RICHARD COLLINGS YELLAND

1834-1903

A BIOGRAPHY OF RICHARD COLLINGS YELLAND 1834-1903

ENTRY FOR THE COMPETITION TO CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INSTITUTE OF HERALDIC AND GENEALOGICAL STUDIES

This is the story of my great grandfather, Richard Collings Yelland. When I started researching his life, all I knew was that he had been some sort of 'chief in the fire service.' Like many other family historians my constant wish is that I had asked my father more about his relatives when he was alive – why did I not know that two of his uncles, (one of whom, Frank, he knew well when he was a boy) had emigrated to Canada? Aunts and uncles did not die until the 40s and 50s – why did I not know about this? Had they all fallen out and lost touch? How much my father would have enjoyed all the research that has been done and finding out about his grandfather.

I decided to write the account in the first person to make it – hopefully – more interesting and more immediate. Where it rambles, that is deliberate, after all in 1901 he was not too far from the end of his life which had been personally eventful, and he had lived through a time of almost unprecedented change. Excerpt

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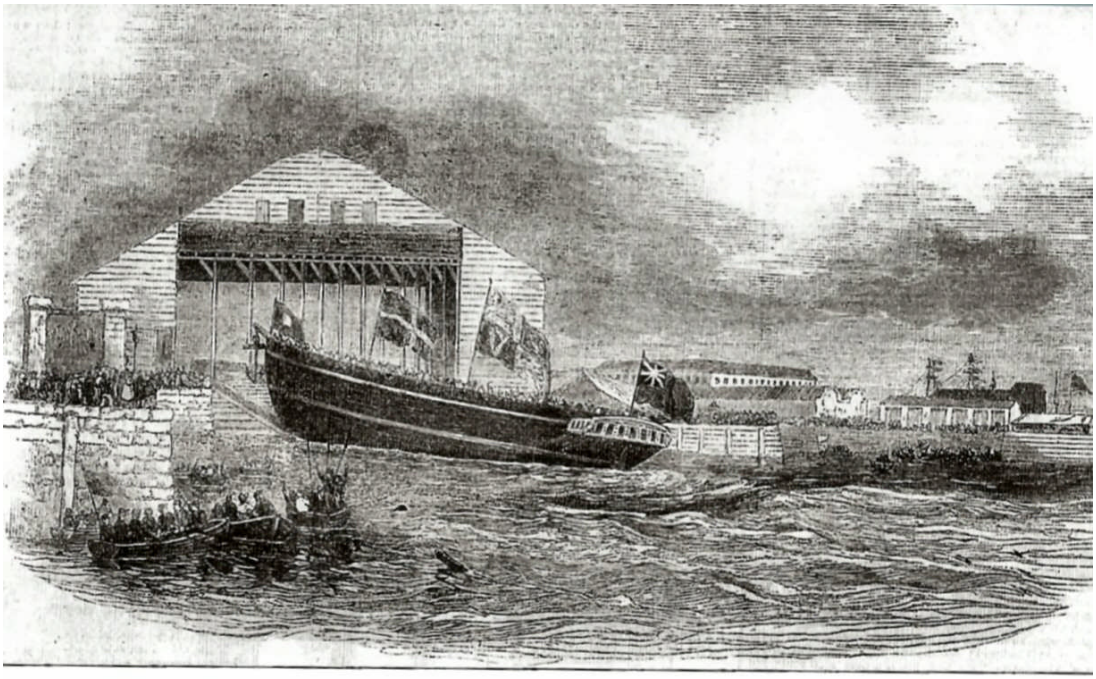
It's 1901, a new century, here in this boarding house on the Grand Parade in Brighton. A new century, but surely with our revered Queen Victoria recently dead, a new age is dawning for us all. My dear wife thought that a good breath of sea air, away from the smoke and dirt of Liverpool would do me good and take my mind off sad thoughts, but I could wish that she had thought it fit to come with me. The ties of home were too much for her to contemplate such a long journey. Hannah and Maud Wright keep a good house here, but I am weary for Emma and my family around me.

How shall I spend these days? Perhaps my grandchildren in Canada might find some interest in some of the incidents of my life – I think I shall not see them again before I die. With my eyes closed, what do I see and hear?

I had better start somewhere properly rather than doting about the years. I was born in Devonport, that noisy ship building town, in 1834 where father worked as a sawyer in the dockyards. I've heard tell that famous ship the *Beagle* was fitted out there, the one that Mr Darwin made all those discoveries in when he was aboard her. That book he wrote caused a great stir, but I was too busy with work and a young family to properly take it in, I think it was called 'The Origin of the Species'. I don't know whether father worked on the *Beagle*, but I like to think our family might have a bit of its fame. After all a ship of that name was with us in the Crimea so maybe I can share it too. Young Sidney, my nephew, was in the Sheerness dockyards when she was broken up – maybe there were Yellands at her beginning and end. I'll never know.

My father, John, had come to the Devonport dockyards when he was a young man and married my mother Elizabeth when he was only 21 – the docks were known as the Plymouth Yard in those days. He'd been born just over the Tamar in St Dominick in 1804, where grandmother was in service - her man was Richard Collins, but the blackguard didn't marry her. Strange really that Dad gave me *his* name, though I got an extra 'g' in it somehow. Father hadn't had an easy life, Grandmother Jane did what she could, but when he was seven years old she apprenticed him to a husbandman, Sampson

Lucas by name. Father never spoke of those years so whether he was well or badly treated, I don't know, but at least as an apprentice, he was fed and clothed enough so that he could work. Maybe we had relatives in Devonport, for there were other Yellands there, but we didn't mix with them and I was too young to understand what was going on, for we moved to the Isle of Sheppey before I was seven years old. My brother John was five years older, and Charles was just a year older than me. My young brother Thomas was born soon after we got to Kent, but there were no sisters who survived



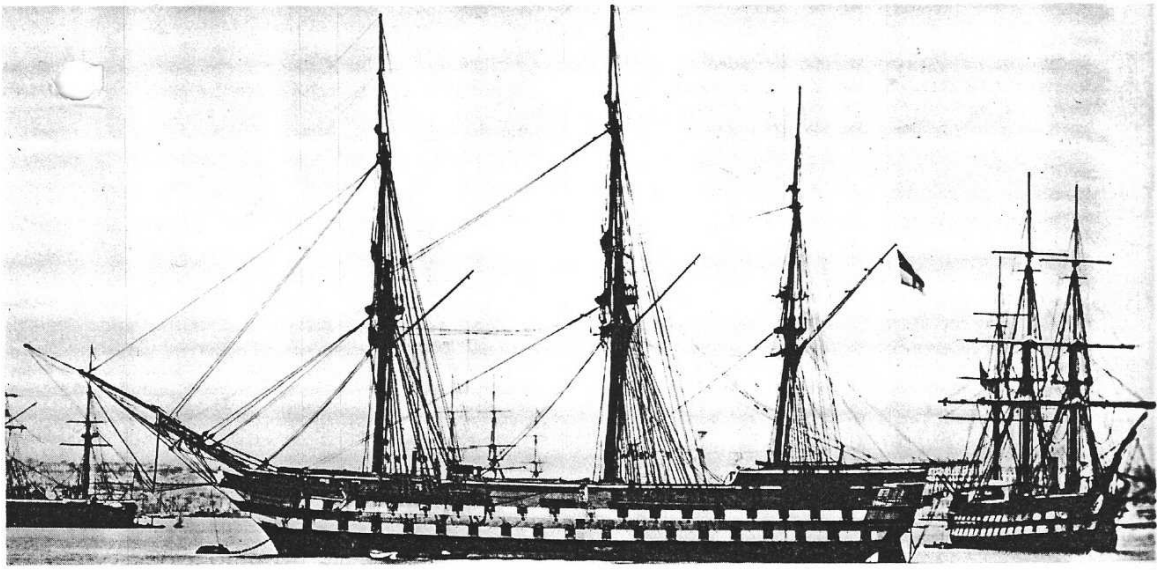
The launch of HMS Rattler at the Royal Dockyard of Sheerness 12th April 1843.

Sheerness was a poor, cut-off kind of a place in those days with no railway and many of the houses were built of wood, but we had good neighbours which made up for a lot. This was fortunate as my dear mother died when I was only twelve years old from a condition of bad breathing (I later learned that it was called asthma) which she must have contracted from the coal dust of our crowded house and the pestilential salt air of the dockyards. Poor Tom was only five when she died and he sadly missed Mother's love – still, Grandmother Jane came all the way from the West Country to help father with the household chores. My elder brother John had already left us to go as a policeman to Norfolk as soon as he was able – he could not stand the crowded life on the Isle of Sheppey and the sadness of my

mother's racking cough. Father died after six years more, being ill a short time with the rheumatic fever, but no news came to me at the time, as I was already a sailor. What became of grandmother I never rightly knew but she must have been a good age – whether she was still alive when father died, I never heard. Young Tom was only 12 then; maybe my other brother Charles took him in, wherever he was, but although Charles was a likeable fellow he was always a bit of a ne'er do well, so likely he neglected his brotherly duties. Later Tom too worked in the docks so maybe one of father's friends did the right thing by him and gave him a roof over his head.

After Mother died in 1847 when I was only 13, I had to fend for myself for a good part though grandmother, Jane, and father did their best by me, and I took to fishing to help bring in some money. Then in 1851 when I was just 17, it was the navy for me as a 'boy, second class' on *HMS Trafalgar* – a grand sailing ship she was and a great warrior with her 120 guns. I have my joining papers still – and they say I was 5'5'', with a ruddy complexion, blue eyes and brown hair. I worked hard and was promoted to 'boy, first class' within the year, when they charged me one pound, six shillings and seven pence three farthings for all my gear, and 3/- for soap! I was not a smoker, so I got no tobacco money.

The *Trafalgar* and *Neptune*.
Imperial War Museum



It wasn't long till I was promoted to Ordinary Seaman, now on *HMS Diamond*, a smaller ship than the *Trafalgar*, with only 28 guns to the *Trafalgar's* 120. I was vaccinated against the small pox, and soon after that we were bound for the Crimea and the war.[1] I was one of the Naval Brigade, regular Royal Navy sailors who fought alongside the soldiers and marines and did a lot of the donkey work. They called us the blue jackets, for that was the colour of our uniforms. When we first arrived, coming from Varna on the Black Sea coast, to the Crimea in September 1854 we camped just south of Sebastopol, near Balaclava harbour. Soon we were called in to help after the dreadful battle of Alma. They say there were 2000 British wounded in that battle and our job was to help bring them, as well as the Russian wounded, down to the ships – it's a wonder so many of them survived for we weren't skilled in that kind of work and had to make do with hammocks slung on oars to bring them in. We fought hard in battles with the French and Turks, against the Russkis, but we never knew what it was really all about, just something us blue jackets had to do – 'ours was not to reason why' like it was said in the poem they wrote about one of the battles – Balaclava that was, but I didn't see the famous charge, they reckon it was all a mistake anyway and should never have happened. All the time we were there, the rain and mud, then the scorching heat, and the raw pork to eat, made many men ill. Those conditions and the weight of the guns as we dragged them up hill from Balaclava to Sebastopol are things I don't like to think of too much now. The morale in the Naval Brigade was better than in the army – we were young and strong, knew how to look after ourselves and were used to making the best of things. When we had to make the platforms to stop the guns sinking into the mud we just turned to and got on with the job – it was good to be on land again after sailing all the way from England.

They say more men died of cholera than Russian bullets and I shouldn't wonder at it for conditions were bad, and the drinking water, stinking – no wonder so many men were drunk on the rum from the buried barrel they put a secret pipe into. Still, they gave us quinine and lime juice which kept the malaria and scurvy at bay. My ship the *Trafalgar* was badly affected but by the time it was being

fumigated from the cholera in early October I was on board the *Diamond* when it was a hospital ship – the sights I saw of the sick and wounded were not easy for the eyes of a lad of 19. When Sebastopol was stormed that October day in 1854, the enemy fired some of our ships but the *Diamond* and *Trafalgar* held firm. We thought the Redan would fall easily to our broadsides and Captain Peel, who was second in command of the whole Naval Brigade as well as my Captain on the *Diamond*, wanted to storm it with his brave blue jackets, but that was not allowed and we had to withdraw.

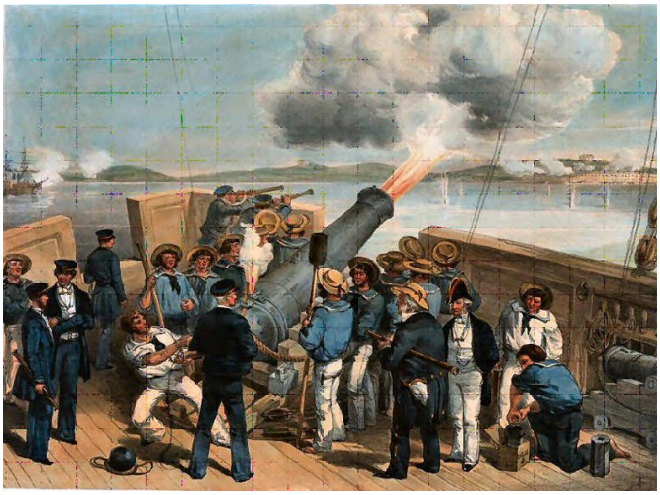
The Naval brigade in action

Early in November the Naval Brigade was fighting again at Inkerman and Captain Peel was one of the first men to be awarded the Victoria Cross for his part in the battle. (We were in London when our dear Queen presented the medal to him in Hyde Park in 1857. (I remember reading about it in the newspaper.) They say there were 600 of us sailors in the fighting that day at Inkerman, and five of my fellows took over rifles from some of the wounded: they were real heroes, keeping up a rapid fire on the enemy while those of us nearby loaded the guns and found fresh ones which had been abandoned. Only three of those five survived, but even that was something of a miracle – they all got the Victoria Cross along with Captain Peel.

An even more frightening thing happened later in the month – a terrible hurricane came out of nowhere and many of our ships were lost along with all the stores they carried. I was on the *Diamond*

then, and we rode out the storm, lucky to be in a more sheltered mooring. They moved our camp after Inkerman – but not far away, it seemed a bit pointless to me – maybe to give us some thing to do while there was a lull in the fighting!

I never saw the end of the war because in January 1855, they called some of the Naval Brigade back to Devonport although we were really needed in the Crimea. After some leave, I soon found myself on the *Hastings*; bound for the Baltic Sea and the fighting there – so I got the Baltic Medal as well as the Crimean medal with its campaign clasps – they sent me the Turkish medal later.



THE BATTLE OF SVEABORG ON THE BALTIC SEA

That was my war over – I was made up to an Able Seaman 6 months before I was discharged - that was at Portsmouth in 1856. I was 22 and had grown an inch while I was in the service, and I felt lucky to be alive and uninjured.

After that I went to London, to be near my older brother Charles and his new wife, mother and father both being dead, and it was there I met my wife Emma Slough – she lived with her parents in Clerkenwell. Her father was a foreman at the wharf, so that is how we met, when I was doing casual labour there. We married in that November, brother Charles and his Isabella were witnesses and it was at St Alphege church in Greenwich. Emma soon fell pregnant but somehow we found we were not

properly married and had to go through another ceremony, this time at St Luke's in Charlton where we were living. Emma was mortified to have to go through a second marriage. This time we had Susan and John Thorn, Isabella's sister and husband, as our witnesses; as Charles was back in Kent and we couldn't ask him to come up to London again. It had taken me some time to get a proper job so both marriage certificates say I was a mariner, I suppose that was how I still felt.

I was taken on by the London Fire Engine Establishment in early 1857; they liked sailors because they were well disciplined, were used to working at all hours, and knew how to get on with a job in a tidy fashion. We had a hard strength test before they took us on, and we were on duty continuously, there was never much time off at all. Thankfully, a house at the Fire Station came with the job; it was in Wellclose Square near the church of St Georges in the East, Whitechapel.

WELLCLOSE SQUARE

It had gas lighting, which we found very convenient, though it was more expensive than candles or oil lamps. Some of the houses had no tap for water and had to get what they needed from standpipes which were only turned on for about an hour a day, but we were luckier, there had to be water at the Fire Station!

We were soon busy with babies though we were devastated when our first, Emma, died soon after she was born. Richard Charles came next and still survives, but later we buried another Emma that was born there. Sadly she could not be buried in St George's churchyard, because by then it was so full

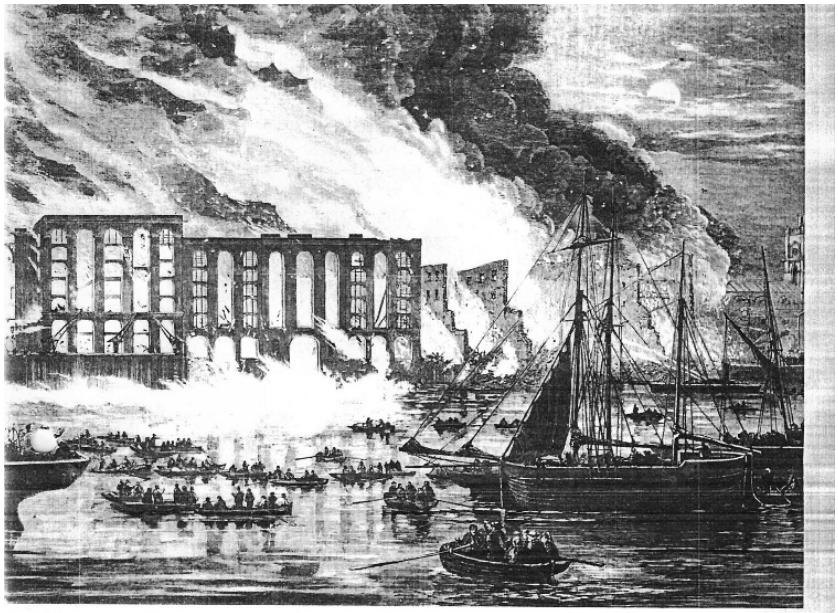
that bits of bodies were sticking out of the soil. In any case we all hated the vicar and his curates too, for their pompous ways. And there was something of a rebellion with folk from all over London coming in to the church and behaving very badly – we even had to have police there during the services to keep order. Bryan King was the vicar [6] – he didn't last long in the parish after people really got worked up about him. That's why some of our babes were not baptised at St George's. Although one died of measles, I often wondered if it was 'the Great Stink' coming up from the river, especially in 1858 that brought us some pestilence. But it was bad in all those years of the 1850s and 60s with cesspits for most of the houses, though they did start a proper sewerage system in 1865, the year before we left London for good. Before that, many of the East End streets were like open sewers and choked with rubbish and filth of all kinds.

Wilton's Music Hall was there in Whitechapel, in Grace's Alley, just round the corner from our house; Emma and I managed to go there once or twice for a bit of fun and a change from work, though I was on call 24 hours a day, there were so many fires in the warehouse and Dockyards. Some called the Music Hall 'The Old Mahogany Bar' and it held a great mass of people – over 1000, they say. Sometimes we saw a good show there, but it could be full of rather rough folk and its reputation went down.[2]

I did take a bit of time off just after Richard was born and went down to the docks at Millwall to see them try to launch Mr Brunel's *Great Eastern*, the biggest ship ever built. It was two months before they got her into the water properly, an ugly great lumbering thing – give me beautiful, graceful, sailing ships like the *Trafalgar* and the *Diamond* any day,

I saw some terrible fires when I was in the Fire Engine establishment and one time in Limehouse I was buried in the ruins when a warehouse collapsed. I was lucky not to be badly injured, but it put me off work for a while. They say Edward, the Prince of Wales, was very interested in fire fighting and even attended many fires, in his own fire uniform, but I was not aware of him being

anywhere where I was called to. But I do well remember the year of 1861. The weather in January was bitter and there were riots in Whitechapel with people looting the shops for food; they had to call in police on horses to try to protect the food shops and eating houses, but there were too many people for them to control.[6] Thankfully we were moved to the Spitalfields Station in Heneage Street, a bit away from the troubles of Whitechapel. Then later that year there was the great Tooley Street fire, what a blaze that was - in the hot June that followed the bitter winter – the dockside warehouse building was full of oil and tallow, sulphur and saltpetre. I heard tell the fire doors had not been closed and the heat of summer had set it off – spontaneous combustion, they said.



The Tooley Street fire, 1861

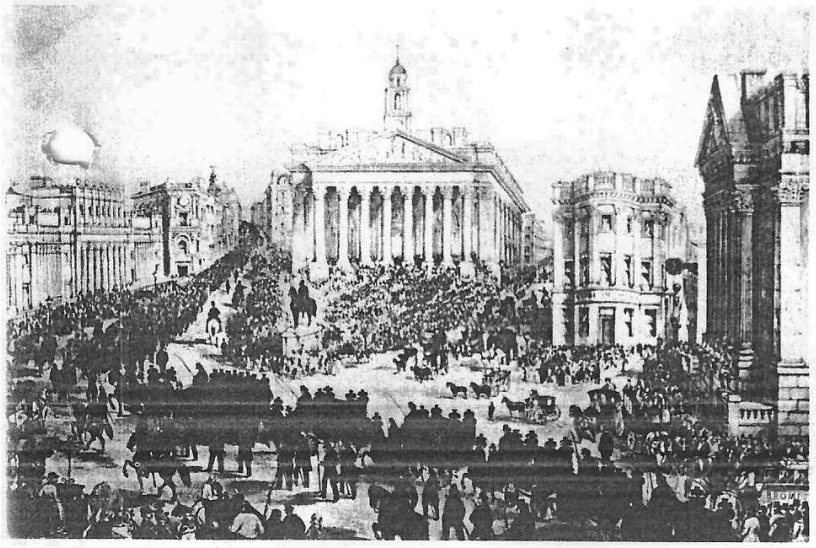
THE TOOLEY STREET FIRE 1861

There was a huge explosion and our chief Mr. James Braidwood – a very great man - was buried under a huge pile of burning bricks and killed.[3]

James Braidwood

The fire smouldered for two weeks before it was properly put out and we were all exhausted by the end of it; but thankful to be alive. We were known as ‘Jimmy Braiders’ and there was a great spirit among his men. Thousands attended Mr Braidwood’s funeral for he was a most well respected man in his trade and made many reforms to the London Fire Engine Establishment.

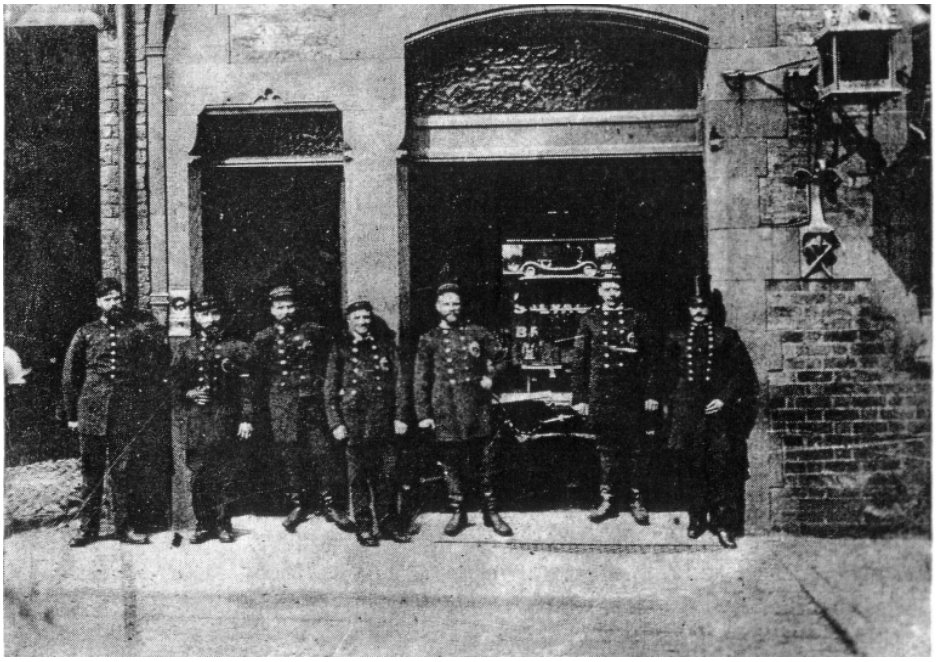
Braidwood's funeral



Thomas Edward, our second surviving son was born at the end of that bad year 1861, he was the one that went to Canada later to start a new life, but I am getting ahead of myself as my mind runs on. When son William arrived in 1866 we had moved to Southwark, away from the cholera epidemic that threatened the north of the river once again. By then I was in the London Salvage Corps set up after Tooley Street by Mr Massey Shaw, who was a great reformer of the whole Fire Services. It took him a long time, but eventually he got all the old Fire Engine Establishments, that had been linked to the different Insurance Companies, into one big Metropolitan Fire Brigade – he thought it was much more efficient that way and so it proved to be with its better engines and uniforms and good helmets for the men. He started using steam engines to pull the appliances, too – Mr. Braidwood had always used horses as he thought them more reliable.

Emma liked it better when I was put to the Salvage Corps, she thought it not quite so dangerous, and I was appointed foreman and wharf inspector, which she felt I deserved. Our house was right opposite the headquarters of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in Southwark Bridge Road – very handy for the job, as we knew straight away when there was fire where we might be needed. But soon after that in 1866 I was called to Liverpool to head up their new Salvage Corps, though it was a great surprise and a good opportunity for me, it was hard for Emma. She was close to her sisters, Sarah and Eliza, and was loath to leave them and her father behind, her mother being dead nigh on 30 years. When we moved we had three little ones with us: Richard, a great lad of 9, Thomas was 5 and William just two months old. Sadly, we left behind another baby girl, called Emma for her mother; she died of acute bronchitis when she was just two years old. Another girl, Sarah Ann, died later in Liverpool, and it seemed we were never going to rear a daughter, but thankfully we do now have two surviving, and good helpful girls they are, both of them still at home and a great comfort to their mother.

When I arrived in Liverpool as the first full-time Superintendent of the new Salvage Corps, [4] I found I was also taking over the jobs of Commander, Secretary, and Inspector of warehouses. Still, I had a good wage - £500 a year. My first job was to appoint full-time Corps men, and I got them into uniform for the first time.



MEN OF THE LIVERPOOL SALVAGE CORPS, SOMETIME IN THE 1860s

We lived across the road from the Fire Station in Hatton Garden in the centre of Liverpool, quite near the great noisy Lime Street Railway Station. Luckily it had room for us all because two more sons, Frank and Adolph, were granted to us, as well as the girls Anne Eliza and Emma Elizabeth, in the next eleven years. Emma Elizabeth was our third Emma, and the only one to survive. Wife Emma bore up well and we always had a maid in to help her. She'll outlive me yet - for I am beginning to feel my years.

There were ten men in the Corp to begin with, but many more later. We had to set up two new depots, the one in Hatton Garden and another later on in Vauxhall Road. Before my time the men had been scattered around the city, but I decide they should all live close – so they were all housed in Hatton Garden too. I had them equipped with all the latest appliances such as we had been using in London since Mr Shaw took over, and no expense was spared. We used horses to pull the carts at first, of course, and then came steam engines, though nowadays my son Richard uses new fangled petrol driven motors

THE LIVERPOOL SALVAGE CORPS, 1891 (possibly great grandfather with the dog)

Although I had reliable men under me, I always attended the fires myself – and we were usually there as soon as the Fire Brigade arrived. Our job was to save as much of the buildings and their contents as was humanly possible – sometimes this was extremely dangerous. One particularly bad fire was at Messrs Aspinall, Son, and Brooks in the docks, when £10,000 worth of damage was done to the cotton in their warehouse – or so it was said, when it was reported in the London 'Times'. I think it was because I had helped save several lives in a great fire in Seel Street round about the same time in 1875, that they got up a public subscription for me and I was presented with a handsome gold chronometer watch with a chain and seal and a magnificent dining room clock [5]. That was a proud moment for Emma and the children.

I remember in January of 1893, sometime after I retired, there was another great fire at a cotton warehouse quite near Hatton Garden. The Brigade was there of course and because the fire spread so

far they had to bring in both the Salvage Corps from Hatton Garden and Vauxhall Road, so son Richard was in the midst of all that. There were Police firemen too. The fire started at night and by the morning, despite all efforts, three warehouses were in flames although it was bitter cold and there was ice everywhere. The sad thing was that two Police firemen, Jack Beer and Charlie Watts, lost their lives that day. The Corps was so stressed with all that needed to be done to clear up afterwards that Richard called for help from the London Salvage Corps and three days later they sent up twelve men to help out. One fact that makes me proud is that, during all the years of my service with the Salvage Corps, not one if my men lost his live, nor did any of them die through sickness or accident.

But life has not been all work. We raised a fine family of seven children, five boys and two girls, though sadly we lost three girls and a boy along the way, as I said before. We gave them as good an education as we could; several of them went to the Quaker School at Penketh where they boarded, though we have always attended the Church of England as a family. The school had an excellent reputation. Our eldest, called Richard Charles for myself and my elder brother, started off as a clerk in an insurance office – so he knew the salvage business from the inside out, you might say. By the time he married in 1885 he was a surveyor in the Salvage Corps and now I am proud to say that, following in my footsteps, he is Superintendent of the Corps and living at the Vauxhall Road Station. I think he will soon go to a new Fire Station in Kirkdale Road, Bootle, not far away. He and Sarah have no children, which is a great sorrow to them.

Thomas Edward is the next eldest, named for my young brother and a brother of Emma's. He too was a clerk, but had a more adventurous spirit than Richard and off he went to Manitoba in Canada when he was only 21. He got himself land to farm for which I had given him a large sum of money, but then joined the North West Mounties and fought in the Riel rebellion. This was an uprising by the Métis, people descended from the French, who had intermarried with the native Indians. They wanted their own government and were particularly worried because the buffalo, which was their main source

of food, were becoming scarce, as the Great Plains of Saskatchewan and Manitoba were taken over by ranchers and turned into farms. I'm proud of Thomas – our dear Queen awarded him the Distinguished Service Medal for his part in that skirmish. Fortunately the rebellion was soon put down.

I was afraid when William, our next boy, went out to Canada to look after his brother's farm while he was fighting, that he would not come back to us, but he never intended to leave England for good. He was only 19 when he went out, but he was always a confident and determined boy. Fires and brigades must have got into their blood though, for Thomas even came home for a while and went into the Birmingham fire service. He met Alice Allen there; she went out to Canada and married him the very day she arrived, when his wanderings had taken him back to his farm. He has five children now and has adopted a daughter of a great friend that died. I've been out to see them a few times since I retired and it's a great delight to see them all doing so well. Emma would not risk her life on the Atlantic even to see one of her precious sons and grandchildren! She's always been a homebody.

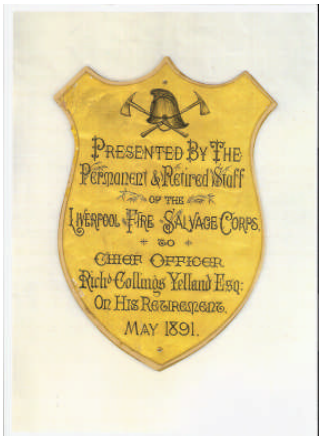
This William Frederick, who went out to Canada to oblige Thomas, was born in 1866, just before we left London. Our son that died was called Frederick so we gave William that name in his memory. He got married just a few years ago after he was selected, out of 45 applicants, as Superintendent of the Fire Brigade in St Helens. He had done very well in the Manchester Fire Brigade and moved to St Helens from there. Now he's superintendent of the Bradford brigade and they have one baby girl – how well the boys have done!

Adolphus John, named for Emma's German relations (her sister Eliza married John Schaper – we see quite a lot of the family) and my father, still lives with us but is getting married next year to Minnie Sanders – or so he tells me. She is a nice gentle girl, from over the water in Poulton, near Wallasey. She doesn't know where her father is – he abandoned the family for another woman, so the story goes, more than 20 years ago when she was very young. Adolph – we call him 'Dolf' - is an inspector on the trams - the fire business never appealed to him somehow.

Annie and Emma live at home - time they got married, at 21 and 23, and off our hands, but their mother finds them a comfort and help to her – though she herself is spry enough yet. My dear friend Richard Reed left the two girls £200 each in his will – but they don't inherit until they are 25, though I am thinking of putting into my will that they don't get the money until they are 30 - a sensible age for a woman to get some independence. They were quite young when Richard Reed died and the money was given to me for safekeeping. I suppose I must make my own will soon enough, for who knows what the future will bring. Dear friend Richard left Adolph some money too – he was always very good to those children.

And the youngest, Francis Henry – I can't remember where those names came from; there's none on either side of the family as far back as we know! He's only 24, but like Adolph he plans to marry next year, his intended is called Amy. He's a plumber – a good trade that, though he talks of joining Thomas in Canada some day.

When I retired in 1891, my Salvage Committee pension was £400, but the fire insurance companies also gave me £200 as a token for what the Salvage Corps had saved them over the years. They gave me framed photographs of all the men and the engines and Emma was given a gold Albert and locket as a mark of their respect for her. She certainly deserved it. My own staff, even those who were retired before me, presented me with an engraved shield mounted on a red velvet back ground – I was quite touched by everyone's tributes.



After this we found ourselves a house in the quiet of Penny Lane, it's a grand house in a terrace, with a bay window to the parlour.

But I am running ahead again, I can't keep my thoughts in order these days! Even with work and family, I had time for a few other pursuits. It was expected that in my position I should be invited to join the Freemasons, and in April 1870 I was initiated into the mysteries of the Temple Lodge. This meant that I could now recognise other masons, by certain signs and words, and go on to learn more of the rituals. I was both proud and humble to be elected Worshipful Master of the Lodge after only seven years and I deemed it worth while having my photograph taken in my regalia, which I have put at the front of these memoirs – I am wearing my Crimean medals too. I think it a fine likeness and so does Emma. During these years I also belonged to the Gentleman's Club and Library in the Lyceum Building in Bold Street – it's good for a man to get away from the cares of work and family once in a while. Richard has always followed in my footsteps, as is fitting for the first born, and to my great pleasure, he too became a mason in my old Lodge while I was still a member there. Doubtless he will become Master in time.

Great things have happened in my life time; railways have spread all over the country making travel easy, if rather noisy and dirty. There are bicycles in the streets and motor cars driven by petrol engines, making a horrid stink and rattle as they go. There are fewer horses making a mess, so I suppose that is something to be thankful for, though to my mind they are still the best way of getting things moving. I have lived through the reign of one great Queen, and seen her family and influence spread throughout Europe and the world. Prime Ministers have come and gone, Mr Disraeli and Mr Gladstone perhaps the greatest. Every man, and some women worthy of it, has the vote, and perhaps all will be given it eventually, though they may not all want or merit it. Amazing things have happened in Science, though I find it hard to believe we are all descended from monkeys, and I am not sure that the invention of machine guns and cordite has been a blessing. I have seen too many wars in my time –

fighting in one was enough to give me no stomach for more. We can send messages all over the world, there are moving picture shows, and anyone can have their photograph taken for a few pence.

So now I have set down, for anyone who cares to read it, the main happenings in my life. It's been a good life, for a motherless fisher boy on the dank Isle of Sheppey, to rise to be – though I say it myself – a man of some worth and substance in one of the greatest cities of the British Empire, the greatest Empire the world has ever seen or is likely to see. I feel I have served my Queen and country to the best of my ability, and faithfully raised a wonderful family, and who can say better than that?

POSTSCRIPT

My great grandfather, Richard, died on June 1st 1903 at his home in Penny Lane, Toxteth Park, Liverpool. He had been suffering from 'chronic myelitis and nephritis' for some months. He was buried with much pomp and ceremony in Anfield cemetery, Liverpool on the 4th June. Only men attended the funeral as was the custom in those days

ANFIELD CEMETERY, THE WILLIAMS FAMILY GRAVE AT LEFT, WITH THAT OF RICHARD COLLINGS YELLAND NEXT TO IT

The gross value of his estate was £4233/15/1 (worth nearly £243, 000 today) and the net value of his personal estate was £1161/5/2. In his will, all his personal effects were left to his wife Emma except his 'watch chain and personal ornaments' and she also received the sum of £50, and £2 (equivalent to £115) weekly from investment income. His watch chain and ornaments were to be sold to the highest bidder among his children living in England! His brothers Charles Ruth and Thomas George were left £10 (£573) each, as was his sister in law Eliza Schaper (Emma's sister). Thomas Edward's Canadian

children received £100 (just over £7, 000) between them. Sons Richard and William were given 1/10 of the income from his estate when invested, and the other four children each received 2/10 of the income from his investments with life insurance companies. Richard, William, and wife Emma were executors.

Emma was living at 97 Penny Lane when she died, aged 81, in 1915. Strangely, she was not buried in her husband's grave but in that of her sister Sarah (nee Slough, later Wickham) in Allerton Cemetery. It seems that she lived with her sister for a time until Sarah died in 1910. The grave had been set up by Sarah's daughter, Emma Funck of Chalk Farm in Kent.

Richard Charles continued to do well in the Fire and Salvage services, and from 1905 until his retirement in 1919 he was Superintendent of the Fire Salvage Station in Kirkdale. He became Worshipful Master of the Temple Lodge of the Freemasons in 1912. At some point he adopted John, the orphan son of a colleague. After his retiring, he took up the business of a coal merchant in Formby along with his wife's brother Robert Williams. Richard died in 1941 in Formby, from 'myocarditis, arteriosclerosis, and chronic interstitial nephritis'. His estate was £1210/10/4, equivalent to nearly £40, 000 today. Among his effects was a diamond ring which had been meant for Robert who predeceased him. Richard Charles is buried in his father's grave along with his brother in law, Robert, and Robert's Sisters Isabella (Shepley) and Margaret (Seibuher). The Yellands and Williams families were obviously very close.

Thomas Edward stayed in Canada, moving from Manitoba, and finally settling on a farm at Forester, near Tisdale, Saskatchewan where with his eight children he founded a dynasty, now settled all over the country. He died in 1936. He was very deaf and at one time suffered from a huge 'bladder stone', which must have been extremely painful.

William Frederick continued the family Fire traditions and by 1915 was Superintendent of the Fire Brigade in Sunderland. He had two children, but I have so far been unable to trace him further. Rumour has it that he later went to Scotland.

Adolphus John, my grandfather, always known as ‘Dolf’ married his Minnie Sanders in 1903, and they had two boys in 1903 and 1905. He does not seem to have done a great deal of note with his life. Minnie died in 1939 and in 1949 Dolf married Eva Walker and lived in Dartford until he died in 1955. Like his elder brother, he was very deaf.

Anne Eliza married Frederick Grundy in 1908, and was the informant of her mother’s death in 1915. I have not traced her life any further as yet and can find no children.

Emma Elizabeth did not marry and was a ‘domestic housekeeper,’ earning enough to visit New York ‘on business’ several times. She died in Liverpool in 1955.

Francis Henry, my father’s Uncle Frank, whom he did mention from time to time, joined his elder brother in Canada, but not until 1919 when, at the age of 42 he was really too old to adapt. He and his wife Amy were not happy settlers, though they and their four children lived to a good old age. Amy particularly, felt ‘brought down’ by their circumstances and because of this would not see Frank’s Sister Eliza when she visited North America in latter years. Frank’s family added to the huge dynasty of Canadian Yellands, who have gone into all walks of life. I have met about 150 of my second cousins of various degrees of removal and learned much of their fascinating early pioneering history, at a family reunion in Saskatchewan in 2001.

Dolf and Minnie’s sons were my uncle Dick (Richard William) who did not marry; my father, Norman Sanders Yelland, (always known as ‘Ted’), married Ethel Maud Blakeway in 1929; and I, an only child, was born in 1935. I lost the Yelland name, marrying Ian Pascoe in 1959 and our children are Robin Jane and Jeremy Philip Pascoe, born in 1959 and 1961. Robin, a journalist, married Luuc van der Raaij in 1989 and her boys, Nathan Luke and George Francis, were born in 1991 and 1993. They live in Amsterdam. Jeremy is a ‘care of the elderly’ nurse and lives in Edinburgh with his long term partner Julie Stuart.

REFERENCES

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3. London’s Noble Fire Brigades, 1833-1904; by Sally Holloway

4. Records of the Fire Salvage Association of Liverpool Ltd

5. Obituary - Liverpool Courier, June 2nd 1903

6. ‘The East End, Four Centuries of London Life’, by Alan Palmer

All actual dates and addresses are taken from Parish Registers, General Record Office Certificates, Census information, and Trade Directories; some researched by myself, some by professional researchers.

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