

# Margaret Louisa KERR



*Margaret Louisa Harrison*

Baptised: 27 November 1862

Died: 14 July 1900

*WIFE of MARK KERR*



**Margaret Louisa KERR**



*In loving memory of  
MARGARET LOUISA beloved wife of  
MARK KERR Colonial Secretary of  
Northern Nigeria and daughter of  
JOHN HARRISON of Broad Oak Park  
Worsley died 14th July 1900  
"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.  
Blessed be the name of the Lord". (j 1152b)*

In the north-east corner of the church, near to the organ screen, there is a commemorative plaque on the wall which reads:

*In loving memory of MARGARET LOUISA beloved wife of MARK KERR Colonial Secretary of Northern Nigeria and daughter of JOHN HARRISON of Broad Oak Park, Worsley, died 14th July 1900.  
The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.*

**Margaret Louisa** was buried in the churchyard on 19 July **1900**. She was 35 years old and the burial record shows that her address was May Croft, Melcombe Regis, Devon. The plot was owned by Mark Kerr. Sadly, today there is no headstone at that site.

Name.				
Margaret Louisa Kerr	May Croft- Melcombe Regis	July 19 <sup>th</sup>	35 Years	F.H. Hodgkinson
No. 745				

**Margaret** was baptised on 27 November **1862** at Holy Trinity, Bordesley, Birmingham, to **John** Harrison and Anne (née Burchmore). It is believed that they had married at St. Michael on the Mount, Lincoln, in **1855**, but this has not been confirmed. Anne died in Kings Norton in the middle of **1873**, aged 41. **John** then married Julia Hunter in **1875**, in Aston, Birmingham. John Harrison had been baptised on 13 January **1828**, the illegitimate child of Margaret, at St. Mary the Virgin, Eccleston, Lancashire.

In the census of **1861**, her family was living at 77 Coventry Road, Aston, Birmingham.

<b>John Harrison</b>	Head	M	33	Commercial Traveller	b. Lancs., Martin
Ann	Wife	M	28		b. Herts., Flamstead
John B.	Son		4		b. Birmingham
Lizzie A.	Daur.		3		b. Birmingham
Stephen N.	Son		2mo.		b. Birmingham
Annie Burchmore	Niece	S	12		b. Herts., Flamstead
+ 1 visitor and 1 servant					

At the time of the Baptism of Stanley George on 22 October **1864**, at Holy Trinity, Bordesley, Aston, the family was living on Vicarage Road, Edgbaston. Another son, Arthur Henry, aged 25, married Helen Moffatt Taylor, at St. Paul's, Finchley, Middlesex. His residence at that time was Whitefield AND Worsley.

By **1881**, the family was at 16 Vicarage Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.

<b>John Harrison</b>	Head	M	53	Gen.Merchant; Comm. Traveller	b. Martins, Lancs.
Julia	Wife	M	50	(his second wife)	b. East Indies
Lizzie	Daur.	S	23		b. Birmingham
Stephen Norton	Son	S	20		b. Birmingham
<b>Margaret Louisa</b>	Daur.	S	18		b. Birmingham
Stanley George	Son	S	16		b. Birmingham
Arthur Henry	Son	S	14		b. Birmingham
Gertrude Ellen	Daur.	S	12		b. Birmingham

All were born at Birmingham and their mother was Anne. The father, **John**, was a Commercial Traveller and a General Merchant in Manchester. Julia was recorded as being born in the East Indies.

In **1891**, the family was now living at St. Leonards, Broad Oak Park. John was a Manchester Merchant in the Home Trade and was 63. Julia was 59, Arthur H. (24, Assistant to father) and Gertrude E. (22). There was a Visitor to the home, Mary Goddard, aged 22, born Longton, Staffs., plus 2 servants. Interestingly, Julia had been born in India, a British Subject. But **Margaret Louisa** was not there.

In fact, **Margaret Louisa**, in **1891**, was at resident at Almorah, Eadipole, Weymouth, Dorset. This was the home of ...

Frederic Echlin	Head	M	47	Commander RN Coastguard	b. Ireland
Lilian	Wife	M	27		b. Barbadoes
Annie	Daur.		3		b. Eastbourne
Frederic S. John	Son		2		b. Ireland
<b>Mark Kerr</b>	Bro.in L.	S	25	Colonial Civil Service	b. Barbadoes
<b>Margaret L. Harrison</b>	Vis.	S	27		b. Birmingham
+ 3 servant					

It is often fascinating when tracing the movements of people in the 19th century to ponder upon how and why single persons from different geographical locations met. This is a very good example of this.

By **1901**, John Harrison was living at St. Leonards, Worsley, aged 73, and was a Cotton Cloth Merchant, (born Marton, Lancs.). Julia (who, it says, was born in Macau, China) was 70. Their son John B. was now 44 and was a Government Analyst, based in British Guiana, and Martha E. (possibly the wife of John B.) was 46. She had been born in Barbados and was a British Subject.



John Harrison died on 14 June **1906** and his address was 'Summerland', Holly Road, Wilmslow. His effects of £40,000+ were left, in part, to Stanley George Harrison, Engineer, and Arthur Henry Harrison, Manufacturer. His wife, Julia, may have died in mid-1905, at Bucklow, Cheshire.

**Margaret Louisa** married Mark Kerr on 7 December **1892** at St. Mark's. He was 'of the Colonial Service' and his father Thomas Kerr was the 'Late Governor of the Falkland Islands'. Thomas Kerr, C.M.G., was Governor of the islands 1880 - 1886, and 1887 - 1891. He died in **1907**, aged 89. The Honourable Thomas Kerr, C.M.G., was British Colonial Secretary (1875) to the Island of Barbados, a Member of the Legislative Council of the Colonial government, and a judge of the Assistant Court of Appeal of the Windward Islands.

1892 Marriage solemnized at <i>St. Mark's Church in the Parish of Worley</i> in the County of <i>Lancaster</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
193	<i>Dec 7<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Mark Kerr</i>	<i>full</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Colonial Civil Service</i>	<i>Barrow Park Worley and Ripart Surrey</i>	<i>Thomas Kerr</i>	<i>Late Governor of the Falkland Islands</i>
	<i>1892</i>	<i>Margaret-Louisa Harrison</i>	<i>full</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>Barrow Park Worley</i>	<i>John Harrison</i>	<i>Merchant</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <i>Richard W. Swaught</i> or after <i>Banns</i> by me,								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, <i>Mark Kerr</i> and <i>Margaret Louisa Harrison</i>			in the Presence of us,		<i>John Philip Schlie</i> <i>John Harrison - Arthur Harrison</i>			

In the **1911** census, Mark Kerr was living at 'Townplace', Lindfield, Haywards Heath, Sussex. He was 46, a widower, and a Gentleman Farmer. At home with him were 5 servants.

Mark Kerr died in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of **1939** on the Isle of Wight. His WILL stated that he died at Morton Cottage, Brading, Isle of Wight, on 2 May 1939, and his effects (£96 5s.) were left to 2 people on 7 February 1952, when Probate was granted.

The *Portsmouth Evening News* for Friday 5 May **1939** reported:

**CAPT. MARK KERR DIES AT BRADING**  
Colonial and Army Service

*At one time Colonial Secretary of Northern Nigeria, Captain Mark Kerr has died at Morton Cottage, Brading, after an illness of about 18 months. Captain Kerr retired from the Colonial Service at the outbreak of the Great War, and entered the Royal Army Service Corps, with which he served in France, Belgium, and India. Since coming to Brading 1921, he had made a wide circle friends, particularly among local ex-Servicemen, being Chairman of the Brading branch of the British Legion from its formation in 1925 until last year, when ill-health forced him to retire. The Conservative cause in the Island has lost a staunch supporter, and the local branch of the Conservative Association an experienced Chairman. The funeral takes place at Brading Parish Church to-morrow at 1 p.m.*



Brading is located on the East side of the Isle of Wight, a short distance from [Ryde](#), and is one of the Island's oldest towns. The parish church of Brading, St. Mary's, dates from the twelfth century.

## POSTSCRIPT

On August 31, **1843**, in the Cathedral of St. Michael and All Angels, Bridgetown, Barbados, Thomas Kerr, planter of Saint Joseph parish, married Frances Ann Toppin. The Archdeacon of the Diocese of Barbados himself performed the ceremony. Mark Kerr was born in Barbados, about 1866. In 1890, Bishop Waite Hockin Stirling and Governor Thomas Kerr laid the cornerstone of Christ Church Anglican Cathedral in Stanley.

He died at his residence, 'Abingdon', in Dayrells Road, Bridgetown, Barbados, aged 89 years, and was interred in Westbury Cemetery on August 5, 1907. In **Thomas'** will, (d. 4 Aug 1907), he left his effects (£89 6s.) to Mark, a retired civil servant.

The *Morning Post* of Tuesday 13 August **1907** announced:

*News has been received by telegram of the death of Mr. Thomas Kerr, in his ninetieth year, at his residence. Fair Abingdon. Barbados, where he settled fourteen years ago, two years after retiring from the Civil Service. He was born on 1818, and entered the public service of Barbados in 1856. He served there as magistrate and judge, and was member of the Legislative Council. Major the 11th Regiment of Militia, he became commanding officer in 1858. Administrator of Grenada from August 1878, to April 1879, he was appointed Governor of the Falkland Islands in 1880, and retained the post until 1891. The C.M.G. was conferred on him in 1887.*

From *The London Gazette*:

DOWNING STREET, December 17, 1873.

*The Queen has been pleased to appoint Frederick Watts, Fitzherbert Alleyne, and Thomas Kerr, Esquires, to be Judges of the Assistant Court of Appeal of the Island of Barbados.*

DOWNING STREET, September 13, 1880.

*THE Queen has been pleased to appoint Thomas Kerr, Esq. (late Judge of the Assistant Court of Appeal, Barbados), to be Governor and Commander-in-CHief of Her Majesty's Settlements in the Falkland Islands and their Dependencies.*

*To be Ordinary Members of the Third Class, or Companions of the said Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George: Thomas Kerr, Esq., Governor of the Falkland Islands. 1887.*



Francis Ann Toppin Kerr, the wife of Thomas, died on 28 Sep **1854** and was buried at Saint John's Parish Church Cemetery, Saint John, Barbados.

Thomas Kerr died in August **1907** and was buried at Westbury Cemetery, Bridgetown, Saint Michael, Barbados.

## Thomas KERR

from the Dictionary of Falklands Biography.

Governor, was born in 1818 in the West Indies, the son of David C. Kerr, a commissary (military supply officer). He spent almost all his life in the Caribbean, entered the public service in 1855 and was a member of the House of Assembly in Barbados for three sessions from 1863-1866, representing the parish of St Joseph. In 1877, Kerr was a member of the Barbados Legislative Council and a judge of the assistant Court of Appeal (at £450 a year). He later referred to his *'loyalty to Governor Hennessy [of Barbados] when he [Hennessy] encouraged such furious hostility...and was deserted by most of those whose duty it was to assist him'*. During 1878-9 Kerr administered the government in Grenada.



*'such a fuddler...'*

In August 1843, Kerr married Frances Ann Toppin: they had two daughters, Frances Evangeline Inniss and Isabellah Blanche Fleming. In April 1857 he was married a second time as a widower to Anna Maria, the daughter of Daniel Douglas a planter. They had two sons, Allan and **Mark**, and two daughters, Lilian and Mabel.

Kerr was appointed governor of the Falkland Islands in 1880 when he was already over the normal retiring age, and he served for ten years - about twice the usual term. The family arrived in the *Theben* on 24 November 1880 - 'I can speak very favourably of the comfort which we enjoyed' he told London. His age was accentuated by a long white beard and Captain WISEMAN observed that Kerr was *'a charming man but such a fuddler and very loath to lose anyone to whom he can pour out his troubles, and they are many'*. On the family, he remarked *'His Excellency is a very pleasant gentlemanly man, most unsophisticated, as indeed are all his family. He has lived nearly all his life in the West Indies, principally at Barbados. Mrs Kerr is a very pleasant motherly creature who has never been to England in her life, having been born in the West Indies and always lived there'*.



Prince Albert Victor (1864-92)...

In January 1881, Kerr was received by the two royal princes ALBERT VICTOR and GEORGE on board HMS *Bacchante*. They remembered him from their visit to Barbados the preceding year; but trouble in the Cape Colony meant that their stay was cut to 36 hours.

Kerr was unfortunate that his treasurer J.W. COLLINS was corrupt and when the latter's safe was eventually forced open, a succession of administrative horrors emerged. Collins was arrested on 31 December 1881 and Kerr appointed his son Allan to hold the fort. Sorting out the confusion took its toll: Kerr reported *'my own health has suffered severely from such close application and night work'*.





### 'The family man'

The colony was financially self-supporting during Kerr's term of office, but he faced problems over the survey and leasing of land. The FIC and the larger landowners were opposed to a proper survey (as it would reveal that their holdings were much larger than they were claimed to be) and wished to prolong their leases or change them into freehold. Kerr originally opposed them, writing to London in 1881: 'It is not desirable to dispose of the crown lands in such a way as to strengthen powerful local interests to the prejudice of small independent settlers'. Having resisted them until 1885, Kerr changed his view

completely after his leave in England during 1886. His successor **GOLDSWORTHY** attributed this change to the fact that the Governor's daughter Mabel had married a West Falkland landowner.

Kerr took nine months sick leave from March to December 1886 (thus missing the second peat-slip in Stanley, which swept away several buildings and killed two people) and ACS **BARKLY** stood in as lieutenant-governor. Kerr later took six months leave in 1889-90, when EP **BROOKS** administered the government.

On his return in 1890, Kerr found that he had been attacked in Parliament by an Irish MP, Swift MacNeill, on the prompting of James **SMITH** of Stanley. MacNeill asked why Kerr was returning to Stanley, aged 72, and implied that there were charges of embezzlement against him. A committee of LegCo (F.E. **COBB** and J.J. **FELTON**) exonerated the governor, though in unenthusiastic terms. The final LegCo of Kerr's term authorised the sale of lands to the F.I.C., despite the protests of Dr. **HAMILTON** that the two unofficial members (Cobb and Felton) had interests. Kerr laid the foundation stone of the new cathedral on 6 March 1890.

Kerr's daughter Mabel married Charles Anson on 7 April 1885: they had three sons born in the Falklands, two of whom died in Stanley during the influenza epidemic of 1890. Lilian Kerr married Commander Frederic Echlin RN in Stanley on 2 December 1885.

Kerr left Stanley on retirement on 28 March 1891. In a plea for a substantial pension (£500 a year), he pointed out that he only received £22 a year from Barbados and had no private income, except a trifle derived from a small sum invested in Jamaica. He added:

*'To myself personally my 10 years residence in this rough, cold and stormy region, after a lifelong residence in the delightful climate of the West Indies where my health was perfect and my life enjoyable has been a term of physical suffering and discomfort, a Siberia in which my health has been impaired by repeated attacks of bronchitis brought on by the inevitable exposure without which I could not conscientiously have performed the duties which devolved on me.'*

He retired to Barbados where he died at his home, Yair Abingdon, in August 1907.

Kerr was not really up to the strains of government and it is difficult to see why he was appointed and why kept in office for so long. FE **COBB** told the FIC London office:

He is over seventy years of age and he is incapable of comprehending the fact that a government which disregards the wishes and susceptibilities of the people is an anachronism. He is personally unpopular and though I say nothing as to matters affecting his private character, I know enough of his ways to be able to say that I can not feel any great respect for him.

The *Falkland Islands Magazine* was a little kinder to him. On his departure in 1891, the April issue recorded that:

*During the exceptionally long period of his Governorship the prosperity of the Islands has steadily progressed. Much has been done to improve the roads and sanitary state of Stanley .....education has been made compulsory and a Savings Bank established.....the trade of the Islands has expanded and in comparison with any other British Colony, when the number of the inhabitants is considered, takes the lead.*

By giving way to the landed interests, Kerr effectively put a brake on the development of a small farmer class and condemned the colony to stagnation and the loss of its more ambitious sons through emigration.

Authors

David Tatham

