comptroller of the Navy) In 1830 she and her son, Samuel Wittewronge Clayton (1803-1875), Gilbert Clayton's grandfather, came to live at Ryde, Isle of Wight, where he built Eastfield in Dover Street as a family residence.

Although Samuel Clayton appears to have been content to manage the family estates rather than to continue the naval tradition begun by his grandfather, the establishment of the family home at Ryde was the outgrowth of the attraction for naval families of the Isle of Wight. Located across the Spithead from the great harbour and dockyard of Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight had long been a refuge where the off-duty naval officer could enjoy a change from service conditions in the beauty of the island and the hospitality of its inhabitants.

It was here in 1843 that Samuel Clayton married Anna Maria Nicholl of an old Welsh family whose father had come to Ryde in the same year as the Claytons and with whom he established close friendship.

Their first son William Lewis Nicholl Clayton (1845-1927) as was expected, remained at home to manage the family affairs, but his three younger brothers were sent off to Oxford and Cambridge and two were subsequently ordained in the Church of England.

Although he had wanted to join first the Navy and then the Army, William Clayton's ambitions appear to have been subordinated to the wishes of his father who required his eldest son at home to help oversee his affairs. Resigning himself to a quiet life on the Isle of Wight William married Maria Martha Pilkington, herself from a family with military and naval traditions going back to the Crusades, and settled down to rear a family and manage his modest estate.

(Footnote in book) Maria Martha Pilkington's father Edward Williams Pilkington (1803-1867) was a Captain in the Royal Navy, and her two brothers Edward (1840-1904) and Henry (1846-1930) were Captain in the Royal Navy and Major in the British Army respectively.)

But his enthusiasm for the military life never waned and he sought to satisfy his passion through his own activities in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Artillery Militia and by watching with obvious satisfaction the military careers of his sons. The militia regiments were the successors to the old Train Bands, which were citizens instructed to bear arms in times of danger and to be ready in times of war or threat of invasion when they would be incorporated into the standing army. The Militia Act of 1757 provided for annual training for service in the United Kingdom only, but later in the eighteenth century the sovereign was empowered to accept voluntary offers from militiamen to serve outside the British Isles.

These militia regiments were generally attached to the county regiments and trained with them and this applied specifically to the Royal Artillery Units and well as the infantry. Thus the local Isle of Wight Artillery Militia which some years later was joined by the Hampshire unit, provided just the soldiering at home to reconcile the military interests of William Clayton with the demands of his father and family. In July 1867 he joined the Isle of Wight Artillery Militia and lieutenant and after twenty years service retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (Footnote WLN Clayton was promoted to Captain in May 1871, Major in August 1885 and Lieutenant Colonel in August 1887)

In the early 1880s the Isle of Wight Artillery Militia held its annual four-weeks

training period in May when it marched daily from its headquarters in Newport to Carisbrooke Castle where King Charles I was kept during his captivity. There on the bowling green of the castle the militia did its marching, musket drill, and artillery practice from several small field guns stationed on the ramparts.