

## Lord Chelmsford's Orders to his Column Commanders

By Adrian Greaves

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Members will be aware of the existence of Chelmsford's 1878 orders to his five Column Commanders following the articles on the subject in Journals Four and Five, I also reviewed the matter in my book *Isandlwana* published by Cassell in 2002.

Towards the end of a Society lecture event that took place in Essex last year, a Society member, Tony Lynch, approached Prof. John Laband, Ian Knight and me with a large brown envelope. On examining the contents, we saw a number of contemporary letters from Lord Chelmsford but what really caught our eye was a battered and stained envelope marked

### *OIC Helpmakaar By Order Bellairs 24.12.78*

The content of the envelope revealed material written on standard blue official paper as used by the Army Headquarters staff at the time of the Zulu War. Like Durnford's orders recovered from the battlefield, it was equally stained and very fragile – probably from long exposure to the elements for several months following the battle of Isandlwana.

A cursory examination and comparison with Durnford's orders revealed that this newly found document appeared virtually identical with Durnford's orders with only minor exceptions, possibly caused by the copies being hurriedly written out by a clerk. Our combined belief was that this document was probably Colonel Glyn's actual order for engaging the Zulus and that, like Durnford's orders, had lain on the battlefield before being picked up.

It is now in a private collection.

This document supports my belief that Chelmsford's staff, thinking that the original orders had been lost, and that, for their convenience, re-wrote part of the orders to give the impression that Colonel Durnford should have assumed command of the Isandlwana camp – which he was not.

See Journals Four and Five for my full assessment, or my book *Isandlwana* published by Cassell.