

**FACT SHEET No 311**



This window is dedicated  
to the honour of God and in memory  
of  
Charlotte Louisa KINNIS  
Wife of John KINNIS Esq. M.D.  
and daughter of  
The Venerable Archdeacon WILKINS D.D.  
Canon Residentiary of this Church  
who died at sea  
on her passage from Bombay to England  
April XXVIII MDCCCXLVIII  
aged XXVIII years

**Charlotte Louisa Kinnis**

**By Diana Pitchford February 2020**

On the wall under the western-most window in the north wall of the Minster (Ref: Stained Glass in Southwell Minster by John Beaumont; page 9, ref: n20) there is a small brass plaque of dedication to Charlotte Louisa Kinnis (1818-1848) wife of John Kinnis M.D. and daughter of George Wilkins D.D.

Charlotte Louisa Wilkins was christened at St Mary's church, Nottingham on 5th September 1818; the daughter of George and Amelia Auriol Wilkins. George Wilkins was born in Norwich; his father and brother were both architects. He was educated at Caius College Cambridge, and ordained in 1809; from 1817 to 1831 he was the vicar of St. Mary's church Nottingham and became Archdeacon of Nottingham in 1832. Nothing is known of Charlotte's childhood but in 1823 her father was appointed to the Prebend of Normanton, so his children would have known Southwell quite well.

Charlotte married John Kinnis on 11th February 1845 in Cape Town, South Africa. John was a Scottish Doctor serving in the Army as a Deputy Inspector of Hospitals in China. Their daughter, Charlotte Mary, was born in Hong Kong in 1846. It seems likely that Dr. Kinnis was soon posted to Bombay, India for it was from there that Charlotte set out on her ill-fated journey in February 1848 aboard Camperdown, a ship of the line.

On 27th April, when Camperdown was just off the island of St. Helena, Charlotte Louisa died and was buried at sea. Camperdown arrived at Gravesend on June 1st 1848. Notice of Charlotte Louisa's death appeared in the Stamford Mercury published on 11th June 1848:

“April 27th, on board the Camperdown, on her passage home, Charlotte Louisa, wife of Dr. Kinnis, Inspector General of Hospitals, Bombay, and daughter of the Archdeacon of Nottingham.”

Charlotte Louisa was survived by her husband John Kinnis and their daughter Charlotte Mary. In February 1851 John Kinnis retired from the army on half pay, returned home to the town of his birth, Dunfermline, Fife and married Lucy Senhouse at Dunfermline Abbey. Sadly John died in August 1852 and was buried in Dunfermline Abbey churchyard alongside James his brother and their parents. Emily Hay Wilkins (Charlotte Louisa's elder sister) was one of the executors for John Kinnis's will which was proved both in the Edinburgh Sheriff Court and the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, the latter being the premier probate court in England at that time. In May 1871 Emily was also granted Letters of Administration for the effects of Charlotte Louisa Kinnis.

Charlotte Mary Kinnis seems to have spent quite a lot of her young life with her maiden aunt Emily Hay Wilkins, in Southwell (1861) and later at Bayswater (1871). On 21st June 1877 she married Evelyn Vardon, a medical student, at St Mary's Church, Paddington. Evelyn had arrived in England from America towards the end of 1874. However he appears to have been born c.1847 in Montreal, Canada to the wife of George Vardon, a civil servant. Evelyn and Charlotte Mary Vardon had three children, Marie Gabrielle born in Edinburgh at 1878, Evelyn Francoise born in January 1880 in New York and Hilda Muriel born at Hayling Island, Hampshire in 1881. By 1901 Charlotte Mary is a widow living with her two daughters at Chepstow Villas, Kensington. I haven't been able to trace what happened to her husband Evelyn Vardon. Her son Evelyn Francois died in 1916 in France and is commemorated in the Noeux-les-Mines Communal Cemetery at Pas de Calais. Charlotte Mary lived to the ripe old age of 84 and died in 1928 whilst visiting Bournemouth.

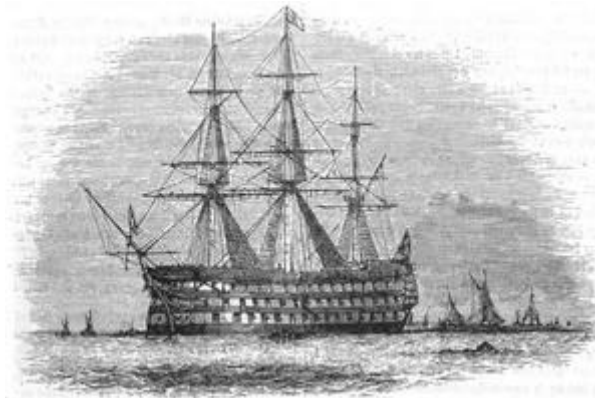


Illustration depicting the ship Camperdown.

From The London Illustrated News published 22nd July 1843 page 5.

*A note on the ship Camperdown copied from Wikipedia*

HMS Trafalgar was ordered as a 98-gun second-rate ship of the line, re-rated as a 106-gun first-rate ship of the line in February 1817 and launched on 26 July 1820 at Chatham. She was jointly designed by the Surveyors of the Navy at the time, and was the only ship built to her draught. She was renamed HMS Camperdown on 22 February 1825.

Camperdown was placed on harbour service in 1854 and became a coal hulk three years later. She seems to be the hulk referred to in the unpublished diary of Col. Archibald Butter (1857) as lying in Simons Bay, near Capetown, South Africa: 'The Camperdown a hulk is kept as a store ship'. She was renamed HMS Pitt on 29 July 1882 and was sold out of the Navy in May 1906.

*An extended version of an article By Diana Pitchford in The Steward of January 2020 [issue No 16]*