

SIBBALD FAMILY

NB: The following is prepared from Falkland Islands Registers and files – there may be other family born outside the Falklands. Unless stated otherwise, all dated births, deaths and marriages occurred in the Falklands and all numbered graves are in Stanley Cemetery. Various spellings of names are recorded as written at the time.

John James Alexander SIBBALD was born circa 1809 to ? **SIBBALD** and ? **SIBBALD**.

John enlisted in the Royal Navy 5 September 1821. He passed his examination in 1828 and on 12 January 1831 was nominated Additional Lieutenant on HMS *Thalia*, flag-ship of Sir Patrick CAMPBELL, at the Cape of Good Hope.

On 3 August 1833 John was appointed to HMS *Edinburgh*, under Captain William Wilmot HENDERSON, at Portsmouth and the North America and West India Station.

From 13 August 1839 he served as Second and then First Lieutenant on HMS *Erebus*, under Captain James Clark ROSS, on his Antarctic expedition. Also, as part of the expedition was Captain Thomas Edward Laws MOORE, mate of HMS *Terror*. Cape Sibbald, 73°54'S 165°23'E, was sighted in February 1841 by Captain Ross and named after John. The Expedition came into the Falkland Islands to refit and refresh during the winter months, arriving at Port Louis in April 1842 and leaving in November 1842.

The ships arrived back in England on 4 September 1843 and John was promoted to the rank of Commander on 4 October 1843.

John was married to **Matilda Lucretia TAPLEN**, daughter of Lieutenant Thomas Taplen and Maria Taplen née Moyes. Matilda was born circa 1822.

On 10 February 1849 John was appointed Inspecting Commander of the Dundalk Coast Guard station in County Louth, Ireland.

According to his son's article 'Five Years in the Falkland Islands' John was '*feeling the sad reverse of shortened means*' when he received a missive from a near relative asking if he would accompany him to the Falkland Islands.

John and his family sailed from Plymouth 12 August 1855 on board the 360-ton British Barque *Frowning Beauty*, with 21 passengers, including **Captain Thomas Edward Laws MOORE**, the new Governor of the Falkland Islands, and his family. His wife, **Emma Jane MOORE**, was Matilda's sister. The *Frowning Beauty* arrived 7 November 1855 after 66 days out.

Governor Moore appointed him Clerk of the Courts 14 November 1855 on an annual salary of £120 and no house allowance. As a commander in the Royal Navy he was also in receipt of half pay of £155-2-6 per annum. [S10; 72] The notice in the Stanley Gazette dated 14 November 1855 stated '*His Excellency the Governor has this day provisionally appointed John Sibbald Esq to act as Clerk of the Magistrates' Court and Police Court and in the Police Office. All applications on judicial business must therefore be made to him between the hours of 10 am and 1 pm at the Police Office.*' [E4; 114]

On 15 March 1856 the central portion of the Barracks was let to Captain Sibbald by order of the Governor at an annual rental of £22 payable from 1 January 1856. [E1; 89]

On 15 March 1856 John Sibbald, Esquire, was appointed a Justice of the Peace for the Falkland Islands and their Dependencies. [E1; 120, 122]

On 22 March 1856 Captain Sibbald RN was appointed Acting Colonial Secretary. [E1; 121]

Matilda was a witness to the wedding to **Charles LEE** and **Emma BROOME** on 16 August 1856 in Holy Trinity Church, Stanley.

In 1857 John's annual salary was £145 and as a commander in the Royal Navy on the Active List he was in receipt of half pay of £182-10 per annum. He also acted as Government Clerk from 20 July 1857 and received £87-10 being one half of the salary during the period of absence on leave of the post-holder. [S12]

In Despatch 2 dated 13 November 1858 James Lane, the new Colonial Manager of the Falkland Islands Company Ltd, reported to London that he had let Teja Cottage to Captain Sibbald, the Governor's brother-in-law, for £30 per annum and that he had had to do some repairs and painting and Captain Sibbald was well satisfied.

Emma Jane MOORE, age 43, died 10 April 1859 from angina pectoris and was buried 14 April 1859 in Grave E 419.

On 27 June 1859 James Lane advised the London Office: *'After my letter Nos 22, 11 per "May", was despatched a shameful proceeding came to my knowledge by Captn Sibbald, as the instrument, not unconnected, I feel assured, with the Governor – Looking to Captn & Mrs Sibbald being his Br & Sister in Law, the Storekeeper might have been induced to fall into the trap. I believe Captn Sibbald himself (probably when stupid from drink which is not unusual, for he is a lost man) made some story to Mr Brooke on which the Warrant issued on the 28th May - & that one or both tried to find ex port facto grounds to justify them.*

On 3 November 1859 Captain Sibbald was one of three captains called to provide a survey on the overheated coals of the *D H Watjen*.

On 21 December 1859 a charge against Captain Sibbald and Mr Pyne for 'firing the Camp' on Saturday was dismissed. [H16; 448]

Matilda and her four children departed February 1860 on the 235-ton British Barque *Sunrise*.

In September 1860 James Lane offered Teja Cottage to the government for an annual rental of £30 but Governor Moore replied that at present the government had no requirement for such a house.

According to the 1861 Census, Matilda, age 35, her children and two servants, were living at 74 North Road, Plymouth, England.

On 11 January 1862 John was again appointed Acting Government Clerk on half pay of £87-10, as well as his annual salary of £145 as Clerk of the Courts and half pay of 10/6d a day as a Commander in the Royal Navy. [S17]

In February 1862 John requested that the Falkland Islands Company Ltd remitted £10 to Mrs Sibbald at 1 Alfred Street, Plymouth.

In Despatch 108 dated 22 September 1862, James Lane advised his London Officer that '*Captn Sibbald had had a stroke of paralysis & if he lives will be quite unfitted for his office of Clerk of the Court.*

On 9 September 1865 Matilda and her children were living at 32 Redcliffe Road, West Brompton, London, England.

In 1866 John was on an annual salary of £170 as Clerk of the Courts and received 12/6 a day as a Captain in the Royal Navy. He was also a Notary Public and Registrar of the Vice Admiralty Court. George HANWELL was appointed Acting Clerk of the Courts 1 March 1866. [S21]

In September 1866 Captain Sibbald was filling the offices of Colonial Secretary, Surveyor General and Clerk of the Courts. [B14; 31]

On 4 January 1867 John Sibbald, Clerk of the Courts and Captain RN, wrote to Governor ROBINSON advising him that he had been more than eleven years in continuous service in the Falkland Islands and requesting twelve months leave of absence to proceed to England on urgent family affairs. [H25, 12]

The Executive Council minutes of 7 January 1867 recorded an application from Captain Sibbald, RN, Clerk of the Courts, for leave of absence for one year to proceed to England on urgent private affairs. The members were unanimous that after eleven years continuous service he was entitled to the leave and that it would commence from his departure from the Falkland Islands. The Governor wrote to Captain Sibbald the same day advising that he was happy to grant his application and that the usual certificate would be forwarded to him as soon as he advised the date of his intended departure. [P1; 337; D12; 371]

On 5 February 1867 John advised the Governor that, with his permission, he intended departing in the mail packet *Foam* at the end of the month to Montevideo. The certificate was sent to him 27 February 1867. [H25; 38]

On 13 February 1867 Governor Robinson wrote to the Secretary of State informing him that he had granted twelve months leave of absence and that the maximum leave with half pay grantable to Captain Sibbald was eighteen months therefore he was authorised to apply to the Secretary of State for an extension of six months should he require it. He also advised that he had appointed George HANWELL Acting Clerk of the Courts during Captain Sibbald's absence from the Falkland Islands. [B14; 105]

On 19 February 1867 J N GOSS advised the Colonial Secretary that Captain Sibbald had instructed him to sell by public auction at his warehouse at 12 o'clock on Wednesday 20 February 1867 a quantity of household furniture and other personal effects. [H25; 47]

The *Foam* was cleared 2 March 1867.

On 3 May 1867 it was noted that Captain Sibbald had returned unexpectedly from the Falkland Islands and that he had been seen and appeared to be in very feeble health, so much so as to render him unfit for the resumption of any active duties and that as soon as the requisite certificates could be procured from Governor Robinson he should be allowed to retire. [F14; 254, 255]

On 18 June 1867 the Secretary of State advised Governor ROBINSON that the Lords Commissioners had consented to allowing Captain Sibbald and that a pension should be assigned to him at once. He would be due eleven years' service plus five years for abolition

being sixteen years 16/60 of £145 giving a pension of £38-13-4. The Duke of Buckingham suggested that Captain Sibbald would be at once allowed to retire on a pension of £39. [F13; 230, 237, 242, 253]

John, age 59 and a captain in the Royal Navy, died 24 December 1868 at 32 Redcliffe Road, West Brompton after eighteen months of paralysis from inanition and was buried 30 December 1868 in Plot M, 59.3, 172.3, Brompton Cemetery, West Brompton, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Greater London, England. His wife was one of the executors of his will.

According to the 1871 Census, Matilda, age 45 and an annuitant, her children and a servant were living at 10 Riverdale Terrace, Richmond, Surrey.

According to the 1881 Census, Matilda, age 60 and the widow of a captain, her children, her sister, **Mary CHANTER**, and a servant were living at 3 Townshend Villas, Richmond, Surrey.

According to the 1891 Census, Matilda, her son, John, and daughter, Maude, were living at 3 Townshend Villas, Richmond, Surrey.

Matilda, age 71 and a widow of 150 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey, died 18 January 1893 and was buried with her husband 21 January 1893 in Plot M, 59.3, 172.3, Brompton Cemetery. Administration of her will went to her son, John, clerk in the Admiralty and her estate amounted to £166-18-1.

Children of John and Matilda SIBBALD:

1. **John Gordon Edward SIBBALD** born 9 September 1845 at Laira, near Plymouth, Devon, England and baptised 16 October 1845 in the parish of Charles the Martyr, Plymouth. According to the 1861 Census, Gordon, age 15 and a scholar, was living with his family and two servants at 74 North Road, Plymouth, England. John was appointed a third-class clerk in the Admiralty in 1862. John was admitted to Bethlem Hospital on 9 May 1868 after not sleeping for four weeks, depression, memory loss and attempted suicide. Notes from the hospital mention that he was overworked and very thin. He was discharged 11 December 1868. According to the 1871 Census, Gordon, age 24 and an admiralty clerk, was living with his family and a servant at 10 Riverdale Terrace, Richmond, Surrey. John, age 38 and living in his family home in Richmond, was readmitted to Bethlem Hospital 4 March 1888. He was discharged November 1888. John was a member of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society and the Somerset Archaeological Society. His sister, Ethel, used to attend meetings with him. The 1901 Census listed John as being a visitor of his brother-in-law at Mount Pleasant Farm. John, age 75, died 8 August 1920 from senile dementia and exhaustion on Mount Pleasant Farm. He had no children and left £870 to George Welch.
2. **Maude Mary SIBBALD** born in 1846 in Plymouth, England. According to the 1861 Census, Maude, age 14 and a scholar, was living with her family and two servants at 74 North Road, Plymouth, England. Maude was married to **George WILLDRIDGE**, tea merchant from Ireland living at 17 Redcliffe Road, West Brompton, 9 September 1865 at St Mary's, Brompton, London, England. George, late of 15 Rood Lane, London and 16 Manor Terrace, Brixton, Surrey, wholesale tea merchant, died 15 June 1866. Letters of Administration, with will annexed by decree, was granted at the Principal Registry Office, London 2 April 1867. Resealed at the Principal Registry, Dublin 17 June 1867. His effects within the United Kingdom were under £6,000. Probate was granted from the Principal Registry, London 28 April 1868. Resealed at the Principal Registry, Dublin 9 August 1873. His effects in Ireland were £2,586-0-10. Maude died in 1905 in Eastbourne, East Sussex. She had no children.
3. **Andrew Thomas SIBBALD** born 5 June 1852 at Point House, Dundalk, County Louth, Ireland. As an adult, Andrew became a journalist and wrote an article for the Army and Navy Magazine, Volume 3, page 13 'Five Years in the Falkland Islands'. According to the 1861 Census, Andrew, age 8 and a scholar, was living with his family and two servants at 74 North Road, Plymouth, England. According to the 1871 Census, Andrew, age 18, was living with his family and a servant at 10 Riverdale Terrace, Richmond, Surrey. According to the 1881 Census, Andrew, age 26, was living with his mother, siblings, maternal aunt, **Mary CHANTER**, and a servant at 3 Townshend Villas, Richmond, Surrey. Andrew emigrated to America circa 1891. He had no children.
4. **Ethel Emma SIBBALD** born 18 October 1859 in Stanley and baptised 3 January 1860 by Holy Trinity Church. Her father's occupation was recorded as Commander Royal Navy. According to the 1861 Census, Ethel, age 17 months, was living with her family and two servants at 74 North Road, Plymouth, England. According to the 1871 Census, Ethel, age 11, was living with her family and a servant at 10 Riverdale Terrace, Richmond, Surrey. Ethel used to accompany her brother, John, to meetings of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society and the Somerset Archaeological Society. Ethel was married to **George John WELCH**, farmer, 8 October 1889 at Holy Trinity, Richmond. Ethel died 12 December 1899 on Mount Pleasant Farm, Norton St Philip, Somerset, England and was buried 16 December 1899 in the Church of St Philip and St James, Norton St Philip. She had no children.