

CODDINGTON

Remembering the Fallen

Lieutenant FRANK MASSIE ROYDS R.N.

(1856-1884)

H.M.S. Carysfort

Died of Wounds, Battle Of El Teb, 29 February 1884



Frank Massie Royds was the son of The Reverend Francis Coulman Royds and Cornelia Frances Blomfield. Francis Coulman Royds was the fifth child of his parents, the Reverend Edward Royds (1790-1839) and Mary Molyneux (b 1793). Francis was born on 24 October 1825 and baptised at Brereton-cum-Smethwick, Cheshire on Christmas Day. His early education was probably by a Governess; he was then educated at Rugby and later went up to Brasenose College, Oxford in 1843. Seven years later in 1850 he was admitted to Holy Orders on 25 February and on 2 March of the same year he was ordained by the Bishop of Worcester at Oxford Cathedral as a Deacon of Oxford. On 30

May he was awarded his MA at Brasenose College.

In 1851 Francis was living with the Armistead family at Vicarage House, Bolts Green, Betchton (close to Sandbach), where John Armistead was the Vicar of Sandbach and Francis was his Curate. Four years later on 9 January 1855, he was instituted to the Rectory of Coddington, which had become vacant following the death of the Reverend Thomas Boydell. The value according to the *London Daily News* was given as £262 plus a house.

Cornelia Frances Blomfield was a member of the Massie family (her mother was Frances Maria Massie) and was born in Tattenhall on 6 July 1829. Her father, Canon George Becker Blomfield, was the Prebendary of Chester and Cornelia was baptised at St Bridget's, Chester on 7 September 1829. She was described by one of her Grandsons as being both 'delightful and petite'. By 1841 her family had moved to Stevenage in Hertfordshire where her father was a Clerk at the Rectory, and by 1851 he had become Rector there. Her mother died in 1837 at the age of only 38, so her father George had to bring up his young family alone (with the help of the odd servant, naturally!)

Cornelia and Frances Coulson Royds married on 12 January 1852 in Stevenage at the Parish Church of St Nicholas. Frances was living in Neston at the time but would move within the next couple of years to take up his position at Coddington. Their first child, Alice Mary, was born in 1853, and there were two more children, Frances and Ellen Hester, born before Frank Massie's birth on 14 November 1856 at Coddington. He was baptised in Coddington Church on 21

December 1856, and five years later was at Rectory House along with his parents, six siblings (*all below the age of eight*), a Cook, a Housemaid, a Laundress and two Nurses doubtless to look after all the children!



Left: Rectory House





St. Mary's Church, Coddington, where Frank Massie Royds' father, Francis, was Rector

Frank was educated at Rossall School, Blackpool Road, Fleetwood – a school founded in 1844 in the home of Sir Hesketh Fleetwood by St. Vincent Beechey as a sister school to Marlborough College which had been founded the previous year. Its establishment was *"to provide, at a moderate cost, for the sons of Clergymen and others, a classical, mathematical and general education of the highest class, and to do all things necessary, incidental, or conducive to the attainment of the above objects."* Along with Cheltenham, Lancing and Marlborough, Rossall was part of a flurry of expansion in education during the early Victorian period.

Lessons were in Latin and Greek. *The History of Rossall School* by John Frederick Rowbotham (1901) gives an insight into the sort of day the young Frank may have had.

A School day at Rossall 1867-8

Chapel at 7.30, breakfast at 8, school at 9 which was mainly Latin such as Tacitus until 1230 with a half hour break. 1230-1300 was games; cricket and bathing in the summer and hockey in the winter

This was followed by Dinner then play from 2 - 4 (or studies for those so declined) Afternoon school was from 4 - 6.30 followed by a lecture from the Headmaster, again on the Classics and a lecture from the headmaster's assistant, which was usually something like

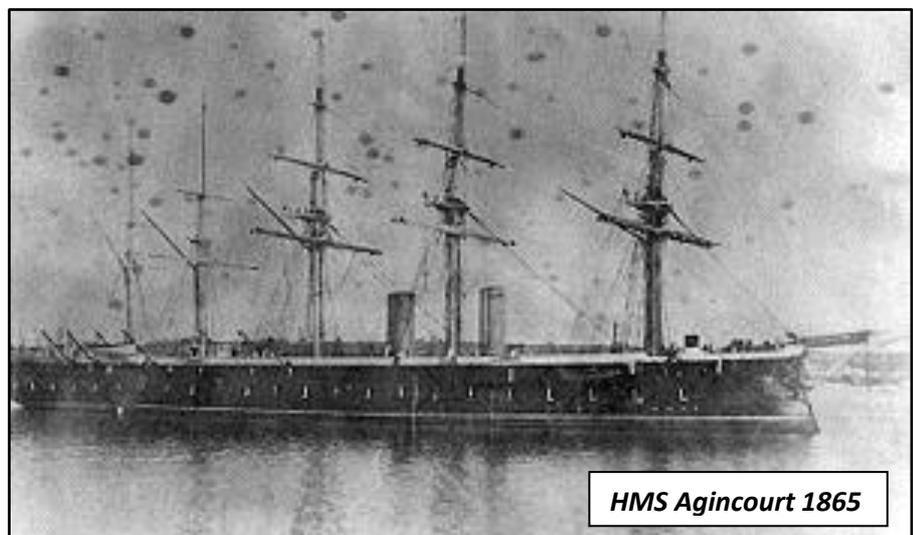
Virgil's Æneid. Supper preceded Chapel which was at 8.45pm usually.

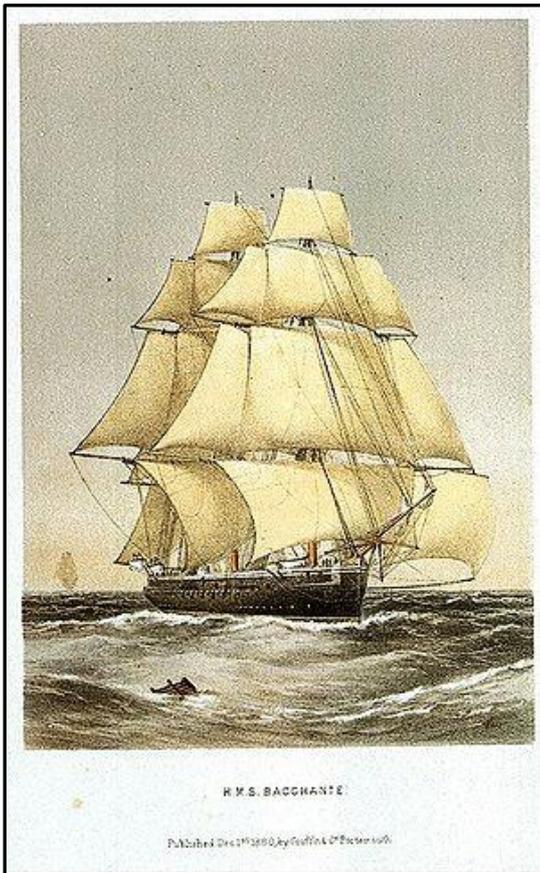
Fagging was considerable for the younger boys – usually fielding in the cricket nets for the older boys or out to fetch pies, milk or nettle beer.



Life in Coddington, meanwhile, carried on much as normal. By 1871, when Frank was at Rossall, a governess had been installed at the Rectory House, and three more children had been added. Ten years later, there were only five children left at home, while the servants had dwindled to four.

Frank joined the Royal Navy in 1870, and served first on *HMS Agincourt*, a Minotaur class armoured frigate, built in the 1860's for the Royal Navy. *Agincourt* ran aground at Pearl Rock, off the coast of Gibraltar, in July 1871. It took four days to free the ship and the Commander in Chief; Sir George Wellesley, was court martialled as a result. It is not known whether Frank Massie Royds was on board the ship at this time. His next vessel was the *HMS Achilles* following her completion in the 1870's at Chatham Dockyards.





He then joined *HMS Bacchante* and was on board during her first voyage around the world. Two members of the crew of the *Bacchante* from 1879 were Princes George and Albert, the eldest sons of the Prince of Wales, who were serving as Midshipmen for three years. This was at the same time as Frank was serving on the ship - the Princes made regular diary entries that were later published in 1886 as *'The Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Bacchante'* and the book cites F M Royds as one of the Second Lieutenants. It seems he was promoted in June 1880 then left the ship only to return briefly, be promoted again and leave in September 1880. One interesting note on the trip is the death of one George Dunn, a sail maker in 1881 from 'Brain-Softening'!

The daily routines seemed to consist of a lot of drills and cleaning, but there was plenty of time in port and as the trip had been a lengthy one to the Caribbean, there appears to have been plenty of socialising with the local gentry as well as mixing with the crew from other ships – at least for the Princes and the officers! The *Bacchante* arrived back in Portsmouth on 4 May 1880, and after a

short re-fit was sent up to Bantry Bay for drills and exercises along with other ships in July. The eastern 'cruise' began in September, but it is not known if Lieutenants Royds was on board at that time. However, the *Bacchante* met up with *HMS Carysfort* in October 1880 at Vigo Bay in north western Spain. The *Carysfort* had left Portsmouth on 16 October, and it is assumed Lieutenants Royds was now with this ship.

The following passages are extracts from *'The Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Bacchante'* by the Princes, highlighting some of their experiences,

Oct. 23rd.— At 4.15 A.M. to-day, H.M.S. *Carysfort*, Captain H. Stephenson, C.B., made her number; she came up the bay and anchored astern of the *Bacchante*, at 8 A.M. She left Portsmouth in company with the *Inconstant*, on Saturday 16th, was afterwards detached to look into Plymouth, but shortly after coming out from that port lost sight of the Admiral and made the best of her way here alone. Captain Stephenson is delighted with his new ship, she is handy and very buoyant and her feathering screw answers admirably, and saves infinity of trouble and time, now usually consumed in raising and lowering screw. He has steamed here against a head wind and heavy sea, but his little ship rises like a cork over it all. She sails fairly well too, and has plenty of room: she carries her guns on the upper deck and thus has her mess deck clear. The *Carysfort* has brought us a spell of fine weather — since her arrival it has been bright and sunny and it is an absolutely calm night.

Dined with Captain Stephenson and much enjoyed hearing news from him about Abergeldie.

Oct 31st — Left Vigo as part of a squadron of 5 ships for Fort Light, Madeira where they arrived Nov 6th. Then to St Vincent in the Cape Verde Islands and Montevideo. It seems a crewmember from the *Carysfort* fell overboard on Dec 8th but was retrieved!

Buenos Aires, Falklands, Cape of Good Hope, Cape Town, Simons Bay (3 months)
 Playing cricket, sailing regattas

Sailed 10 April for Melbourne It will probably take us forty-two or more the cruise as now settled is that we should arrive there May 20th, leave 28th; arrive Sydney 31st, leave Sydney June 14th; arrive Wellington (New Zealand) June 27th, arrive Christchurch 28th, leave July 4th ; arrive Fiji 18th, leave 25th, and arrive Yokohama September 8th, thence as on former programme

In the Census of 1881, Lieutenant Frank Royds is listed as being a on board *HMS Carysfort* under the command of Captain Frederick Henry Stephenson.

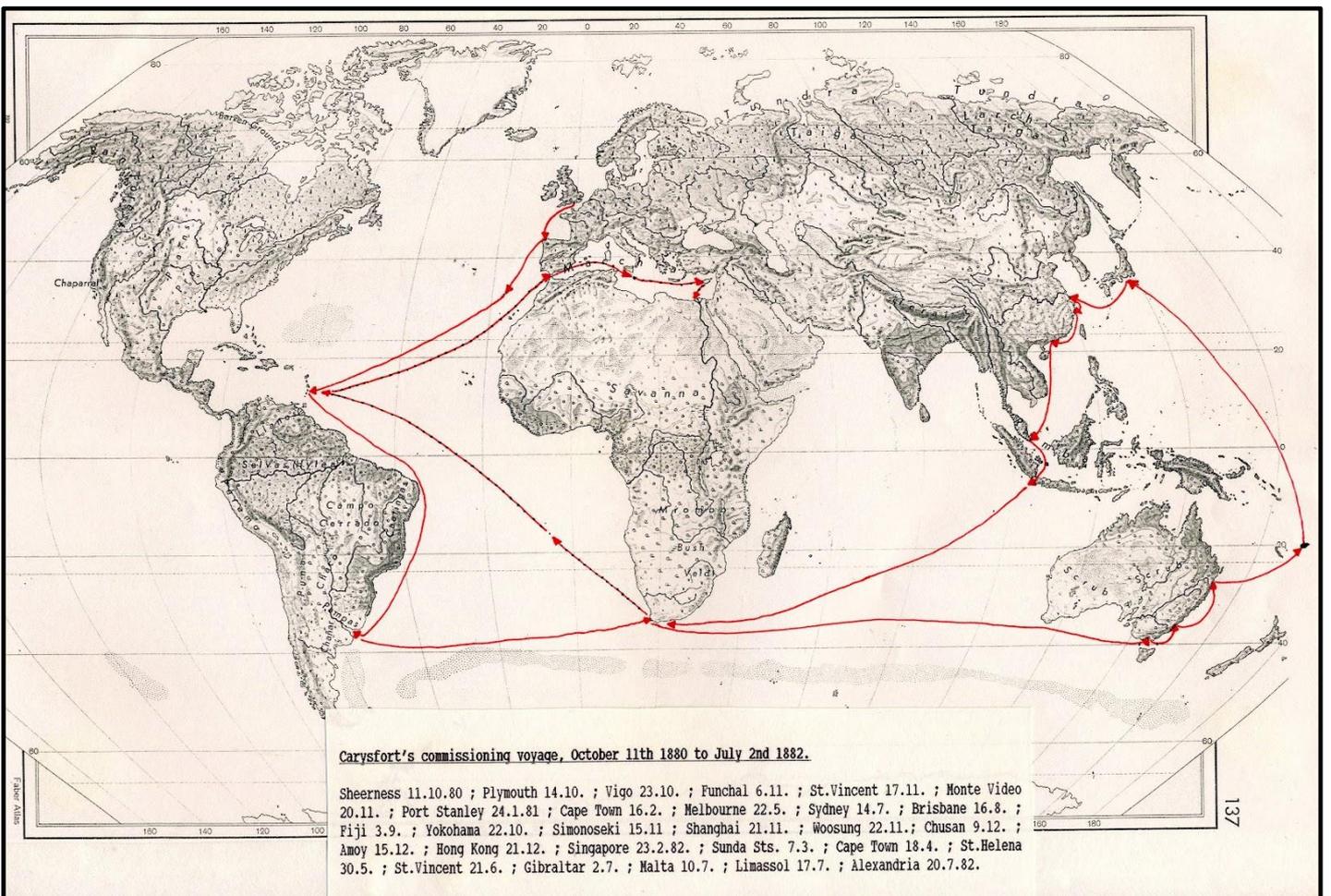
I.—LIST of the OFFICERS, MEN, BOYS, MARINES, and of all other persons on BOARD Her Majesty's Ship <i>Carysfort</i> on the NIGHT of SUNDAY, APRIL 3rd, 1881. [See pages 15 and 16 at the end of the Book for entering those Absent on the Night of April 3rd.]					
NAME and SURNAME	RANK and RATING	CONDITION as to Marriage	AGE Last Birthday		WHERE BORN
			Male	Female	
Write after the Name of the Captain, or Commanding Officer, the Names of the other Officers, of the Petty Officers, of the Seamen, of Boys, and of Marines; the Names of all other Persons on Board to follow.	State Rank of Officer, Rating of Men and Boys; Marines to be distinguished; also Passengers, Visitors and others.	Whether "Single," "Married," "Widower" or "Widow."			Opposite the Names of those born in England, write the County and Town, or Parish. If born in Scotland, Ireland, the British Colonies, or the East Indies, state the Country or Colony. If born in Foreign Parts, write the particular State or Country; and if also a British Subject, add "British Subject," or "Naturalised British Subject," as the case may be.
1 Henry Frederick Stephenson	Captain	Single	38	-	Broadstairs Kent
2 Gerald Charles Langley	Quartermaster	Single	22	-	London, Middlesex
3 Edward Stearn Jones	Lieutenant	Single	30	-	Westbury Tasmania (British by)
4 Algernon David Granville Grenfell	do	Single	26	-	Lymouth Devon
5 Cecil Burney	do	Single	22	-	Corey River Channel Islands
6 Frank Massie Royds	do	Single	24	-	Cheshire Cheshire
7 William John Bullmore	Rating Lieutenant	Single	33	-	Southsea Hants
8 John Anderson Dougherty	Chaplain & Cavalry	Married	36	-	Deptford Kent
9 Robert George Bird	Staff Surgeon	Single	38	-	Bantry Co Cork Ireland
10 Ar. de B. Corrie	Paymaster	Married	38	-	Plymouth Devon
11 Wm. J. C. Brewer	Chief Engineer	Married	45	-	Worsham Wilts
12 Theophilus Burnand	Sub Lieutenant	Single	24	-	Tottenham, Edmonton, Middlesex
13 George J. Fogarty	Surgeon	Single	28	-	Essex & Kent
14 John A. G. Scheppe	Asst. Paymaster	Single	21	-	Downtown, Co Cork Ireland
15 Thomas Owen	Engineer	Married	42	-	Holyhead, Anglesea, Wales
Total on Page 1			15	-	

The keel of *HMS Carysfort* was laid down in 1878, and she was one of the last steam-and-sail 'corvettes' built for the Royal Navy, and the only one to see war service. Under Captain Harry Stephenson, *Carysfort* had a magnificent maiden voyage with the Detached Squadron. Leaving Plymouth on 15 October 1880, she sailed via Vigo in Spain to Madeira, then via St. Vincent to Monte Video, then to the Falklands, across the southern Atlantic to Cape Town and on to Australia, visiting Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Leaving Australia in August 1881, she headed for Fiji, and then on to Japan, visiting Yokohama and Simonoseki. She then toured the Chinese coast, calling at various ports, reaching Hong Kong just before Christmas 1881. Her homeward voyage took her via Singapore, the Sunda Straits and back to Cape Town, before heading up the

Atlantic via St. Helena, St. Vincent and Gibraltar. When you consider what other working men were doing at that time – the fathers or brothers of *Carysfort's* crew, perhaps employed in the fishing fleet or in factories, in building, on railway work, and other hard manual trades - a two-year voyage around the world on a small, brand-new warship seems a pleasant alternative.



Above: The Detached Squadron in Hobson's Bay, Australia in 1881, with *Carysfort* second right
Below: The maiden voyage of the *Carysfort*



However, like other ships of the Mediterranean Fleet, *Carysfort's* pleasant cruises were sometimes interrupted by the call of active service. It was whilst she was in Gibraltar in July 1882 – en route for Portsmouth after nearly two years' absence – that *Carysfort* was diverted into the Mediterranean to join the British fleet at Malta. With the escalation of the Egyptian crisis, Britain was assembling a powerful warship force to support military action in Egypt. On 17 July 1882, *Carysfort* was at Limassol in Cyprus, and on 20th finally joined the British squadron in Alexandria – which had bombarded the port defences on 11 July. Her crew thus missed entitlement to the clasp Alexandria 11 July by a few days.

On 24 August 1882, a party under Lieutenant Montgomerie RN, and Midshipman Sir Charles Cust, served in *Carysfort's* pinnace, armed for the occasion with a 9-pounder gun, in the Sweet-water Canal. Another thirty men served ashore under Lieutenant E S Jones, in and around Ismailia on transport duties, and on 10 September, Lieutenant G C Langley, the ship's Gunnery Officer, thirty-seven men and a Gatling gun went ashore to serve with the Naval Brigade attached to Wolseley's main army. This contingent served on the far left of the British Army as it advanced along the Sweet-water Canal, and was present in the defeat of the Egyptian army on 13 September at Tel-el-Kebir; the detachment returned to the ship on 16 September. Another contingent from the ship, twenty sailors and twenty Marines under Lieutenant Royds, was landed on the 18th as part of the force deployed to protect the canal.



H.M.S. Carysfort on patrol in the 1880's

Carysfort finally sailed from Ismailia on 25 September for Suez, picking up Lieutenant Royds and his command on 10 October.

When *Carysfort* left Egyptian waters in September 1882 at the end of the Egyptian campaign, she sailed for Malta. She was to spend her entire active career as part of the Mediterranean Fleet, based at Valletta, and only returned to UK waters at the end of her service life.



Collision Drill on board *H.M.S. Carysfort* in 1882

The ship joined the British squadron in the fine natural harbour of Suakin on 10 February 1884. Straight away, she was pitched into the military operations then underway, landing parties of Marines (113 on 14 February) and sailors for shore work over many days. They also helped to unload and stack stores and supplies. *Carysfort* was sometimes in action, firing shells over the port defences at enemy groups congregating too close to the perimeter, and was also involved in operations off Trinkitat.

Carysfort was then involved in the Relief of Tokar - land operations by combined British Army and Royal Navy personnel to rescue the threatened Egyptian garrison at Tokar. Here the governor had surrendered to the local Madhi forces, and his troops had joined the rebels to avoid being massacred. On 29 February, during the Battle of El Teb, she landed Gatling machine-gun crews to serve with the Naval Brigade in the thick of the action.

Carysfort's casualties were light, with only one officer and two men wounded, but Lieutenant Frank Massie Royds, a popular man by all accounts, was that was injured officer, and subsequently died of his wounds on 1 March 1884. He was buried at sea on 3 March near Suakia – he was only 27 years old.



LIEUTENANT FRANK MASSIE ROYDS, R.N.
H.M.S. "Carysfort"

Died of a Wound Received at the Second Battle of Teb, Feb. 20, 1884

A memorial to Lieutenant Frank Massie Royds RN can be found in Rossall School Chapel, and there is also a plaque at the school entrance to his memory.

In memory of Frank Massie Royds, Lieut.RN, HMS Carysfort, who came to Rossall in 1867, entered the Royal Navy in 1870, and after a career of signal promise was chosen for service with the Naval Brigade at the second battle of El Teb on the Soudan where he was mortally wounded Feb 29th 1884 aged 27 years.

A brass tablet is inscribed thus in St Mary's, Coddington :

In memory of Lieutenant Frank Massie Royds RN, aged 27 years, who was mortally wounded at the battle of El Teb on February 29 1884 while in command of HMS Carysfort's gattling gun. This tablet is erected by the Captain and Officers with whom he served in HMS Carysfort, in loving memory of a Gallant Officer and amiable companion.

***He hath used no deceit in his tongue,
Nor done evil to his neighbour.***

There is also a window in Coddington Church dedicated to his memory, the left panel showing Moses parting the Red Sea and the Israelites coming through and the right panel showing Jesus walking towards the disciples on a boat. The inscription below reads :

To the glory of God and in memory of Frank Massie Royds RN, son of a Rector of this parish, who died of wounds at El Teb and was buried in the Red Sea March 2nd 1884

In the Anglican Church, Alexandria, a brass tablet is inscribed:

In loving memory of Frank Massie Royds, Lieut RN of HMS Carysfort and eldest son of the Rec Frances Coulman Royds of Coddington Rectory, Cheshire, who fell mortally wounded in the chest at the battle of El Teb while commanding a division of the Royal Naval Brigade. He died on board the Carysfort March 1st 1888 aged 27 years and was buried at sea near Suakai.

The Massie Royds family continued living in Coddington until after 1901, Frances had become the Rural Dean of Malpas, and then the Canon of Chester. He and Cornelia later moved to Penmaenmawr, where they lived in retirement, along with their eldest daughter, Alice, who had been widowed. Frances died on 20 December 1913 at their home, *Bryn Golen*, and Cornelia on 12 December 1919, aged 90. They had ten children, eight girls and Frank and his brother Edmund, who went on to become a solicitor and was the Conservative MP for Sleaford from 1910-1922. Edmund was knighted in 1939. Frances and Cordelia are buried in Penmaenmawr.

Researched and written

By

Hilary Williams