

Table of Contents

Editorial.....	1
Catholics in India.....	2
Catholics in Mangalore – A Bicentennial.....	6
St Thomas' Mount.....	7
Records of the East India Company held by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, London.....	8
Some Facts about the Black Hole of Calcutta.....	11
Oral History.....	15
Major Thomas Back of the Madras Army.....	19
A Brief History of the East India Company Site in Poplar.....	20
Images from the front and back covers.....	23
Request for help – James Henry Fletcher.....	24
Looking for Armenians in India.....	25

Editorial

Editorial team: Michael Gandy, Tony Fuller and Jenny Law

Welcome to the first edition of the Families in British India Society Journal.

Despite FIBIS still being a relatively young organisation, you will see that the first edition of our Journal contains a wide diversity of features, ranging from Michael Gandy's article on researching Roman Catholic records in India to articles on individuals, information about archives together with the start of our regular features including project reports and book reviews. If you come across any new - or even old books - that you think may be of interest to readers, feel free to write a review of about 150 words and send it on to the editor. Or, if you are engaged on large-scale or even small-scale research, let the editor know – you never know who may be able to help you!

However, despite all the articles and prospective articles that we have, we still need more AND we need interesting family photographs to illustrate life in India. We already have a good deal of material for the second edition of the Journal and we will be ensuring that it is with members before the end of December. That said, much of the material to hand is the work of a very limited number of people and we will be looking to FIBIS' members to provide articles thereby relieving the strain on the trustees to provide copy.

We are also looking to develop the services we provide to members. We already have an extensive collection of postcards and can provide copies, on computer disk, if members should want them. Donald Jaques maintains his research service, only asking for a donation when the research is completed. We can undertake searches on Harts Army Lists and can also search through the microfiche of Welsh recruits into the EIC's armies. We are also in the final stage of a major piece of research with BACSA and are discussing further projects with both the Society of Genealogists and the OIOC.

We are delighted to be able to offer Peter Bailey's excellent research on the Roman Catholic Church of St Thomas in Madras. An abridged version of the text appeared in The Genealogist of September 1999 but we have a full version, including Peter's extensive list of names of people associated with the church between 1751 and 1880. Look for the advertisement elsewhere in the Journal.

We are always happy to hear from our members. However, as ever with family history societies, if you are expecting a reply, please include either a SSAE or an International Reply Coupon.

Catholics in India

By Michael Gandy

A great many of the British in India were Catholics but Catholicism was not part of the British presence and, apart from chaplaincy duties, Catholic churches and the Catholic institutions in India were entirely unconnected with the Raj.

It has always been believed that the apostle Thomas preached in India around 52AD and established a Christian community on the Malabar Coast. He was martyred in 67AD and buried at Mylapore, the modern Madras. The community he founded was greatly strengthened by the migration of about 400 Syrian Catholics, led by Thomas of Cana, in 345AD. This group expanded and flourished but remained isolated throughout the Middle Ages.

In the 14th century Marco Polo visited these Syrian Christians in Madras and also found others at Quilon. Other Europeans reported on the state of Christianity in the following century (John of Monte Corvino in 1289, Brother Jordan in 1321 and John de Marignolli in 1348). However all contact ceased in the 15th century.

The arrival of the Portuguese, and especially their conquest of Goa in 1510, changed the picture. Franciscans and Dominicans made many converts and in 1534 Fr Joao de Albuquerque was appointed Bishop of Goa with jurisdiction from the Cape of Good Hope to China. Soon afterwards churches, schools and orphanages were established on the island of Salsette, near Bombay, and at other places along the coast. Within a few years 150 churches had been built in the area bounded by Diu in the north, Madras in the east and Colombo in the south. Catholics had first preached in Ceylon in 1540.

There was even greater development during the missions of St Francis Xavier (1542-1552). After strengthening Christianity in Goa, St Francis also reformed the Parava, the pearl fishers of the South, who had nominally accepted Christianity 20 years before.

Later in the century the Jesuits were invited to preach at the court of the Emperor Akbar. Although he was not converted the Jesuits remained influential and some of the royal princes were baptised after the Emperor's death.

At the same time Christianity spread in Calicut and Travancore where conversions ran for a time at between 400 and 1000 per year. In 1560 Christianity spread to the island of Manaar, where there were many Paravas, and there were missions in the Kingdoms of Megapatam, Gingi, Tanjore and Madura. In 1576 the Jesuits opened a school at Madura which in 1598 became a seminary. The work continued, though with much less success in Northern India.

Most of the major religious orders worked in India over the next two centuries and the work of the Portuguese went on side by side with that of the French. The mission at Pondicherry was established in 1674 and the Capuchins soon converted not only Hindus but also the entire local community of Syrian Christians. The work of the French continued above all in Surat and Madras.

Sectarian differences continued amongst the Christians themselves. In Ceylon the Protestant Dutch forcibly converted about 150,000 Catholics in Jaffna alone.

By the middle of the 18th century there were perhaps a million Christians in India mostly in the territory controlled by the French and the Portuguese. In Northern India the French worked in Tibet between 1703 and 1745, and Nepal where the mission was suppressed in 1769. However numbers contracted towards the end of the 18th century. The worldwide suppression of the Jesuit Order in 1773 naturally weakened their missions. Soon after, persecution by Tippoo Sahib (1781-1799), Sultan of Mysore, brought about the deaths of 100,000 Christians and 40,000 more were induced to apostatise. In just one year, 30,000 more were enslaved on account of their religion.

However the establishment of British rule brought religious peace, at least at the level of Government. Throughout the 19th century Catholics were free to worship and to evangelise. The work was still done largely by missionaries from the Catholic countries of the Mediterranean and, of course, by the very large number of native Catholics who were perfectly capable of running their own Church - and did so.

In the 19th century the Government in India found the large class of Catholic natives very useful in establishing European rule. There had also been many mixed marriages between early servants of the East India Company and natives of every religion. Catholicism never had the standing of Anglicanism and it was not clearly a British religion like most other forms of Protestantism. On the other hand Indian-born Catholics could be considered to some extent Europeanised by their religion.

In the Army a high proportion of the lower ranks were of Irish origin. Most of them were nominally Catholic and a substantial number of Indian priests were paid for chaplaincy duties. In June 1853 it was estimated that there were 600,000 Indian Catholics and 16,000 Catholic soldiers. There were 16 bishops and 303 priests, of whom 200 were European and 78 were paid for chaplaincy duties. European in this context does not mean English, or even Irish. After 1835 some Catholic baptisms, marriages and burials were returned to the India Office, 197 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NG. There are separate films of Catholic material as follows:

Bengal 1842-1856	Films N//RC/1 – 5
Madras 1835-1854	Films N/2/RC/1 – 8
Bombay 1842-1854	Films N/3/RC/1 – 5

These registers usually define people as European, Indo-Briton or Native Christian and there are a number of registers with hardly any Europeans at all. After this period Catholic material is spread generally throughout the returns. The returns are only a small percentage of the Catholic registers of India but may represent quite a high proportion of entries relating to soldiers.

The Catholic Church in India was not affected by the End of Empire and a letter to the parish priest in the area where your ancestors lived is as likely to get an answer as a similar letter written to anywhere else. Full details of the parishes are published in the Catholic Directory for India, though it is not easy to find an up-to-date copy in the UK. The most recent copy at the India Office Library dates from 1984; addresses for the older churches are likely to be correct even though the priests have changed.

Catholic cemeteries too are not at risk to the same extent as Anglican ones.

It is important to remember that Goa, Daman and Diu remained Portuguese possessions throughout the period of the British Empire and are therefore not covered by the records. In 1800 they had a population of 178,478. By 1900 this had grown to 531,798 of whom 262,648 were Christian, the majority of whom were Catholic.

The areas of Pondicherry, Karikal, Yanam, Mah, and Chandernagore likewise remained French. In 1901 Pondicherry had a population of 273,185.

Throughout the 19th century the number of priests and religious orders working in India increased. Vicars-General were appointed from 1834 and a full hierarchy of Bishops was established in 1886. The following was the situation in the various parts of India by the 1880s.

Northern India

Up to about 1820 the whole area of Agra, Patna, Bettiah, Lucknow and Sardhana was served by just six priests and little progress was made until the 1840s by which time there were about 20,000 European Catholics. By 1856 the number of priests had increased to 27 and Irish soldiers were estimated as about two-thirds of the army in that area. During the Mutiny of

1857 almost every church and school was destroyed but by 1889 there were 23,800 Catholics with 62 priests in Agra and Patna, but probably less than 1000 in the Punjab. The 17th century Jesuit missions in Lahore and Delhi had been short-lived. This area was taken over by the British from the Sikhs in 1849 and by 1850 there were 8,000 Catholics, mostly European and native soldiers. The Capuchins had been in charge of this mission since 1807.

In Bettiah there had been 805 baptisms between 1769 and 1848. In 1867 there were 1201 Catholics and in 1889 there were 1800. In 1840 Churee, a colony of exiled Nepalese, had 357 Catholics.

Bombay and Poona

In 1854 there were 70,000 Catholics in this area. Bombay was under the care of the Carmelites and Poona of the Jesuits.

Verapoly or Malabar

This mission had been in the charge of the Carmelites since 1701 and Mangalore was separated from it in 1845. After 1859 Carmelites of the Syrian Rite largely ran it and in 1885 it counted 275,600 Catholics with 429 priests.

Quilon

This area was separated from Verapoly in 1853. In 1885 there were 97,496 Catholics with 55 priests.

Madura

In 1870 the Catholic population was substantially increased by conversions on the coast of Achanars, in the southern district of Tinnevely, owing to the work of the missionaries during the great famine of that year. In 1885 there were 176,169 Catholics with 78 priests.

Madras

French Capuchins had served the mission until 1792 when Italian Capuchins took over. In 1832 however Irish secular priests took charge of the area which then included Vizagapatam (separated 1849), Hyderabad (separated 1851), and Nagpur. There were also 6000 Telugu-Christians whose ancestors had been converted by the early Jesuits. In 1878, 3176 famine victims became Catholics and in 1885 there were altogether 56,548 Catholics and 58 priests.

Pondicherry and the Carnatic

The Priests of the Society for Foreign Missions of Paris took over Pondicherry in 1776 and over the next 30 years they spread their influence throughout Kumbakonam, Coimbatore and Mysore though they were severely stretched and in 1840 Mysore was served by just one priest. In 1850 Pondicherry had 83,000 Catholics with 24 priests, Mysore 13,000 Catholics, and Coimbatore 16,000 Catholics with four priests. There were numerous conversions amongst the pariahs but priests who had themselves formerly been pariahs met with much resistance. However by 1885 there were 202,691 Catholics in Pondicherry with 105 priests, in Mysore 27,175 with 39 priests, and in Coimbatore 24,027 with 27 priests.

Bengal

At the end of the 18th century there were Augustinians in Calcutta and Bandel and Capuchins in Chandernagore where they had settled in 1706. Elsewhere Catholics were served by Goanese clergy and were estimated at 25,000. In 1834 the area was entrusted to the English Jesuits, who were joined later by other Orders and produced some conspicuous successes such as the conversion of Chota Nagpur. In 1880 there 14,100 Catholics in Calcutta with 48

priests. In Dacca there were 11,300 Catholics with 17 priests and in Central Bengal 1200 Catholics with 9 priests.

Travancore and Cochin

These areas had the largest number of the old-established Syrian Christians.

Mangalore

By 1880 this area had 84,000 Catholics with 72 priests

Ceylon

In 1851 there were 125,320 Catholics; in 1871 173,269 and in 1881 199,270.

Burma

In 1851 Burma had 3000 Catholics; in 1871 8500 and in 1881 21,689.

Growth continued steadily for the next fifty years. In 1871 there were 2603 churches and chapels throughout India. This rose to 5044 by 1901 and 6712 by 1922. In 1884 there were 1765 priests working in India, by 1913 this had risen to 2150 and by 1922 to 3280. In 1881 there were 242 religious Brothers and 603 Sisters; in 1911 643 Brothers and 3615 Sisters. By 1922 there were 63 Congregations of women working in India with 4965 Sisters. There were 12 Congregations of men with 723 brothers involved in educational work in colleges, schools and orphanages as follows:

Brothers of St Gabriel	Pondicherry and Mysore
Brothers of St Patrick	Madras, Coimbatore, Agra and Lahore
Brothers of St Francis of Assisi	Colombo and Madras
Brothers of the Sacred Heart	Trichinopoly
Brothers of the Immaculate Conception	Mysore and Trichinopoly
Brothers of St Teresa	Verapoly
Brothers of St Joseph	Jaffna
Brothers of the Christian Schools	Colombo, Burma and Malacca
Christian Brothers	Calcutta and Allahabad
Franciscan Tertiaries	Agra and Lahore
Franciscan Missionary Brothers of Paderborn	Colombo, Nagpur and Agra
Little Brothers of Mary	Trincomalee

In 1871 there were 47,250 pupils in 1168 Catholic schools. By 1922 this had risen to 337,130 pupils in 4946 schools. By 1901 there were 158 orphanages with 11,108 inmates. By 1922 there were 261 orphanages. Altogether in 1884 there were said to 1,256,100 Catholics; in 1913 1,786,465.

These figures are of course two-edged. Considering the vast size and population of India, Catholics (and indeed Christians of all denominations) were only a small percentage; recently - in 1993 - they were said to be 1.76%. However they were very much concentrated in certain areas (and have been reduced in recent generations by the wholesale emigration of Anglo-Indians and Goans). Yet for those who are concerned with the British in India the above figures give no indication of race. All one can say is that those who ran the Catholic Church in India were not British and, apart from chaplaincy duties, were not catering primarily for the British. In India, as in England, it was the Anglicans who represented the Establishment and Catholics had a religious loyalty that was entirely separate from their national background.

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Neill, S. The Story of the Christian Church in India and Pakistan (1970)
Soares, A. The Catholic Church in India (1964)
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Marshall, T.W.M.
This article originally appeared in Catholic Ancestor, February 1998

Catholics in Mangalore – A Bicentennial

On 4 May 1999 the Mangalore Catholic community began celebrating the bicentennial of their ancestor's liberation after 15 years of captivity at Seringapatam. The celebrations will culminate in an International Convention of Mangalorean Catholics from 26 to 31 December at Mangalore on the western coast of South India.

There is a range of events being planned. These include the launch of a number of specially commissioned genealogy books, including what will probably be the definitive publication on Mangalore Catholics, the ten volume Genealogical Encyclopaedia of Mangalorian Catholic Families by Michael Lobo. This major publication will supplement other works on this community and will undoubtedly be one of the major works on Catholic ancestry in India published for many years. There are still some places available for people that may want to take part in the Convention.

Enquiries should be sent to:

The Bicentennial Steering Committee

C/o The Rector, St Aloysius College, Mangalore 575 003, India.

Further details, including the extensive list of publications on the Mangalore community can be obtained from the Secretary. As usual, please enclose an SSAE/IRCs.

Webmaster Note:

Please note this is a past event, archived to the website for historical information

St Thomas' Mount

Roman Catholic Baptisms of Europeans, 1751-1880

We are delighted to be able to offer members copies of Peter Bailey's outstanding piece of research on the Baptisms of Europeans at St Thomas' Mount Church, Madras, between 1751 and 1880.

The research report comprises text and a list of all the baptisms, plus an index, which took place in the church, a great number of which do NOT appear in the OIOC records or on the Mormon Church films. To supplement their records, a copy of the report and lists has already been lodged with the OIOC in London and is being used extensively to help researchers at the Enquiry Desk.



*The Portuguese Mission Church of Nossa Senhora de Expectacoa
at the summit of St Thomas' Mount Near Madras, originally built 1547*

Peter has kindly donated a copy of the report to FIBIS on disk and has given permission for FIBIS to pass it on to people who may be interested in it.

Webmaster Note:

An A4 format, comb-bound report could be produced if you are interested (price is on application). Please express your interest to Peter Bailey:

fibis-chairman@fibis.org

Records of the East India Company held by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, London

By Tony Fuller

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets now administers the local government area in which the East India Company operated until its demise in 1858. The records held in the Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives at Bancroft Road Library, Mile End, London E1 are an absolute treasure trove of information, very little of which is duplicated by information at the OIOL.

I have been working my way through their holdings and have been re-cataloguing some of the material as it only appears in general lists especially where, for example, a number of items are in one envelope. The following list is the material which they hold which relates to the Poplar Fund and Poplar Almshouses, the means by which mariners were able to save for their 'old age' although many of them had retired from the sea by the age of forty.

Space permitting, I will be submitting a list of the rest of the material for inclusion in the next edition of the Journal. The list below gives the item's full title and the archive reference number.

Many of the items detailed below contain extensive lists of names. Researchers will have to visit the Library to look through the records to look for ancestors.

NB: Tony Fuller is currently writing a book on the history of the Poplar Fund and the EIC's operation in Poplar. The book will include indexed lists of all the Poplar Fund recipients between 1789 and 1858, which is the only period for which records are available. The book will include details of the service records of the mariners of all ranks from captain to seaman who either inhabited the almshouses themselves or whose families inhabited the almshouses after the mariners had died. The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum are publishing the book next year.

TH/8367/9	An Account of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Funds for the Almshouses at Poplar from 30th June 1709 to 30th June 1810
TH/8367/10/1/1	Regulations for the Admission of Pensioners upon the Poplar Fund, 5th December 1738 (poster)
TH/8376/10/1/2	An undated manuscript list of the Pensions usually granted to Nautical Officers, Widows and Children admitted to the Poplar Fund
TH/8376/10/1/3	Regulations for the Admission of Pensioners upon the Poplar Fund, 12th April 1785 (poster)
TH/8376/10/1/4	Pensions to Nautical Officers, Widows and Children as determined upon the 31st March 1813
TH/8376/10/1/5	Pensions usually granted to Nautical Officers, Widows and Children as determined upon the 12th April, 1785
TH/8367/10/1/6	An Extract of a Report of the Committee of Shipping, 8th April, 1793
TH/8376/10/1/7	Report of the Committee of Shipping, 9th May 1798, Poplar Almshouses, Increase in Numbers
TH/8376/10/1/8	Report to the Committee of Shipping, dated 1st April, 1799, regarding Charles Montague
TH/8376/10/1/9	Regulations for the Admission of Pensioners upon the Poplar Fund, 8th April, 1800 (poster)
TH/8367/10/1/10	Resolution from The Court of Directors, the 23rd December 1807, Resolved that the following Regulations be adopted in future respecting the Payment of Pensions on the Poplar Fund
TH/8376/10/1/11	Regulations for the Admission of Pensioners upon the Poplar Fund, 7th April, 1813 (poster)

TH/8367/10/1/12	Regulations for Admission of Pensioners on the Poplar Fund established by The Court of Directors of the East India Company on 9th May, 1821
TH/8376/10/1/13	Title cut from front cover of the Contingent Poplar Fund book
TH/8367/10/1/14	Amount of Pensions to be given to Persons of the folio-wing descriptions from the Poplar Fund under the regulations established by The Court of Directors on 9th May, 1821
TH/8367/10/1/15	Regulations for Admission of Pensioners on the Poplar Fund established by The Court of Directors of the East India Company on 7th November 183?
TH/8367/10/1/16	Amount of Pensions to be given to Persons of the following descriptions from the Poplar Fund under the regulations established by The Court of Directors on 7th November, 1832
TH/8376/10/2	Regulations for the Admission of Pensioners upon the Poplar Fund, 8th April, 1800 (printed, poster)
TH/8376/10/3	Regulations for the Admission of Pensioners upon the Poplar Fund, 1821 (marked Appendix 1)
TH/8367/11	Contingent Poplar Fund; Pension receipt book, 1813-1815
TH/8367/12	Contingent Poplar Fund; Applications for Admission, 1816-1842
TH/8367/13/1	An Extract of Regulations of the Consolidated Poplar Fund, 29th April, 1814
TH/8376/13/2	An Extract of a Report of the Committee of Shipping, 28th May, 1823, regarding an application by Mrs. Ann BARNARD
TH/8367/13/3	A Manuscript copy of the Accounts etc. of the Poplar Fund, October, 1831
TH/8367/13/4	Appendix 2 to the Accounts etc. of the Poplar Fund, October, 1831, (Manuscript)
TH/8367/13/4	Appendix 3 to the Accounts etc. of the Poplar Fund, October, 1831, (Manuscript)
TH/8367/13/4	Appendix 4 to the Accounts etc. of the Poplar Fund, October, 1831Statement showing the difference of charge to the Poplar Fund if the present pensioners were to have their allowances reduced to the scale of April 1813 (Manuscript)
TH/8367/13/4	Appendix 5 to the Accounts etc. of the Poplar Fund, October, 1831,Number and description of persons receiving pensions from the Poplar Fund and the amount paid to each class (Manuscript, six pages)
TH/8376/13/5	Cases -wherein pensions have been granted to Children of Maritime Officers -who have passed the limited age, with reference to the 20* Clause of the Regulations of the Poplar Fund, dated 7th November 1832
TH/8367/13/6	An Extract of a Report of the Finance and Home Committee, 19th October, 1836, regarding an application by Mrs. Jessy RAITT
TH/8367/13/7	List of Names, Rank and dates of Admission to the Poplar Fund of those persons who are in receipt of income from other Sources and date of the Regulations which govern their respective
TH/8367/13/8	A Manuscript copy of the Accounts etc. of the Poplar Fund, 21st July, 1855
TH/8367/13/9	A Manuscript copy of the Accounts etc. of the Poplar Fund, 21st July, 1856
TH/8367/13/10	A Manuscript copy of Accounts of:

	Capital and Consolidated Poplar Funds, 1st May 1860; Capital of the Poplar Fund on 1st May 1861;EIC Hospital and Chapel, 30th April, 1863 and Comparison figures for 1864 and 1865
TH/8376/14	Poplar Fund - Value of the Present Annuities allowed to the present incumbents on this Fund, 25th August 1832
TH/8376/15	Journal of Occurrences in the East India Company's Buildings, Poplar, 1816-1827
TH/8376/16	Journal of Occurrences in the East India Company's Buildings, Poplar, 1828-1847
TH/8376/17	Application for Admission to the Upper and Lower Buildings, Poplar, 1808-1849
"The Poplar Pension Fund", Ian Baxter	
"The Cockney Ancestor"	
"The Journal of the East of London Family History Society", London, 1988, pp. 14-17	

Some Facts about the Black Hole of Calcutta

20 June 1756

Despite all of the modern research that has been undertaken into the myth of the Black Hole of Calcutta, there are still publications that insist on carrying on the falsehoods originally perpetrated by John Zephaniah Holwell, the main promoter of the Black Hole story. Holwell wrote the original account of the affair and in doing so made himself out to be the real hero of the hour. However, despite the efforts of the Imperial hagiographers like Macauley to maintain the myth, recent research has proved the story as told by Holwell to be without foundation.

There is little doubt that during the night of 20 June 1756 a number of British captives were confined in a room usually used to confine members of the Bengal or Fort William garrison. Holwell, in his usual approach to self-glorification, claimed that of 146 people that had been confined the previous evening, only twenty-three were still alive the next morning. Holwell only names eleven survivors, the remaining twelve being identified by other, but equally unreliable commentators.

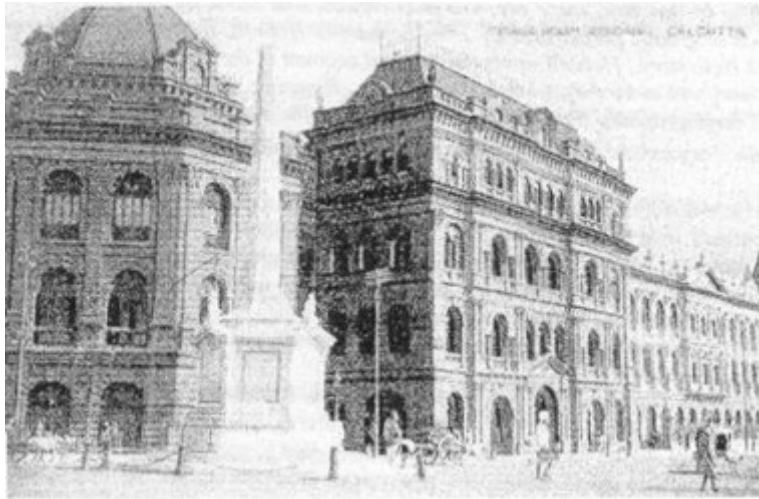
Analysis of the records of the Fall of Calcutta show that there were not that many Europeans left in Calcutta. Medical research has shown that there would have been no good medical reason for so many people to have died in such a short space of time and that, in fact, it would have been a physical impossibility for so many well-nourished Europeans to fit into such a small space. In addition, despite what Holwell may have said there were no women in Calcutta let alone the Black Hole, their captors having freed them all earlier that day. Several of the people that Holwell contended died in the Black Hole were known to have died in the fighting for the Fort. Even more bizarrely, several of the people whom he reported as having died had left the Fort in the days prior to the final battle and were alive and relatively well further down the River Hooghly.

Holwell was unable to name over seventy of the British dead, which is nonsensical as the majority of the dead would have been his fellow HEIC merchants and traders with whom he would have eaten every day.

A great many people claim descent from the people who either died in or survived the Black Hole. Holwell insisted on erecting a monument close to the site of the demolished Black Hole to those whom HE said had died. Interestingly despite such monuments being erected by public subscription, the HEIC refused to make any contribution towards it and Holwell paid for the monument himself. After Holwell died the monument was allowed to fall into disrepair and was eventually demolished.

Some sixty years later Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, initiated a good deal of research into the Fall of Calcutta and instructed his Keeper of Records, Charles Samuel Hill, to undertake some proper research. With Curzon's support, Hill published two major works between 1902 and 1905, which effectively removed any shred of credibility from Holwell's self-serving account.

Curzon then replaced the Holwell monument with one of his own but this time the names inscribed upon the monument bore closer relationship to the truth of who died in the Black Hole.



As part of some work in progress on the Black Hole I have made comparisons of the information in Hoiwell's list and Curzon's list. However, what may be of more interest to family researchers is the following information, which is as comprehensive as it can.

Company Servants (49 names):

Drake	Manningham	Parkes	Frankland
Machet	Holwell	Eyre	Baillie
Bellamy	Sumner	Court	Cooke
Coales	Valicourt	Jenks	Revely
Law	Billers	Ellis	Tooke
Rider	Jeb	Carse	Lindsay
Senior	Vasmer	Drake	Smith
Thoresby	Dalrymple	Orr	Wilkinson
Byng	Leycester	Page, Stephen	Page, Edward
Johnson	Harwood	Grub	Street
Gosling	Ballard	Lushington	Dodd
Toriano	Knapton	Charlton	Bardet
Grey			

Military Officers (19 names):

Commandant:	Machin		
Captains:	Clayton	Witherington	Buchanan
	Scott	Grant	
Engineer:	O'Brien		
Lieutenants:	Blagg	Carstairs	Hays
	Simpson	Pickard	Talbot
	Bishop		
Ensigns:	Bellamy	Scott	Walcott
	Hastings	Wedderburn	

Clergy:	Bellamy	Mapletoft
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Company's Doctors:	Gray	Fullerton	Taylor
	Knox, senior	Inglis	

Other Doctors:	Knox, junior	Fletcher
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Lawyers:	Dumbleton	Putham	Ridge
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	Atkinson Mackpherson	Berdal Porter	Cocker Hillier
Free merchants:	Beaumont Douglas Blackford Cole	Margas Wood Nixon	Holmes Cruttenden Stevenson
Foreigners:	Mackpherson Le Beaum Montrong Coquelin Joam	Carvalho Montague Freze Beanto Bodle	Albert Montro Piniot Caytano
Other Inhabitants: Unspecified occupation:	Baldrick	Parker	Pyefinch
Tailors:	Wilson	Rannie	Phillips
Butchers:	Whaley Stopford	Burton	Alsop
Carpenters:	Guy Todd	Surman Stopford	Cole Blue
Smiths:	Leech	Burton	
Court Officers	Tilley	Cartwright	Bruce
Tailor:	Coverly		
Sail Maker:	Osborne		
Joiners:	Blaney	Barnet	
Fiddlers:	Ling Janniko	Tuball Heneriko	Hilmbrat John

Sea Captains and Officers (50 names):

Dundas	Rannie	Lemmon	Walmsley
Dean	Wedderburn	Parsons	Purnel
Tool	Widderington	McLaughlin	Nickeson
Tart	Young	Pennatz	Watmore
Morris	Sanders	Lord	Hunt
Graham	Aston	Summers	Iver
Caley	Elvis	Champion	Collins
Brown	Campbell	Dixon	Mill
Carey	Lewis	Baldwin	Austin
Best	Baillie	Laing	Savage
Johnson	Smith	Costilly	Cozens

Other members of the garrison are known to have absconded when they could.

Source: *The Orme MSS., India IV, pp 951-955, quoted Ahmed, pp. 127-135*. In all there are 192 names on Orme's list, grouped by occupation. Those names in italics are the people known to have left the Fort, on 18 and 19 June.

The main sources used were:

AHMED, Saiyid Amin: *The Black Hole of Calcutta*, New Delhi, 1935

HELL, Samuel Charles: *List of Europeans and others in the English Factory in Bengal at the time of the Siege of Calcutta in the year 1756*, Government of India, Calcutta, 1902

Bengal in 1756-1757, 3 Volumes, Government of India, London, 1905

All are available at the Oriental and India Office Library in Euston.

Oral History

By Geraldine Charles

What is Oral History? Is it important? These questions are best answered by quoting the Oral History Society itself:

- Oral History records the living memories and feelings of all kinds of people, many otherwise hidden from history and creates a more vivid picture of our past
- Oral History is the recording of people's memories. It is the living history of everyone's unique life experiences on sound and video tape. It is a vital tool for our understanding of the recent past. No longer are we dependent only on the written word.
- Oral History is new and exciting because it is interactive: it is shared history and a rare chance to talk to history face to face
- Oral History preserves the past for the future

It is my great regret that my own interest in my family's Anglo-Indian past developed after many of those from my grandparents generation had passed on. All those Reunions and Family Gatherings where reminiscences filled the air, the occasions when as a child one sat playing in a room only half listening to the adults recollections of India - they were a fund of stories of a now vanished life style and more importantly of members of my family, long since dead.

However it is still not too late to attempt to preserve at least part of the picture of Anglo-Indian life. Many of us come from families that are "extended" to the point where relatives merge into distant cousins and long standing family friends, with the courtesy title of uncle and aunt. This network of friends and relatives is potentially an important source for both factual and anecdotal stories of the Anglo-Indian way of life and of members of your family from your parents, grandparents and sometimes great grandparents generation, albeit second or third hand sources.

Where many friends/relatives might balk at a request to write down their life-stories, a recording or series of recordings of their recollections, is far less daunting a task - all they have to do is reminisce. The success or failure of the venture will be down to you (your equipment and interview technique).

I would also add, particularly for Anglo Indians, recording reminiscences allows the accents/intonations of people to be preserved as well as differences in the words they use when compared to people in the UK. For example the use of "box" for suitcase, "bottle" for jar, "glare glasses" for sun glasses. Also Anglo-Indians will use "Auntie" and "Uncle" as a term of respect when addressing older people who are not related to them.

There are also specific phrases such as "my head is paining" instead of "hurting". The use of "my girl" in the same way that a British person would perhaps use " (my) dear" or "love" or "chuck", rather than in the rebuking way "my girl" would be used in the UK. This phrase is often used between older women who know each other well.

If after reading this you decide to go ahead and try to record the reminiscences of older relatives/family friends, it is advisable to do some careful preparation before hand. The following two booklets are an invaluable source for those contemplating such action and will help you get the best out of such a venture if both are consulted.

Interviewing Elderly Relatives by Eve McLaughlin, 1986
published by FFHS, available from Eve McLaughlin, Varneys,
Rudds Lane, Haddenham, Nr. Aylesbury, Bucks, UK. It is also
available from the Society of Genealogists in London. The current
cover price is £1.25 plus postage & packing of 50p in the UK

Oral History – Talking About The Past, by R Perks, 1992, published by the Historical Association in association with The Oral History Society. Available from National Sound Archive at the British Library

Knowing in theory what you want to do is all very well, but no matter how many books you read on technique, there is nothing to beat practical experience, preferably before you embark on your first interview. What you are aiming for is a tape of reminiscences, with you appearing on the tape as little as possible - you certainly don't want to end up with a recording that sounds like a police interrogation or a series of short exchanges and one word answers!

The National Sound Archive run a very good one day course for novices which covers many aspects of Oral History including practical experience in operating equipment and the technique of interviewing (both from the aspect of interviewer and interviewee). Having attended the course, I can certainly recommend it.

THE ORAL HISTORY SOCIETY

- The Society encourages people of all ages to tape record or write down their own and other people's life stories.
- Offers practical support and advice on getting started, equipment, best techniques, looking after tapes and how to make the best use of what you collect.
- Members are drawn from all backgrounds and have widely differing interests
- Through its twice-yearly journal "Oral History" and conferences it brings together individuals and local groups from all over Britain and Europe

By joining the Society you will not only receive their journal, and other publications at a reduced rate. You will also be able to call upon the Society's specialists for advice on your own project and have access to regional contacts across the country through the Society's database and join a local group in your area..

Further details from Mr R Perks, Secretary The Oral History Society, C/o National Sound Archive, British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB

Home Page <http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/>

Joining the OHS <http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/#joining>

OHS Journal <http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/#journal>

THE NATIONAL SOUND ARCHIVE (NSA)

Originally opened in 1955, this institution was absorbed into the British Library in 1983. One of the largest sound archive in the world, it houses over 1 million individual recorded sound items. Its collections comprise all forms of recording media, including wax cylinders, wire, tape, discs and audio and videocassettes. The earliest recordings in the collection date from the 1890's and include Florence Nightingale, William Gladstone and (reputedly) Queen Victoria.

Oral History is only one of the subjects that the Archive is involved in – its areas of interest include music, drama, literature, language & dialect, wildlife & indusro-mechanical sound. Services offered by the NSA for people interested in Oral History include:

- Access to the Curator of Oral History who can offer comprehensive answers to both written and telephone enquiries
- Public talks on aspects of Oral History
- Technical and archival advice on equipment
- Training and guidance in interview techniques
- Database of current oral history work in the UK
- Listening & Viewing services in London (South Kensington), West Yorkshire (Boston Spa) and Devon (Barnstaple), for both individuals and groups

- Retrieval programme for the rescue and safe custody of oral history collections for which no permanent home can be found locally

Whilst the records at the Oriental & India Collection (formerly the India Office) are permanently preserved and will be accessible to future generations tracing their Anglo-Indian forebears, it must be borne in mind that the picture one gleans of a family from such records is just the bare skeleton. It is therefore important that those of us interested in the history of our families realise that we are currently in the unique position. We have available to us, through the older members of our families and their contemporaries, access to a wealth of folk memories and reminiscences of life within the Anglo-Indian/Domiciled European communities. It is up to us to act now, to make every effort to preserve this information for the future before it is too late.

The recording of such reminiscences is fairly easy to do, cassette recorders and microphones are easily obtainable, and the Oral History Society (National Sound Archive, 96 Euston Rd, London NW1 2DB) have produced an excellent book for beginners *Oral History – Talking About The Past*.

There are two organisations currently recording reminiscences which include India & Far East, if you would like further details please contact them direct, remembering to enclose an SAE/International Reply Coupon:

- Oral History Project, Empire & Commonwealth Museum, Clock Tower Yard, Temple Meads, Bristol, BS1 6QH
- Cheryl Perreira, 700 Starview Court, Anaheim Hills, California 92808 USA; (714) 974-3227

THE ANGLO INDIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Anglo-Indian oral history project will consist of a collection of taped audio histories of individual Anglo Indians around world, capturing their recollections, thoughts and traditions in a vibrant, colourful format that personalise and add a rich dimension to the history of the Anglo Indian community.

Anglo-Indians are defined for the purposes of the project as individuals of mixed heritage, born in India or Burma, and descended from persons of British, European or other non- Indian origin. This project is especially timely and urgent to do the continuing dissemination of Anglo Indians around the world and their rapid assimilation into the cultures and traditions of their adopted countries. If this rich source of Anglo Indian folklore and history is not preserved, the Community's history will be incomplete in many critical aspects.

The value of this project lies in the unique history of this small multi-ethnic community that has spread out from its homeland and is now represented in many countries throughout the World. The community came into being because of dramatic historical events that brought British and European men to India and its very existence and survival has been tied to and impacted by many significant historical events. Its members have experienced tumultuous highs and lows-from their respected status as members of the governing arm of the British in India to their later marginal existence shunned by both British and Indians alike. Nevertheless, the Anglo Indian community has made significant contributions in many different fields, producing statesman, scholars, actors, artists, musicians, athletes and authors of world wide repute.

This project will probe the recollections of members of the community who lived through some of the most defining moments in Indian history, capturing their anecdotal evidence of traditions, attitudes and lifestyles, as they struggled to survive in India, while straddling two often diametrically opposing cultures. The project will also analyse the impact of this struggle on individual Anglo-Indians as they began new lives outside the land of their birth. It will serve as a unique and essential companion to any analysis of the history of British colonisation of India.

In order to accomplish a project of such vast dimension and scope with very scarce resources, volunteers are being recruited from within the community to conduct oral history interviews with their fellow Anglo-Indians. Thus, the Anglo Indian community itself will be implementing the project and the success of the Anglo Indian oral history project will depend entirely on the efforts and commitment of members of the community. This element will add a unique dimension to the project so that when completed it will truly represent a testimonial to the ingenuity, survival and vast accomplishment of the Anglo-Indian people throughout history and today. The project has expanded from the United States to Canada, India and Australia. It is represented on the Internet as part of the Anglo-Indian home page created by Adrian Gilbert in Melbourne, Australia and can be accessed at:

<http://elecpress.monash.edu.au/ijais>

Please consider joining in this very worthwhile effort. Help us create a piece of living history! To volunteer to be interviewed, conduct oral history interviews or assist in any way, please contact:

Cheryl Perreira
700 Starview Court, Anaheim Hills, California 92808 USA, (714) 974-3227
E-mail: cperreira @ fullerton.edu

[Please remove the spaces either side of the @ symbol in the email address]

Major Thomas Back of the Madras Army

By Tony Fuller

At the Society of Genealogists Fair I was approached by a member of the public who told me that he had an original army commission awarded to Major Thomas Back of the HEIC's Madras Army. He offered to send me a copy which duly arrived accompanied by a letter in which was an offer to sell me the original commission for the price originally paid, £10. I put a cheque in the return post.

When the commission arrived it was clearly not in pristine condition. However, a great deal of detail could still be seen, including the embossed stamps and the signature of Queen Victoria, appointing Major Back to "her armies in the East Indies." Of course, I knew nothing about the recipient of the commission so, on one of my visits to the OIOL I tried to find more about him.

The first files I consulted were the Cadet Papers (L/MIL/160/425-429) which gave me the following information. Thomas's application form for the HEIC Madras Army is dated 1 February 1826. He was nominated by John Masterman (a Director of the HEIC) and was recommended by Stewart Marjoribanks, a London merchant and HEIC ship owner.

Thomas was born to John and Mary Back (his father was a grazier) on 16 January 1810 and was baptised on 8 March the same year at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Dover. He was educated at Mr. Temple's School and St Margaret's School, Dover. When I looked through the Cadet Papers and the OIOL biographical card index, I also found that Thomas had a brother, John, who was born 10 March 1806 and baptised at the same church on 13 April of 1806. John attended the HEIC's Addiscombe College and like his brother, joined the Madras Army. (File reference L/MIL/9/140/86)

Thomas was appointed to the 2nd Native Regiment as an Ensign on his arrival in India. On 26 November 1828 Thomas was appointed Lieutenant and in the Army List for 1830 is shown as a supernumerary and as being on furlough. By 1839 he had moved through the seniority list to become the Senior Lieutenant. On 8 October 1839 he was appointed Captain and he again moved through the list until he was appointed Brevet Major, vide the commission, on 11 November 1851. At the same time he was given seniority in the Queen's Army as well as the Madras Army. For the whole of his military service he was with the same regiment.

He does not appear in the East India Calendar for 1854 and 1855 but neither does he appear in the retired or invalid list, nor is he given as a casualty. However, a search of the death records for Madras show that he died on 28 June 1854, aged 44 years and was buried the following day at Ootacamund (N/2/33/186).

Thomas Back left no will. Instead, his estate was dealt with through letters of administration, dated 13 January 1855. The attorney appointed by the Court was William Reirson Arbuthnot, a partner in a law firm in Madras, who seemed to have specialised in probate work. He was given responsibility for the estate because the only living relative of Thomas Back was his brother, John, who was then a Major (Brevet Lt. Colonel) in the Corps of Artillery. John Back was stationed in Rangoon, which was described in the administration as being "outside the jurisdiction of the Court of Madras" and as such, the estate was passed to an attorney to deal with. There is no inventory of the estate but the administration states that Thomas had never married, that he had no children and that his parents were dead. It also describes John Back as his elder brother and next of kin. On 11 February 1855, John Back also died. Like his older brother, John had not married nor did he have any children. As in his brother's case, the lawyer disposed of the estate. As with Thomas, no cause of death is given for John.

I then had no real use for the commission other than curiosity. I have now donated the original document to the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum at Bristol, but I do have some copies of it should there be any descendant of the family still alive who would like a copy.

A Brief History of the East India Company Site in Poplar

The Honourable East India Company was founded on 31 December 1600 by a Charter awarded by Queen Elizabeth I. The Charter gave the merchants of London ONLY, many of whom were members of other merchant adventure companies, the EXCLUSIVE right to trade to the East Indies. With certain, frequently ignored, restrictions on their activities, they were given monopoly rights from the Cape of Good Hope to the East, as far as they could travel. It must be remembered that at this time the East Indies was essentially the Spice Islands with India playing a minor role in the HEIC's activities.

Because of the changing role of the Company and the Company's changes in fortune caused by the English Civil Wars, the Company was always under threat, especially because of the monopoly that it held. That said, Cromwell and Charles II renewed the charter, but Cromwell made the Company change its structure to meet criticisms and shortfalls in the way that it was funded. By the end of the Stuart period, the Company was under threat from other companies and individual rivals, many of whom ignored the monopoly and whom traded privately into the East Indies.

The East India Company first met in the home of its first Chairman, Alderman Sir Thomas Smythe, who lived in Bow. Because it was a mercantile operation, it obviously revolved around the sea and rivers, at a time when London and the River Thames was the dominant maritime and mercantile area in the country.

From its inception, the EIC had a presence in the Poplar and Blackwall areas and as early as 1610 there are Court records agreeing levels of charitable funding for the poor in the local parishes, especially in Stepney, where the Company supported those EIC workers who were sick or injured.

In 1614 the Company decided that it was no longer practicable to take its ships up river to Deptford. There were several reasons for this decision, the most pressing factors being the increasing size of the East Indiamen, the congestion further up river and the practical fact that larger ships could not negotiate the bend in the river around what we now know as the Isle of Dogs. The Company therefore bought land at Poplar which, at that time, was still relatively rural but was already being used as a staging site for longshoremen. The docks were dug out, by hand, and in August 1614 the first ship, The Dragon, which went on to be the flagship of the first convoy to the East Indies, was laid in the dock. The Dock was completed in 1615.

The Company was owned and managed by Merchants to whom their duty to God, together with all its charitable implications, was only marginally less important than what they saw as a God-given fiduciary duty to themselves. By 1616 the Company had discussed the practicalities of establishing a charitable hospital or almshouses in Poplar and they established a committee to look at the practicalities of leasing or buying a particular Elizabethan building in the area.

They were then given or promised two substantial amounts of money to establish the hospital. Firstly, the Company was left a legacy of between £300 and £400 by Hugh Greet, a Merchant who had served them in Bantam. He was brought back to England under arrest for allegedly stealing diamonds from the Company but, shortly after his arrival back in England, Greet died. Despite his poor treatment by the Company, he never the less left the residue of his estate to the Company to found the hospital and, nevertheless, in doing so, completely confounded his critics. The Company was then promised a further £400 by Sir Thomas Roe after his famous embassy to India, although their dithering eventually led Roe to withdraw the offer.

By December 1619 the Council confirmed that they would either purchase or build a hospital/hospice, close to their dockyard but, in common with many of their decisions of that time, nothing was done to implement their decision. However, in 1625 a Captain Thomas Stiles, who was prominent in the Court minutes of the time, promoted the purchase of the building in Poplar so the Company appointed another Committee, this time with Stiles as its

guiding force. After a period of negotiation with the owner of an Elizabethan manor house in Poplar that they had originally viewed in 1619, the first hospital/almshouses were purchased for the sum of £360 and a satin suit.

The Council then agreed to spend another £350 on renovating the building which, when the renovations were completed, was able to house 20 men. The building also contained what had previously been a large dining hall, which was converted to use as the first East India Company Chapel, the forerunner of the current Chapel.

In 1633 the inhabitants of Poplar, whose numbers had grown in direct relation to the expansion of the EIC docks, started to petition the Company for a more formal Chapel building, which was built at the EIC's expense and opened in 1656. Interestingly, the building was never consecrated and the ground could only be used for burials. Christenings and marriages did not take place in the Chapel until it converted to parish status over two hundred years later.

Things did not go well in the almshouses. It was generally unregulated and admitted any EIC employee who was able to petition the Company successfully. The first two occupants were expelled for theft, drunkenness and bigamy. There were considerable problems with the conduct of the almsmen, who were accused of continual drunkenness, allowing their wives to stay in the buildings overnight and theft.

However, whilst the regulation of the almshouses was being discussed at Council level, in 1647 the EIC's Chaplain, the Rev. Edward Howes, was allowed to open a day school in the almshouses which the Company funded. Although there is some debate whether EIC employees' children only used the school there can be little doubt of the social value of any school in the area.

In 1657 the Chapel's first minister was given rooms in the almshouses and started to manage the building. Prayers were to be said twice a day and psalms were to be read to the almsmen by a designated one of their number. In 1674 Council approved the first formal regulations for the almshouses and by 1679 the Council had agreed to regularise the funding of pensions to sick and disabled employees who lived OUTSIDE the almshouse, thereby establishing what was later to be called the Poplar Fund.

The almshouses continued throughout the next century, its fortunes reflecting that of the Company in general. In 1730 the school was closed because of falling rolls.



Detail from the ceiling
boss in the East India
Company Chapel, Poplar
The ships should be
facing the other way,
permanently sailing
towards the east

However, the Company only ever undertook rather piecemeal and small scale renovation work on the almshouses and by 1785, when the building was believed to be around two hundred years old, it was so dilapidated as to be dangerous. The Council of the Joint Company decided to demolish the old building and to build a series of almshouses around the site of the chapel. By 1796, twelve new houses had been built for commanders and sworn officers close to what is now the East India Dock Road. In 1798/9 thirty-eight homes were built for the lower ranks at the lower end of the site, giving rise to their descriptions as the Upper and Lower Buildings.

The level of application and need was such that by 1808 a further eight homes had been built for officers and a further twelve built for the other ranks. At the same time a Vicarage, which still stands as 115 Poplar High Street, was built.

Throughout its history, the Poplar Fund, which was used to support the Company's maritime pensioners, was subject to the economic fluctuations of the Company. For example, the loss of the general trading monopoly in 1803 saw a rush on the Poplar Fund's assets, caused by those mariners who had been put ashore. The loss of the Canton tea monopoly in 1833 had an even greater impact on the Fund and the almshouses. The Company had to establish a new pension fund from the Poplar accounts, to meet the needs of the mariners of all ranks that it had beached and to whom it still had contractual obligations. In addition, many of the mariners affected by the loss of the tea monopoly applied for admission to the Poplar site, thereby causing even more administration for the chaplain and even longer waiting lists.

The Sepoy Uprising of 1857 marked the end of the East India Company and its involvement in Poplar. In 1858 the Company was officially wound-up and its assets were sold off. In 1866 the Chapel became the Parish Church of St Matthias and the land around the Chapel, outside the graveyard, was sold to the Poplar Board of Works, which quickly demolished the buildings.

The last of the almshouse inmates lived until 1894 and was the last of the in or out-pensioners to receive a Poplar Pension.

Images from the front and back covers



(Above)

This month's cover shows the entrance to St Matthias Old Church, previously the East India Company Chapel in Poplar

The map reproduced (left) shows the layout of the almshouses, chapel and chaplaincy from c1812 until the almshouses were demolished in 1866

Webmaster note: Apologies for the quality of the map, we will try to source the original and make a better quality image.

Request for help – James Henry Fletcher

FIBIS have received an enquiry about James Henry FLETCHER, born c.1847. He died on 17 August 1892 at Mangalore, at which time his occupation was given as Port Master.

Further research shows that he had two daughters, Gertrude and Violet, who were both baptised in Calcutta. Gertrude's grand-son, Peter Sheldrick, is the person making the enquiry. James Fletcher's name does not appear in any of the trade directories, nor does he appear in the usual maritime lists. The enquiry was accompanied by the following photographs which are evocative of their time.



(Above)

James Henry Fletcher, aged c.15 years Believed to have been taken in the UK

(Above, right)

James Henry Fletcher in later life

Looking for Armenians in India

By Jenny Law

Armenia, as we understand it today, is an ex-Soviet republic that is now an autonomous member of the Russian federation. It was not always like this. In the past, Armenian culture, influence and religion played a major role in the development of what we now call civilisation. The academic theories and concepts of nationhood are complex but clearly Armenians - whether they are from what we now call Armenia or old Armenia which incorporates large parts of modern Iran (Persia), Russia and Turkey - have maintained a nationalist identity through shared cultural, religious and socio-economic experiences.

In the 16th century Armenians were feted in Persia where their business and political acumen was appreciated at the very highest levels of government. However, attitudes changed and after the support that Armenians received in the establishment of the enclave of New Julfa (built 1605 et seq.) which was part of what was then the Persian capital, Ispahan (Isfahan), they became a persecuted minority in the Persian sphere of influence.

Armenians had long been trading with Indian rulers and they were able to develop their trading and mercantile links to establish small communities in India. These communities allowed them the freedom to follow their own religious and cultural beliefs unhindered by either their Persian rulers or the Armenians that were seen to be collaborating with the Persians.

By the time that the French, British, Portuguese and Dutch adventurers landed in India, Armenians had already established themselves as major figures in the Courts of many Indian rulers. Many Armenians were then instrumental in diplomatic discussions with the new influx of merchant adventurers and many played a significant role in the establishment of the various East India companies.

Armenians in India

The Armenian communities in India really reflected the confusion faced by any people that are subtly overtaken by alien social, economic and political systems. They were able to maintain their Armenian identity by the establishment of their own churches, philanthropic institutions and schools and the inter-marriage between Armenian families. They also maintained their close links with other Armenian communities in South East Asia, especially those in Singapore and the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). Above all, they maintained their links with their traditional home in Persia and, to this day, Persian Armenian children are educated at the Armenian College in Calcutta.

However, Armenians were also affected by the influence of the British and other European communities. Armenians were living and trading in the area we now call Calcutta prior to the establishment of that city. Within ten years of the British developing Calcutta into a major trading centre, Armenian merchants were playing a major role in developing Calcutta's national and international trading links. In 1756

Armenians fought alongside the British and Portuguese in the defence of Calcutta and key members of the community formed an important fulcrum in the city's political activities after Calcutta was retaken. A hundred years later Armenian/Anglo-Armenian men were working in both the covenanted and uncovenanted Civil Service. Whilst other Armenian families maintained their traditional trades in jute and indigo, others began assimilating into the new social structure of India.

In Calcutta, Armenians were able to maintain their influence in the developing legal and medical professions whilst remaining part of the prosperous merchant class and many Armenians made a significant contribution to the communities in which they lived. But, in places like Dacca, Agra and Saidabad the communities died out quite quickly, leaving very little trace that they had been there except for the old Armenian churches and graveyards.

Many of these have now fallen into decline, or have been demolished or taken over for other, secular, uses.

In 1936, the Armenian communities in India were described as falling into three socio-economic classes. The first was the merchant class that came from Persia, which lasted until c.1825. The second was essentially the civil service and trader class, which lasted until c.1900. The third was the largely artisan class which lasted until partition. Within each period there were people who rose to the very top or fell to the very bottom of Indo-Armenian-European society but these broad categorisations still hold good. But many Anglo-Armenians were also treated in the same way as Anglo-Indians. To combat this discrimination, many families were willing to subsume their cultural identity by anglicising their names to fit into the new social structure.

Genealogy

The ability to research Armenian, Anglo-Armenian and Anglo-Indian families is made difficult because of the attitudes that prevailed in India between 1780 and 1947 towards inter-racial relationships. The fact that many Anglo-Indian families were within the mainstream Christian faiths means that research can be carried out because all denominations were supposed to make proper returns of their baptisms, marriages and burials. As a result, the large Portuguese and other European communities in India can, to some extent, be accessed through clerical and statutory records without too much difficulty, PROVIDED the records exist.

However, historical resources are only as good as the people who recorded the events and are most useful if the population they recorded was geographically static. This cannot be said of the Armenian community because, despite their domicile in India, many Armenians moved freely between Persia and India, thereby reducing registration data.

The problem of tracing the Armenian population has, to some extent, been overcome by using the Family Tree Maker computer programme, which has enabled me to track individuals as they moved around India, back to Persia and then back to India. The database has in excess of 6,500 names, mainly dealing with family names beginning with the letter A. This is part of an ongoing project designed to examine all the OIOC records and then to enter all the Anglo-Indian/Armenian names that can be identified onto the database in alphabetical sequence.

The problems associated with this research are legion. The first is that the Armenian community was not wholly homogenous and that it was split on intellectual, religious and geographic grounds. There was a good deal of intellectual and cultural snobbery within the traditional Armenian community who mainly supported the Armenian Orthodox Church. The Roman Catholic Armenians, who had, arguably, been less effected by the Armenian genocides of 1895 to 1923, were regarded as rather lower class. It was this group that provided the base of the Anglo-Armenian community. They played a greater role in the modernised, Raj-based culture although at a lower social station than their Orthodox Armenian cousins. They became closely integrated with the British and Anglo-Indians by marriage and they mainly worked at the lower, artisan end of the divide between wealthy and poor Armenians. In many ways the 'artisanisation' of the male workforce reflected the role of the broader based Anglo-Indian working class when the work structures changed away from government/commerce and onto the railways, engineering, the telegraph service and civil engineering.

The second major point is the way that traditional Armenians used and still use given, family and 'clan' names, which are confusing and frequently contradictory. For example, a name I am particularly interested in is AVIET.

The name is an Anglicised version of AVETIS, which is the Armenian word for the Resurrection, which in turn was changed to AVETIC or AVIETICK/AVETICK to make it into an Armenian name. To those names should be added AVTETMALL, which for some as yet unexplained reason, was mainly used in Burma. The matter was made even more complex by

the use of Aviet as a given name rather than a family name. It was and remains common practice to give a name that was the same as a family name, for example Aviet John Aviet and Manuk Sarkies Manuk, both of whom appear on the database. To all this must be added the fact that some of the records were maintained in Ancient or Modern Armenian or even Persian none of which are standard subjects at English schools!

Analysis of the available records shows that the mainstream, Persian-based community remained within the sphere of influence of the Orthodox Armenian Church, whilst the people in the Anglican and Catholic communities became more Anglo-Armenian and integrated more with the Anglo-Indian community in India. The data also shows that many Roman Catholic and Anglican families dropped out of the registers when large-scale emigration to England, the Commonwealth and the Americas by Anglo-Armenians in the post-war period effectively started another Armenian Diaspora.

Conclusion

The whole of the Armenian/Anglo-Armenian community and its culture has now effectively been lost from India. Calcutta, the main area of Armenian/Anglo-Armenian influence, once boasted some 20,000 Armenian inhabitants. That number is now reduced to under 30 families Or about 250 individuals. Many Armenians/Anglo-Armenians left India at partition, moving to England and other Commonwealth countries. Many others had already fled to America at the time of the Armenian genocides following the large part of the historical Armenian nation, which had moved to areas where their political, cultural and religious differences would be better tolerated.

There is little doubt that for a good deal of the 18th and 19th centuries, Armenians played a significant part in India's development. Trying to understand their influence and role has, in itself, become a major piece of work.

There are very few books specifically about the Armenians in India. Various articles appeared in Bengal Past and Present, although they were mainly written by one man, Mesrobian Jacob Seth. Seth was also the author of the only "history" of the Armenians in India, called, rather unimaginatively, Armenians in India. Whether the sub-title, "a work of original research", is justified is a matter of opinion. However, until the project to re-write the book can be implemented, it remains the ONLY book of any substance on the Armenian community in India.

A facsimile edition of the 1936 edition of the book is available from Asian Educational Services, C 2/15, SDA, Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016

Jenny Law's ancestors are both English and Armenian. We hope to publish another of her articles about her English ancestors in India and Persia, from where her Armenian ancestry originated in a later edition of the Journal. Jenny is one of the proprietors of the Armenians in India Press and she undertakes research on the Armenian and Anglo-Armenian community across the world.