

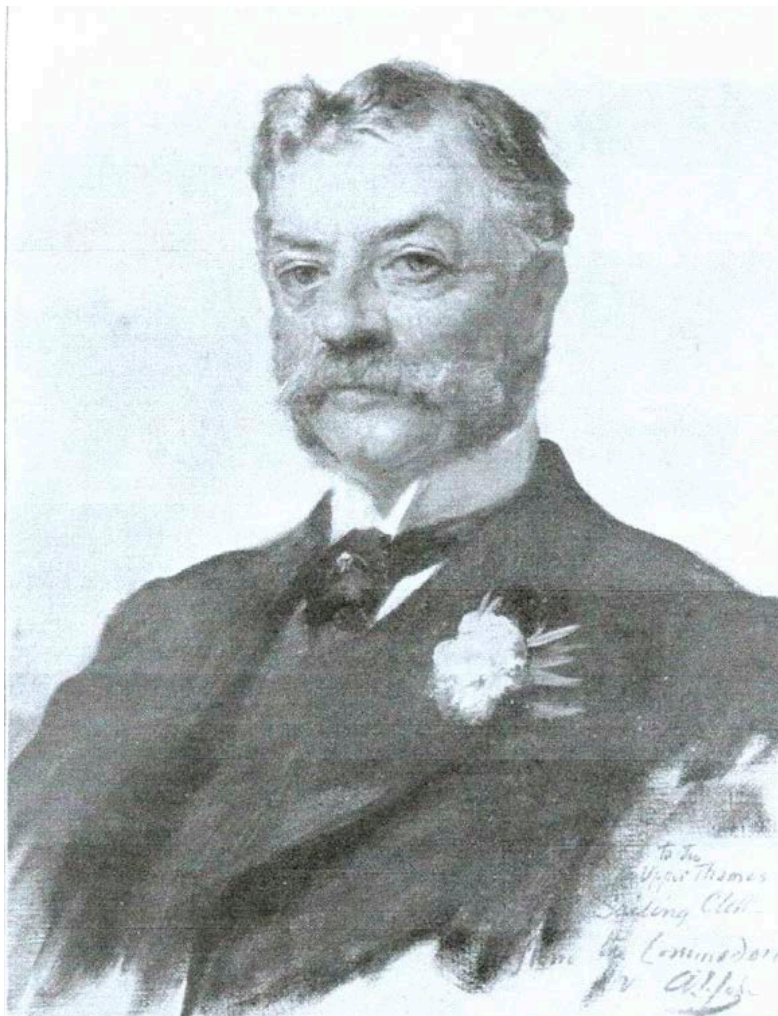


Local History Collection

09 - Colonel Sir Fitzroy Clayton of Fifield

Winter 2021

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Colonel Sir Fitzroy Clayton K.C.V.O

Colonel Sir Fitzroy Clayton of Fifield House was born in 1834, the only son of the Rev. Augustus Philip Clayton and Georgina Elizabeth Talbot and great grandson of Henry Somerset, 5th Duke of Beaufort.

He was educated at Eton and, in 1848 whilst still at school, owned a 15 foot, fully rigged, Plymouth Schooner which he sailed on the Upper Thames.

In 1853 he was commissioned into the Grenadier Guards, serving with King Edward V11 (whom Fitzroy later taught in Musketry) in the Crimean War, receiving the Crimea Medal (and clasp) and Turkish Medal. He retired with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in 1871 and was knighted in 1909.

Sir Fitzroy Clayton took up 'Gentleman' yachting seriously after his return from the Crimean War. His yachts included a 12 ton Cutter kept on the Isle of Wight, a 26 ton Cutter and a 19 ton Yawl.

He sailed for many years as an amateur hand on board the racing Schooner Egeria and also the 60 ton Cutter Vanguard. He acted as helmsman with marked success in the 30 ton Cutter Xenia. In later life he was a Justice of the Peace for Berkshire and Chairman of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute where he invented the drop keel for lifeboats. A number of lifeboats have been named after him, including the "Sir Fitzroy Clayton" at Newhaven 1912-1930. Built by Thames Ironworks, she was self-righting, and was launched 66 times, saving 108 lives.

Sir Fitzroy was appointed Knight Commander, Royal Victorian Order on 25th June 1909 by King Edward V11 for his services to the RNLI as Chairman.

Sir Fitzroy lived in the village at Fifield House (also known as Fyfield House) from the 1870's until he died in 1913. He is buried at Braywood Church (now demolished) Cemetery with his late wife, Lady Isabel Clayton, daughter of the 3rd Marquis of Headfort, who died in 1909.

The funeral service was attended by Windsor Castle's St. George's Chapel choir and the coffin was taken to the cemetery on a gun carriage escorted by a bearer party of the Grenadier Guards and 3 officers of the regiment. King George V sent Mr. Harold Clayton, eldest son of Sir Fitzroy, a letter of condolence mentioning Sir Fitzroy's service to the RNLI and his good relations with the late King

The estate of Fifield House was later for sale in 1919 and this is when the land was gifted to the local community for the Village Hall and Braywood Cricket Club by the new owner Captain Turnbull.



The Sir Fitzroy Clayton 1912-1930



Crew of The Sir Fitzroy Clayton