Lieutenant General Samuel Townsend [403]

Is this the Gainsborough portrait of Samuel?



Portrait of Samuel's wife Elizabeth Ford (nee Aikenhead) by John Smart (1742-1811)
Sold at Christies in 2002 for £14,340



Portrait of Samuel in the Uniform of a Major 19th Foot
(Courtesy of The Green Howards Museum)



Short Regimental Histories

Drogheda's Light Horse (18th Light Dragoons)
The British Army between 1600 and 1815 depended on a system of patronage for raising and maintaining regiments. Under this system a noble patron undertook to raise and equip a regiment. In the case of cavalry this meant providing the troopers, their equipment and uniform. Horses were paid for from government funds and generally were sourced in Ireland.

The1st Marquis of Drogheda, Lord Henry Moore served as a Cornet (junior officer responsible for carrying a cavalry pennant or guidon) with the 12th Dragoons in 1744. Being responsible for law enforcement in various districts of Munster, and for Ordnance and Artillery held in the Leinster region he raised a Yeoman Cavalry force in the Monasterevan, Kildare, area in 1759. This was named the 19th Light Dragoons and became known as Drogheda's Light Horse. In 1763 it was re-designated the 18th Light Dragoons.

The Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment)
Originally raised on the 25 February 1689 by Colonel Francis Luttrell, it claims to have its roots in some companies of pikemen and musketeers raised for the Revolution of 1688 against James II when William of Orange was invited to come over from Holland to take the throne.

The regiment was numbered 19th of Foot in 1751, by which time it had already acquired its nickname of the "Green Howards" from its commander, the Hon Charles Howard, and the green facings to its tunics. This was to distinguish it from the Old Buffs who were also known as Howard's after their colonel, George Howard and wore buff facings.

In 1875 the Regiment received royal patronage and was able to add "Princess of Wales's Own" to its title. This, of course, was Princess Alexandra, wife of the future King Edward VII. On the general reorganisation of the Army in 1881, it became The Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment). Eighteen members of the regiment have been awarded the Victoria Cross.

The Border Regiment
The 34th (Cumberland Regiment) was raised in 1702 and amalgamated with the 55th (Westmorland Regiment) in 1881 to become The Border Regiment. In 1743 the 34th of Foot were sent to Flanders at the outbreak of the War of Austrian Succession, conducting a famous rearguard action at Fontenoy on 30 April 1745. For this action it was awarded the right to emblazon a laurel wreath on the Colours.

Charles Fort, Kinsale, Co Cork



Copy of Letter from Samuel's father made by John Townsend [622]

Copy of Directions and Advice, from my Great grandfather, Samuel Townsend Esqre of Whitehall, County of Cork (fifth son of Bryan Townsend of Castle Townsend) to his son Samuel, (My mother's father) afterwards General Townsend, on his first parting with him.

My Dr Sam —

We are now parting for a time, but I hope we shall have a happy meeting againe, and as much Satisfaction in it as this World can afford. My anxiety will be great for you, and you will seldom or Ever be absent from my thoughts, — I know you Soe well that I am persuaded your Conduct will be as happy, and as well as possible, and that your usual Sobriety and goodness will Ever subsist with you, however as 'tis an Ease to my mind at parting to repeat Something to you that I have often observed to you before, tho I am obliged to Doe it in a hurry I would not omitt it — First then lett your strictest Duty to God be your Constant care we can hope for no Blesing or happyness but through the Almighty, this World is transient and triffling filled with troubles and uncertainty - he must however doe the best we can in it, in the most prudent and virtuous Manr - A Blessed Eternity is wt we must have the greatest Regard to, and indeed is the only thing worth our anxiety and Care ———

Next to your Duty to God, that of your Duty to yr King & Country you are not to forgett. ———

Be courteous and obligeing to Every Body and never on any occasion Suffer your Selfe to fall in to any passion, or Hurry in your thoughts or Expressions. ———

Consider Seriously in Every thing you Doe and Every Steppe you take, that you may by that meanes always act with prudence and Discretion, and not hurry yor Selfe into Any thing that may not afterwds answr to yor Satisfaction. ——

Be carefull to read dilligently and to gett the best instruction you can in your intended profession, when you think you can read in ye Country, I think Capt Gwynns at Upham in Hampshire will be a convenient place, where you may be assured of a sincere Welcom. Trinsarian I think in ye Same way of, but you will have more Company there than at Upham, however I would have you use both places as your Discretion will Direct you. —

Be prudent in your Expenses, but dont want wt ever is necessary for a Gentleman, you pritty well know my Situation and Circumstances and that I shall always answr you Calls while I am able for I begrudge you nothing. You are Centered in my heart and from your Conduct and behaviour with Virtue Honr & discretion will be placed the greatest Happyness I can have in life. I am Hurryd so I am forced to Conclude, may the great God always bless and preserve you, and have you in his Keeping. write often, never omitt a month at a time at most. ——

be carefull in your Choice of Company ~~A Gentleman~~ Keep none that are wicked or Wild or of loose bad Characters, for Such bring discredt and lead a man into misfortunes.

My dear Sam,

We are now parting for a time, but I hope we shall have a happy meeting againe and as much satisfaction in it as this world can afford. My anxiety will be great for you, and you will seldom or ever be absent from my thoughts. I know you soe well that I am persuaded your conduct will be as happy and as well as possible, and that your usual sobriety and goodness will ever subsist with you, however as 'tis an ease to my mind at parting to repeat something to you that I have often observed to you before, tho' I am obliged to doe it in a hurry I would not omit it. First then lett your strictest Duty to God be your constant care we can hope for noe Blessing or happyness but through the Almighty. This world is transient and triffling filled with troubles and uncertainty, we must however doe the best we can in it, in the most prudent and virtuous manr. A Blessed Eternity is what we must have the greatest Regard to, and indeed is the only thing worth our anxiety and care.

Next to your Duty to God, that of your Duty to your King and Country you are not to forgett.

Be courteous and obliging to Every Body and never on any passion or hurry in your thoughts or expressions.

Consider seriously in everything you Doe and every steppe you take that you may by that means always act with prudence and Discretion, and not hurry your selfe into anything that may not afterwards answer to your satisfaction.

Be carefull to read dilligently and to gett the best instruction you can in your intended profession. When you think you can read in ye Country I think Captain Gwynne[1] at Upham in Hampshire will be a convenient place where you may be assured of a sincere welcome. Trimsaran[2] I think in ye same way of, but you will have more Company there than at Upham however I would have you use both places as your discretion will Direct you.

Be punctual in your Expenses, but dont want whatever is necessary for a gentleman. You pritty well know my situation and circumstances and that I shall answer your calls while I am able for I begrudge you nothing. You are centred in my heart and from your Conduct and behaviour with virtue Honour and discretion will be placed the greatest Happyness I can have in life. I am Hurryd soe I am forced to conclude. May the Great God always bless and preserve you, and have you in his keeping. Write often, never omitt a month at a time at most.

Be carefull in your Choice of company, keep none that are wicked or wild or of loose bad characters for such bring discredit and lead a man into misfortunes.

The Gordon Riots, June 1780

In 1778 the Government passed the Catholic Relief Act. The ostensible intention of this piece of legislation was, as the Act's preamble states, to mitigate some of the more extreme manifestations of official discrimination against Roman Catholics at the time, in particular it absolved Catholics from taking the religious oath when joining the British military. There were very strong expedient reasons for this act of seeming benevolence, notably the fact that British military forces at the time were stretched very thin, with conflicts ongoing with France, Spain and America, and opening the door to recruitment of Catholics was a significant factor in the eventual resolution of this shortfall of manpower.

Lord George Gordon, a powerful and extreme Protestant, set up the Protestant Association in 1780, demanding the repeal of the Catholic Relief Act. He spread fears of "Popery" and royal absolutism; he suggested that Roman Catholics in the British army, especially the Irish, might join forces with their French and Spanish co-religionists and attack England. He saw the Catholic Relief Act as a threat to Anglicanism and, since being a Roman Catholic was equated to being a traitor, his Association attracted extremists. Much anti-Catholic feeling was roused.

Crisis arose in late June 1780 when a crowd some 60,000 strong marched to the House of Commons to present a petition for the repeal of the Catholic Relief Act. The crowd included a riotous element and the whole event got out of hand. The mob took over London for a week. The London homes of Rockingham, Devonshire, Mansfield and Savile (the main advocates of the legislation) were attacked; those of Mansfield and Savile were burned and the others had to be defended by the militia. The mob looted and burned Catholic churches and presbyteries, attacked prisons and freed prisoners.

On the 7th July, the army was called out and it was later reported that 285 of the rioters were killed, 173 wounded and 139 arrested. Lord George Gordon was tried for high treason but was found not guilty. However, 25 of the rioters were hanged and twelve imprisoned. It is estimated that over £180,000 worth of property was destroyed during the rioting.

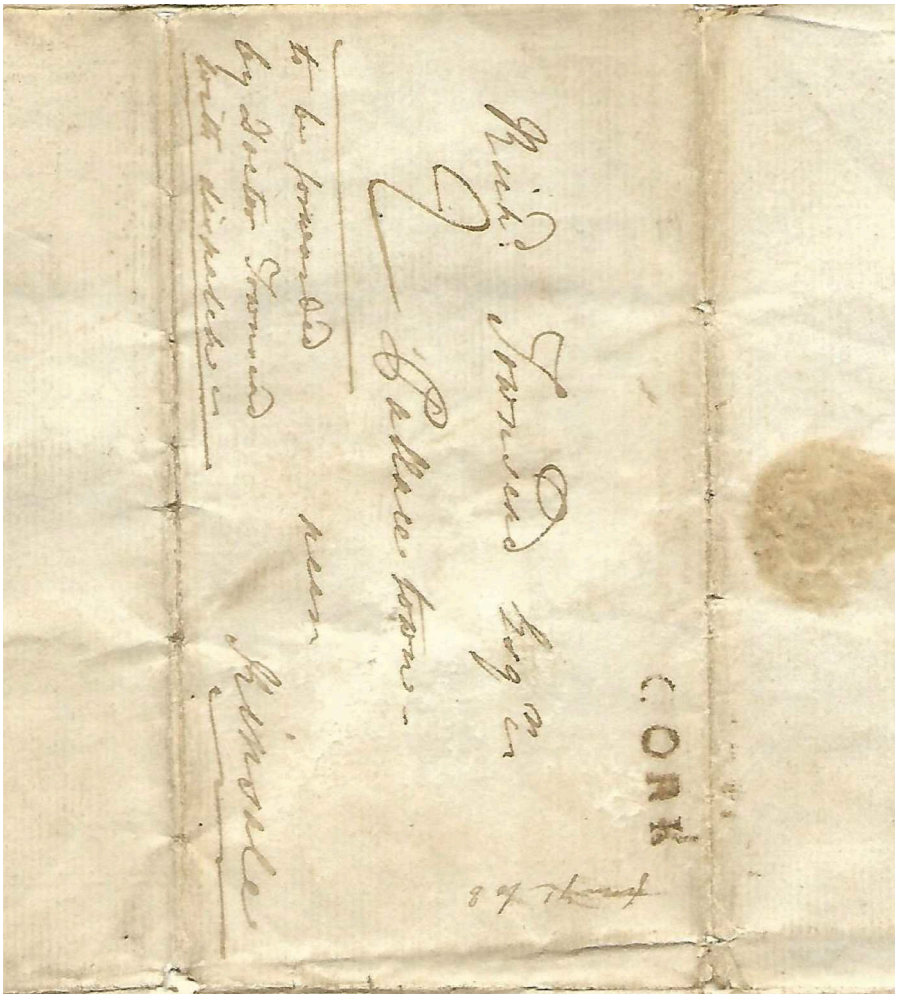
St George's Church, Hanover Square, London



St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, London



Samuel's Letter to his cousin Richard Townsend of Pallastown



My Dear Richard — Upper Wimpole Street - London
7th April 1787

I have received Yr favor of the 24th of last month, & delivered Mr Swaines letter to Mr Dawson with my own hand, & at ye same time gave Him Yr letter to me to read & and desired He would loose no time in writing to Mr Swaine, & to you also, if He judged it necessary —

When He first came to me with His Lawyer Mr Crispin to demand the six thousand pounds, I laughd at the application, & told Him it was evidently a mistake, a misunderstanding, & askd Him if it was possible that you cond have sent Him to me for so large a sum of money, without the least advice of ye matter — He however affirmd that ye mistake was not on His side — When He read Mr Swaines letter & Yrs He said it was a mistake of Mr Swaines which He was ye more surprised at as Mr Swaine was extreamly clear, & a man of Business.

However I find every thing is settled here except Yr part, and as a proof of His being right He informd me that every Other sum was remitted from Ireland hither & lodged in ye Bank, & that the remitters benefitted

near one p^r Cent by it, the course of Exchange being in favor of Ireland — I told Him I could say nothing to that, but that I knew to a certainty that you was at all times ready to fullfill y^r engagements with the most exact punctuality, of which He had not ye least doubt — Mr Crispin informs me the money must be remitted here (& so did Mr Dawson) & asked me if I would receive it on y^r Account — I told Him I should readily do any thing you desired to promote y^r interest or convenience, & in that respect could say no more then that y^r directions should meet every attention from me — & this I repeat to y^r Self, if I can serve or oblige you, I desire you will command me most freely —

Mrs Townsend joins me in sincerest compt^s & regards to you Cousen Townsend & fire side, & I ever am My Dr Richard

Y^r truly affect^t Kinsman —

Saml Townsend

I sent y^r letter to their Lawyer, who did not return it till yesterday or I should have acknowledged it sooner —

ENVELOPE :

CORK

Richd. Townsend Esq;

Pallace town; near Kinsale.

to be forwarded by Doctor Townsend with dispatch.

LETTER :

Upper Wimpole Street, London.

7th April 1787.

My Dear Richard,

I have received your favour of the 24th of last month, and delivered Mr Swaine's letter to Mr Dawson with my own hand, and at the same time gave him your letter to me to read, and had desired he would lose no time in writing to Mr Swaine, and to you also, if he judged it necessary.

When he first came to me with his lawyer, Mr Crispin, to demand the six thousand pounds, I laughed at the application and told him it was evidently a mistake, a misunderstanding, and asked him if it was possible that you could have sent him to me for so large a sum of money without the least advice of your brother. He, however, asserted that your mistake was not on his side. When he sent Mr Swaine's and yours, he said it was a mistake of Mr Swaine's, which he was the more surprised at, as Mr Swaine was extremely clear, and no man of business.

However, I find everything is settled here except your part, and as a proof of his being right, he informed me that every other sum was remitted from Ireland hither and lodged in your bank, and that the service thus benefitted near one per cent by it; the course of exchange being in favour of Ireland. I told him I could say nothing to that, but that I knew to a certainty that yours was at all times ready to fulfil your engagements with the most exact punctuality, of which he had not the least doubt. Mr Crispin informed me the money must be remitted (??) (and so did Mr Dawson), and asked me if I would receive it on your account. I told him I should readily do anything you devised to promote your interest or convenience, and in that respect could say no more than that your directions should meet every attention from me --, and this I repeat to yourself; if I can service or oblige you I devise you will command me most freely.

Mrs Townsend joins me in sincerest compliments and regards to you cousin Townsend and fire side, and favour me by Dr Richard.

Your truly affectionate Kinsman,

Sam'l Townsend.

I sent your letter to their lawyer, who did not action it 'till yesterday, or I should have acknowledged it sooner.