

Robert Lighttallars – an overview

This summary is based on the research of Linda Lytollis combined with my discovery of Robert's death plus information relevant to the 1st Regiment Lancashire Militia from 1803 to 1807.

In support of this I have included extracts from newspapers, books and web sites with added inputs from Margaret Dodds and Lez Lytollis.

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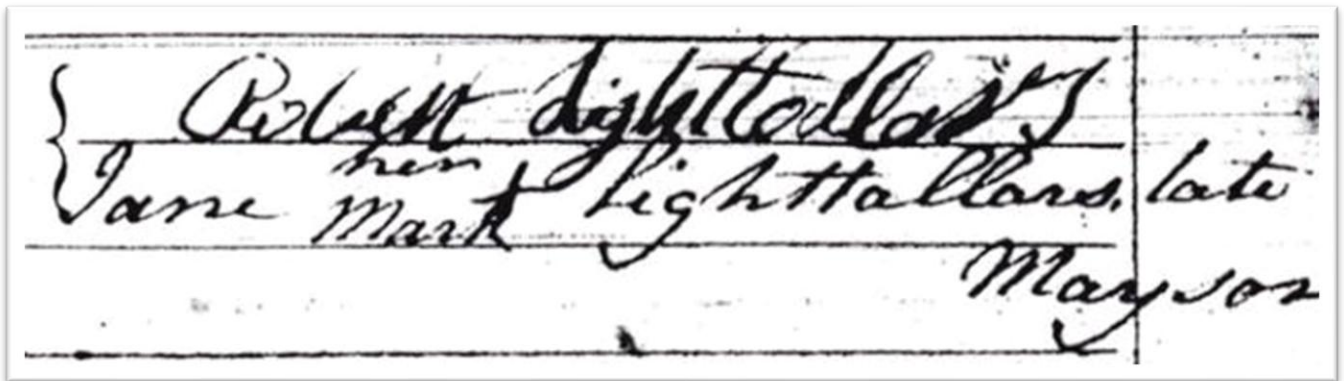
When Robert Lighttallars decided to leave his place of birth and travel to Carlisle, he had no idea it would create the modern Lytollis family. A family which began in Cumberland and spread eastwards into the counties of Northumberland, Durham and North Yorkshire. Some families emigrated to other countries.

Linda Lytollis, on the web site 'The Lytollis Family Name', says...

Robert Lighttallars, from whom the whole Lytollis family spring, first appeared in Carlisle on the St Cuthbert Parish registers when he married Jane Mason in 1803...She was a local girl, but Robert must have come from outside the area as there are no records before this of any brothers, sisters or parents in the Carlisle area.

Surname and the many variants

The parent and siblings of Robert Lighttallars are presently unknown. I use this version of his surname because it is how he recorded himself when he married Jane Mason/Mayson on the St Cuthbert Parish registers in 1803.



Signature of Robert Lighttallars & 'mark' of Jane Mayson

Lez Lytollis ('The Lytollis Family Name' web site) wrote...

It is not clear how our family name became commonly spelled as Lytollis and for a hundred years or so down the tree from Robert Lighttallars, many variations have been found. I have listed them below from the records I have from Linda: Lighttallars, Litellus, Litollus, Lighttollers, Letillus, Lytellon, Littellus, Littollas, Letellus, Lytallous, Lighttollous, Lytollas, Lytallis, Lyttallis, Litholis, Litholin.

Several books have been written discussing surname variations and the effects of migration on their development. Dr. George Redmond in an article entitled 'Migration and the Linguistic Development of Surnames' wrote this...

The facts of Lightowler's distribution now are simply drawn. It is relatively numerous only in Bradford, with a smaller number of families in the Colne valley. It is rare in Halifax and almost extinct in Lancashire. Where it is well established it survives only as Lightowler or Lightowlers. The only other variants appear to be Lightoller and Lightholder, with Lytollis as a possibility. These three are rare and widely dispersed.

... and goes on to say...

This story of migration provides illustration of numerous changes in spelling. However, the majority of people bearing the name either now live in Bradford and the Colne Valley or have moved from there within recent memory. Lightowler(s) is recognised in these places as the 'standard' spelling and although variants locally persisted even in the 19th century, most branches of the family now conform. It will be no surprise to those who study surnames and their history to learn that most Lightowlers consider that they are unrelated to people with the same name – even in the Bradford enclave.

Linda Lytollis wrote...

I think it was most probable that he (Robert Lighttallars) was part of the Lightollers family from Lancashire and West Yorkshire and he came to Carlisle during the boom years of handloom weaving. Weaving was taking off in the area at the time and people with the right skills were arriving from Lancashire and Ireland. There are possible links in Wibsey, near Bradford, Yorkshire and Chorley, Brindle and Preston in Lancashire. Many of these families were involved in the weaving industry. The name Lightoller itself originates from the manor of Lightowlers near Littleborough, Lancashire first recorded in 1296.

So, Robert's origins are unclear, but we know he was a weaver and was probably attracted to Carlisle because of the booming cotton weaving industry. Some research by Margaret (Ward) Dodds found that...

...around Carlisle the amount of cotton weaving increased steadily until the boom years of the 1790's when the wage for a home weaver was £1 a week – twice that of an agricultural worker. This caused a lot of migration into the area from other parts of England and from Scotland and Ireland. The population of Carlisle rose from 4158 in 1763 to 21,965 in 1841. By 1810 this influx of workers in turn caused wages to fall and the weekly wage went down to between 5-8 shillings a week.

To put things in perspective here is a timeline of events related to Robert Lighttallars and his new family...

Time line of Robert Lighttallars 1780-1807

1780

Robert Lighttallars was born about 1780 but parents & birthplace are still unknown. His birth year is inferred from Plymouth Death & Burials Transcription for Robert Lightollows. He was buried 2 Jun 1807, aged 27 years, at Stoke Damerel, Plymouth, Devon (source: Stoke Damerel parish burial archive: 166/82 page:97)

1803

- **21 Feb** – Robert met and married Jane Mason/Mayson in St Cuthbert Church, Carlisle. Robert was a weaver at the time – (*Source: England, Marriages 1538-1973*)
- **04 Apr** – 1st Regiment Royal Lancashire Militia was re-embodied – i.e. reformed.
- **May** – England renewed war against France.

- **21 May** – John Lightollers was baptised at St Cuthbert Church, Carlisle – Robert & Jane were only married three months before – *(Source: England, Births & Christenings 1538-1975)*

Robert enlisted in the Lancashire Militia as a 'substitute' for John Sutcliffe of Lancaster – this meant that Robert was paid by John Sutcliffe to serve in his place. All men between 18 and 45 were required to be registered for the local Militia. According to 'Sources for the History of the Militia & Volunteer Regiments in Lancashire' by Lancashire Record Office each regiment was allowed to recruit soldiers only from allocated places.

The town of Lancaster (among others) was the recruiting province of the 1st Lancashire Militia. This suggests that Robert joined the 1st Lancashire Militia in place of John Sutcliffe of Lancaster and opens the possibility that Robert had some previous connections to that area.

1804

1st Regiment Royal Lancashire Militia was stationed at Danbury Camp, Essex (1803-1804)

- **07 Jan** – Petition for maintenance of dependants of Robert Lighthallows. Petition read at Easter session of Lancashire County Quarter Sessions – *(Source: Lytollis .info)*
- **11 Apr** – Petition for maintenance of dependants of Robert Lightharrows – *(Source: Lytollis .info)*.

Note: included a letter from J. Brown Grisdale, JP of Cumberland, which specifically notes that Robert was a substitute in the Lancaster militia.

- **10 Jul** – Petition for maintenance of dependants of Robert Lightharrows. Petition read at Midsummer session of Lancashire County Quarter Sessions – *(Source: Lytollis .info)*

1805

Robert must have had some 'family' leave early during this year as his second son, Joseph, was born early in 1806.

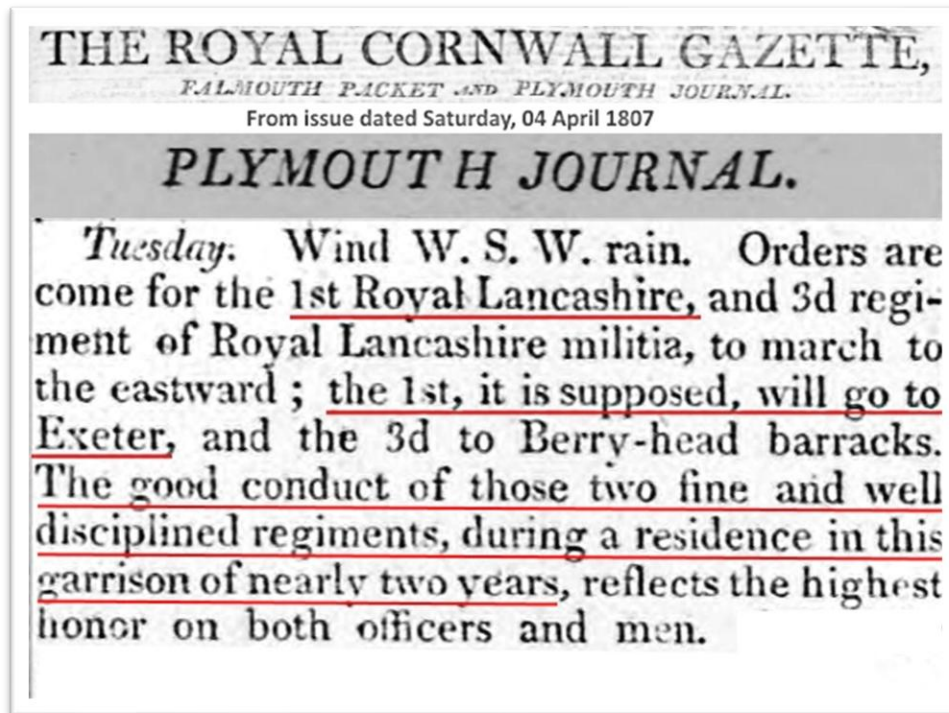
- **May** – 1st Regiment Lancashire Militia was sent to Portsmouth.
- **July** – 1st Regiment Lancashire Militia was sent to Weymouth.
- **12 Oct** – 1st Regiment Lancashire Militia arrived in Exeter.

1806

- **19 Feb** – Joseph Lighttallars was baptised at St Cuthbert Church, Carlisle. Second son for Robert & Jane – *(Source: England, Births & Christenings 1538-1975)*
- **03 May** – John Lightollers (eldest son of Robert & Jane) buried. Robert's occupation was now soldier – *(Source: Lytollis .info)*

1807

- **4 Apr** – The Plymouth Journal reported that the 1st Lancashire Militia were to proceed to Exeter from Plymouth, where they had been in residence for nearly two years – probably at Stonehouse Barracks. This puts Robert Lightollers in the Plymouth area from early 1806 until his death.



Article from Plymouth Journal dated 4 th April 1807

- **2 Jun** – Robert Lightollows, age 27 years, was buried in the parish of Stoke Damerel, near Plymouth, Devon. Possibly Robert (and other milita) was left behind when the regiment was ordered to Exeter. The record indicates that Robert died aged 27 years which would put his birth around 1780.

Date	Name	Age	Notes
June 1.	Mary Andrews	56	
* 2.	Robert Lightollows	27	*
2.	John Day	2	
3.	Ann Maria Dunn	29	

Plymouth Deaths & Burials June 1807 for Parish of STOKES DAMEREL near PLYMOUTH (Ref:166/82 Page:97)

Excerpt from Stoke Damerel parish burial record June 1807

Note: Stoke Damerel parish register of burials for 1807 lists 74 burials for May & 76 burials for June – could this signify an outbreak of some virulent disease? The 'History, Gazetteer & Directory of Devon' notes that Stoke Damerel parish had 23,747 inhabitants in 1801 and 30,083 in 1811.

- **10 Dec** – Petition for maintenance of dependants of several 1st Lancashire militia men serving as 'substitutes'. Amongst them was Robert Lighthallows. Petition read at Epiphany 1808 session of Lancashire County Quarter Sessions – (Source: *Lytollis.info*). NB: the petition covered a period of 13 weeks from 10 April 1807 and when it was read, they may have been unaware of Robert's death in June.

1808

Jane probably learned of her husband's demise in the latter part of 1807 or early 1808.

- **06 Aug** – Jane Lightallars was married to Michael Ward at St Cuthbert Church, Carlisle – (Source: *England, Marriages 1538-1973*)



Stoke Damerel area on Donn's one-inch-to-the-mile survey of 1765

(c) www.devon.gov.uk/

Map of Plymouth 1760 showing Stoke Damerel & Stonehouse Barracks

The next step is to use the information of Robert's death and possible birth year (about 1780) to try to find out where he was born.

Linda Lytollis passed this info to Dave Bland (a Lightoller(s)/Lightowler(s) researcher) who kindly offered us a starting point in our efforts to trace Robert – see [Other Lightollers & Lightowlers](#) page.

(Billy Wakefield – March 2015)