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Editorial

Autumn 2005

Most genealogical researches must of necessity be conducted among the various official archives in which (we hope) our forebears left traces. In their article on *An English Soldier in Persia*, Jo Purshouse and Lawrie Butler demonstrate the patience and perseverance so often required to detect the trail left by an ancestor in the official records and, just as important, to distinguish it from the footprints of others of the same name whose paths cross the track we are following. In another article, Lawrie has explained the kind of documentation to be found in the L/MIL/14 Series of the India Office Records, and how to extract it, while Peter Rogers gives us a taster of the fascinating nuggets of information to be found in the records of *The Indian Navy Family Fund*.

However, in their nature, official archives usually tell us little of the actual personalities of the men and women who cross their pages. True, they do sometimes indicate, if only by implication, the trials and tribulations they must have suffered, for example the early deaths of the *English Soldier in Persia* and his wife, or more dramatically the short and troubled life of an ancestor teased out from the records by Bill Hall in his article *Tragedy and Betrayal: the story of Henry Fowle 1803-1849*. But what they 'must have' felt or thought is still only educated guesswork. This must not be despised: it is what most of us must perforce be content with. Only in a few cases will there survive those private letters, papers, diaries or memoirs which enable us to know in their own words what our forebears really did think or feel. Richard Wenger in his article on *George Bogle 1746-1781* has made excellent use of the Bogle family's correspondence in the Mitchell Library at Glasgow and the Glasgow University Manuscripts to show what George thought, felt and did on his voyage out to India, and in his first two years in Calcutta 1770-1771.

Despite the efforts of various official bodies, not least the India Office Private Papers section, to gather private papers relating to India into the safe custody of a public library or

archive, many India-related documents, both private and official, remain in private hands and unsurprisingly the hands are sometimes those of FIBIS members or their relations. My article on *Brigadier-General Octavius Edward Rothney* could not have been written if FIBIS members Dave and Brenda Barnett had not sent me copies of a few papers relating to Rothney surviving in Brenda's family's possession. Among them is a document 'The Rothneys' recording family tradition handed down among family members, some of which at least can be confirmed from official sources. Family tradition, though it must obviously be used with caution, is another source which, like private papers, can give us a more intimate glimpse of our forebears than official records. What official document, for example, would record a woman getting up at dawn to scrub her front step and dressing in silk for church on Sundays, as did Emily Rothney of her mother? And family tradition proved to be correct both in believing that the *English Soldier in Persia* had married a Persian wife, and in suggesting a link between her and the Duke of Portland's estates.

David Blake

George Bogle 1746-1781, Part 1, His Early Years

By Richard Wenger

George Bogle, Warren Hastings's ambassador to Tibet and the first British traveller to cross the Himalayas, was born in 1746, the youngest son of George Bogle of Daldowie in Lanarkshire. The Bogles were one of a small group of merchants in Glasgow, who had prospered through the expansion of trade with the American colonies and the Caribbean islands in the late 17th and early 18th centuries despite the difficult economic conditions in Scotland at that time. They were prominent members of the guild and their burial place for several generations was in the High Church yard against the east end wall of the Cathedral. Robert Bogle, the father of George Bogle of Daldowie, was a sugar and tobacco merchant with interests in an ironworks, a tannery, a soapworks and whaling through the Greenland Fishing Company. Like most Glasgow people, they were strong supporters of the Hanoverian dynasty and when his son George visited Germany in 1725, he attended court at Herrenhausen and was presented to George I. Although he had already graduated from Glasgow University he then enrolled at Leyden University in Holland, which was popular with Scottish students, where he studied law, history and literature for two years. At the same time he interested himself in commerce. Upon returning home, he joined his father in business and in 1732 married Anne Sinclair, the second daughter of John Sinclair, Bt, of Stevenson and Martha Lockhart, Lady Castlehill of Cambusnethan. Through her paternal grandmother, Lady Helen Lindsay, Anne Sinclair could claim descent from the early Stuart kings. Under the marriage contract Robert transferred to his son his estate at Daldowie on the banks of the Clyde near Uddingston and that of Whiteinch. The marriage was a very happy one. They had six surviving children: the first was Martha born in 1734 followed by Robert, Mary, Elizabeth, John, Anne, and finally young George – the subject of this article. The family lived in a fine new mansion at Daldowie. The estate suffered some depredations during the '45 Jacobite rebellion, but Martha, then aged eleven, used to tell her grandchildren how she went to Bothwell bridge to see 'the Bonnie Prince' pass by. Apart from his business, George took an active interest in Glasgow University where he was four times rector. A moderate Presbyterian, he was a supporter of Dr Francis Hutcheson, the renowned professor of moral philosophy, and interested himself in the university's new library designed by William Adam.

His eldest son Robert spent some time as an apprentice storekeeper and factor in Virginia where he was joined by his brother John in 1758. Robert returned to Glasgow in the following year and decided to set up a counting house in London. Known to his friends as Bob or Robin, he was a man with a great deal of kindness and bonhomie. Young George greatly admired his eldest brother – there was eleven years between them. Their mother died of nervous consumption in 1759 when George was still at Haddington Grammar school and after leaving he spent six months at Edinburgh University studying logic. He wanted to be a merchant so attended Mr Dobson's at Glasgow where he was taught some arithmetic, book keeping, and a little French. It was then decided that he should join Robin

in London. He wrote to John in Virginia: 'I am immensely obliged to my dear Bob, what a character he has gained. Everybody speaks well of him. Whenever a Glasgow person comes down from London they rave upon the civilities they received from my brother. In a few years I am persuaded he will engross the whole business in this town.' However, after working for about eighteen months in the counting house with Robin and his cousin Willie Scott, he was sent to the Reverend Kinross's academy at Enfield, one of several set up south of the border for young Scots to pass their time in study and amusements 'to improve them both as Gentlemen and merchants.' In 1765 he accompanied a sick family friend Dr David Wark of Haddington to Toulouse, where they thought the climate would be beneficial for him but he died there early in the New Year. George spent about another six months in France learning the language and then came back to London to join his brother's firm of Bogle and Scott now in Love Lane, Eastcheap. His sister Martha had been staying with Robin and a few months later married Dr Thomas Brown, an apothecary in London who had formerly been an East India Company surgeon. By 1768 it was five years since he had visited Daldowie and his father was anxious to see him. He had retired from business after John's return from Virginia and was in good health, working on and improving the estate, which he considered very delightful. George's friends had found him a position in the East India Company but nothing had been finally fixed when he visited Daldowie in the autumn of 1769. They were all overjoyed to see each other again and he would later recall that the three weeks spent with his family before leaving were the happiest he had ever experienced. Whilst there he was given the job of laying out the court in front of the house. Anne offered to look out for a place in Scotland for him but he insisted that she should consult Bess, who had more taste than all of them, and he hoped on his return he would not need to buy 'a pennyworth'. Then came the regret of parting with such a distant prospect of meeting again. Back in London he decided on Bengal rather than China and sent ten shrubs to John with instructions on how Archie the gardener should plant them so he would find them flourishing and beautiful on his return from India. He was taking with him several letters of recommendation including ones to Mr Vansittart and Mr Scrafton, two of the Supervisors recently appointed to sort out the Company's affairs in Bengal who had just departed for India on the *Aurora*. His friends had given him some letters of credit and various keepsakes; Dr Brown had taught him how to bleed and provided a case of lancets and two books on health; and his cousin Isabella Morehead, whose husband had passed to him a letter for £2,000, embroidered a sword knot which would serve as a talisman in case of attack. Before leaving, his friends made a party at the London Tavern. His tailor made him a new suit of clothes for the occasion, and he took along his good friend Miss Jessica Dalrymple as a partner.¹ It was a very fine assembly and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

George was going out to Bengal on the Indiaman *Vansittart* commanded by Captain Lewin. After much trouble getting all his chests and necessities ready, it was a relief to get them on board by mid-January while the ship was still at Gravesend. A fortnight later he himself embarked off the Downs, but contrary winds meant that she did not finally leave

¹ Charles Morehead, *Memorials of the life and writings of Robert Morehead* (Edinburgh, 1875).

Portsmouth until the end of February. He was sad to be leaving his friends but excited at the prospects. On board were forty passengers, one hundred and ten sailors and their officers, and fifty soldiers. Five days later they ran into a brisk storm in the Bay of Biscay, which resulted in the loss of two sails and some sheep and poultry overboard. He lay seasick in his cot while it was going on. At Gibraltar they fell in with the *Greenwich* under Captain Carr, who had formerly been a first mate under Captain Lewin. The two were good friends and the ships kept each other company until parting one dark night near the equator. He had intended to keep a journal to send to Robin and Willie Scott, which would amuse them over their toasted cheese in Love Lane, but life was so monotonous (one day was the same as another) that he had to give it up. He had bought a rather slender Persian dictionary and grammar in London, the only one he could find, but with no one to help him with it he soon gave it up, and turned to his Latin by reading Horace's *Odes* and *Livy*. In the early morning they did military drill and then he would study, play chess, or participate in games with the sailors. Sometimes in the evenings the *Greenwich* would come alongside and serenade them with music, but if it was calm they would visit her for supper. After losing her, the only ship they met was a Swedish one returning home, whose Captain exchanged a fine African turtle full of eggs for some cheese and porter. Below the line they met with a south-east trade wind, which blew them towards South America, and after getting out of it they steered south at great speed for the Cape. On reaching 30° latitude they saw many sheerwaters and further east some albatross and storm petrels, the size of martins, which the sailors called mother Cary's chickens, and some other types of petrel. He could not conceive what these small birds lived on so far from land: there were no insects on the surface and the water was as clear as crystal – yet they were perpetually flying backwards and forwards like swallows on the Clyde. Then there was hail and rain and they put on their great coats. At last they sighted the Cape on 3 May, but then the wind changed and they continued to beat off the coast for ten days until they put in at False Bay, which was sheltered by high hills from the gales.

There they all relaxed. By the shore there was a small village of seven houses, a store for provisions, and a hospital. George and a few of his companions lodged with a Dutchman, his *vrouw* [wife] and a niece. He had become wealthy selling cattle to the ships and had sixteen slaves from the Malabar coast. He sat outside all day smoking his pipe and the women spent most of their time drinking coffee. After supper they all danced Scotch reels with the fat niece 'to the singing of the black girls, who knew the "Isle of Skye" and two or three more tunes to a tee'. During the day he collected shells for Bess and rambled in the hills. At the highest point on the promontory he could look out at the ships tossing on the ocean: on one side was the harbour with English and Dutch ships at anchor, on the other Table Mountain covered in clouds. Capetown was a five hours ride but he could not risk going as the ship would leave as soon as the wind changed.

They left on 22 May and sailed up the Mozambique channel close to Madagascar, putting in at Johanna (now Nzwani) in the Comoro islands where they were supplied with tropical fruits and other provisions. The people there were Muslims. Their king had once taken a fancy to an English lady on her way to Madras to visit her brother. He offered the Captain

some bullocks and goats for her and was extremely surprised when his offer was refused! They left Johanna on 24 June and passed through the channel between the Maldive and Laccadive islands in mid-July. Then they sailed past Ceylon, where the Dutch monopolised the cinnamon trade and refused to export the young trees. They arrived at Madras on 21 July 1770. So far they had had a successful voyage: only one person on board had died and he had been in ill health. They were carried ashore in small boats made of a few planks bound together with coconut ropes. When approaching the shore he was surrounded by several amphibious black fellows squatting on logs, who were ready to pick him up in case of accident. They reminded him of Robinson Crusoe on his raft. Needless to say he got a good ducking from the surf. Some of the officers and sailors disembarked. He stayed with William Duff, a young writer, who showed him around the settlement. There they all heard the sad news of the loss of the Aurora with the Supervisors on board. One day a ship arrived on the horizon. Everyone believed it to be the Aurora – faces sparkled but how sadly they were disappointed.

They had a fine trade wind when leaving and sailed to the Ganges delta within eight days. There they were met by a pilot sloop and dropped anchor near the mouth of the river. Captain Lewin went to Calcutta on the sloop but the rest waited twelve more days living off salted provisions as their stores were quite exhausted before a small sloop of 25 tons agreed to take them. Thirty of them crowded on to it, taking some salted beef and biscuits with them. It took nearly a week to reach Calcutta and running out of food they had hardly enough to eat for the last two days. At night they had to sleep in the open air and often torrential rain would keep them awake. As they had no wine or spirits they were obliged to drink from the muddy river, which was covered with thousands of dead bodies, victims of the terrible famine raging in the country. On 19 August, heartily tired of each other's company, they were glad to get ashore only five miles from Calcutta with the intention of walking to town. Passing a garden house they were invited in for refreshments. Mr Higginson, a Londoner for whom George had a letter of recommendation, happened to be there and invited him to stay at his house. He was setting out for 'Beerbrom' [Birbhum] in eight days, where he was a supervisor but before leaving introduced him to most of the Councillors and found him a good banyan.²

After his friend Alexander Higginson had gone up country, he shared a house with two brother writers James Olive and John Yeo, who had both come out on the Vansittart with him. It was an agreeable arrangement and would help to reduce his expenses: he was spending far more than his income from the Company but found Robin's credit useful for all the small things he needed. To begin with it was all rather chaotic, the weather was very warm and at times he would sit half naked badly bitten by insects. At night he had the novel experience of sleeping behind gauze curtains and was obliged to stand the bed posts in basins of water to protect himself from the ants. He wrote to Bess at the end of August to tell her about his accommodation and to give her his other news. He assured her he was happy with his situation. He had found some more shells at Johanna but he did not

² A Hindu trader; in Calcutta a native broker or man of business acting on behalf of a European partner.

think his collection was yet good enough to send to her. He described the Calcutta houses with their verandahs shaded by canvas awnings. The weather was very warm and as soon as anybody went into a house they threw off their coats and sat in a fine thin waistcoat with sleeves. 'The great people here live in the most magnificent manner, it would amuse you to hear of the number of servants they keep ... The natives are the most inoffensive creatures in the world and bear the expression of it in their countenances. They have not the same keen resentments and animosities that we have in Europe and their religion forbids them to take the life of any animal as they believe in the transmigration of souls.'

He imagined what she was doing, maybe she was walking out before dinner or watching the salmon fishing on the river or perhaps by a sort of sympathy she was thinking of him and guessing what he was doing ... 'for remember I expect that we are to climb together the banks that hang over Clyde when I return to my native country, that you are to show me all the improvements about Daldowie. What pleasure I have in indulging hope in all her sallies [sic] and in building castles in the air.'

He was spending his time visiting Company servants for whom he had letters of recommendation and had been politely received by everyone but he later found out that the Governor, John Cartier, had never heard of the man who had written his letter. As for the letter from Mr Orme, the Company's historiographer, to Mr Alexander which he wrote only after some persuasion, at least half a dozen fellow passengers on the ship had similar ones! The loss of the *Aurora* was a personal misfortune for he had strong recommendations to Mr Vansittart and Mr Scrafton, which would have been of great help. None of the writers who came out with him had been appointed by September but he found he had been put at the top of the Company's list for that year, which would be of immense advantage in the future as it gave him the right of preference over the others. He began having lessons from a moonshee [munshi], who made him repeat his A B C in Persian but there was one troublesome difficulty: the language had two Rs. One he could pronounce admirably as he had inherited the skill from his mother who had a Berwickshire accent, but the other, oh dear! He almost wore out his tongue trilling it upon his palette but moonshee was never very pleased with his performance. He was also attending public levées where he met many good people. They were quite informal apart from the Councillors' breakfasts, which were stiff humdrum affairs. Sometimes as many as thirty junior servants would be present but not a word was spoken. Everyone just sat about eating their bread and butter and drinking tea or coffee in the most mournful silence, but in the evenings all was free and easy and after supper they would throw bread pellets at each other à la mode de Bengal. He was informed that in the cool weather they would also throw pieces of meat – how he feared for his fine trequet [sic ?embroidered] waistcoat ! It was eventually decided that he should be an assistant to the Select Committee and this meant he would be working in the Secretary's office. He was delighted as this was the appointment he wanted. The Select Committee was responsible for the government of the province and its relations with the 'country powers' [i.e. independent Indian rulers] and consisted of the Governor and the first four members in Council. Its deliberations were kept secret, so he would be privy to information unavailable to others.

He had arrived in a country quite exhausted by famine. The crops had failed due to lack of rain in the previous year and the most fertile province in India had to import grain from Madras and elsewhere. The Government opened up a magazine in Calcutta, which fed about fifteen thousand for several months. He thought it quite remarkable that there had been no disturbances or attempts to open it by force: 'what mobs and commotions there would be with us were grain to increase to three times its price! and in many places it was a hundred times what it usually is.' Men were employed daily to pick up bodies in the streets and threw them into the river. He would pass the starving reduced to complete skeletons, some hardly able to crawl, others avidly eating their pitifully small handfuls of rice: 'I cannot see them or think of them without my heart being ready to break – and yet their case is without remedy. All India has been ransacked for grain.' Their resignation was quite amazing. In other parts of the country the famine was much worse and it was not so easy to supply the people with grain. There the streets of the cities were choked with dead and entire villages wiped out. There were reports of cannibalism and many ate leaves off the trees or animals contrary to their religion. He reckoned that between a million and a million and a half had died of hunger. Trade was very badly affected. No money came in from the export of grain, and the manufacture of cotton and silk goods declined drastically due to the death or illness of the weavers. Cash was in very short supply and the prisons were full of debtors. Then the price of grain began to fall in October and by December the famine was practically over.

In Calcutta, a new town was being built on the ruins of a large part of the old, which had been destroyed by Siraj-ud-Daula in 1756, and was expanding rapidly. It had many grand buildings and was strung along the right bank of the river which George described as three times as broad as the Thames in London, but he did not consider 'elegance to be the forte of the settlement'. Mrs Kindersley who had described the town in 1768 very much agreed with him:

It is as awkward a place as can be conceived; and so irregular, that it looks as if all the houses had been thrown up in the air, and falled down again by accident as they now stand: people keep constantly building; and everyone who can procure a piece of ground to build a house upon, consults his own taste and convenience, without any regard to the beauty or regularity of the town; besides, the appearance of the best houses is spoiled by the little straw huts, and such sort of encumbrances, which are built by the servants for themselves to sleep in; so that all the English part of the town, which is the largest, is a confusion of very superb and very shabby houses, dead walls, straw huts, warehouses and I know not what.³

It was an expensive town too especially for a junior Company servant. Indeed, he had never been in such an expensive place – every pleasure of life seemed to be sacrificed to rank and distinction, show and expense. Service with the Company was conducted strictly according to the rules of seniority and as a covenanted servant he was part of an elite: a Company servant was more sought after than a free merchant even if the latter were more

³ Jemima Kindersley, *Letters from ... the East-Indies* (London, 1777), p273.

than his equal, 'subaltern officers are very little attended to and a captain of a ship is nobody at all.' The most costly articles from Europe were commonplace – fine furniture, wines, jewellery, carriages and other luxury items. Young Company servants ran up debts without regard to their means merely on the assumption they would be in a position to cancel them within a few years. This attitude affected all of them to some extent but he did his best to live moderately. Robin had strongly advised him not to start trading privately until he was sure of all the risks and adventures, and many were warning him of the current dangers. As he observed to Robin, such trade was 'dangerous even to the most experienced people – from the dullness of the markets, the want of money and credit in the settlement and the distress of the country suffered in the famine.' If only he could get a post up country he would be able to live cheaply and have prospects of trading profitably as the supervisors there were in a strong position to control trade. His friend Alexander Higginson, the supervisor at Birbhum, had actually written to the Governor asking for him to be sent there but the proposal was turned down. He was made an alderman in the Mayor's Court, much against his inclination, which took up a great deal of his time. The post had no salary although he was given a small allowance to keep a palanquin that was hardly sufficient for the purpose. In the Court he heard of further cases of hardship, which only increased further his reluctance to trade.

The Lord Mansfield arrived on 31 October 1770 with a packet of letters, which was opened at the Governor's breakfast the next day. There was a crowd of gentlemen around a table and squeezing in amongst them he heard the names being called out by one of them, but not a George or a Bogle was mentioned. Then right at the bottom appeared a letter in Dr Brown's handwriting. He picked it up and elbowing himself out of the crowd retired to a corner and broke its seal half afraid and half hopeful for he had not heard from any of his family for eight months. He was so happy to receive it that he replied to his sister Martha (Dr Brown's wife) the same day expressing his gratitude: 'a thousand blessings be poured down upon your head and your worthy husband's for the kind letter you wrote me ... My dearest sister excuse my rhapsody, I am so happy to find that my friends are well'. By December the weather was much cooler, which was very fortunate as it was now the time of year for the dispatch of ships and they were all very busy. At last there was an abundance of vegetables and fruit but he was rather disappointed with the fruit, even the local pineapples did not taste as good as the ones grown in hothouses at home. It was now the season for lavish balls, concerts and plays and there was also riding, hunting and shooting. He began to take an active interest in the playhouse on the south side of Lall Bazaar for which £4,000 had been subscribed that year. It was a hive of activity. The scenes came from London but were painted on site. Anyone could act if they were good enough. Some just sang or danced, others would join the orchestra if they played an instrument. By the end of December they had staged 'Venus Preserved' and 'The Wonder'. They were better performed than in Edinburgh. One of the actors had been on the London stage in his younger years but the greatest attraction was a young fellow called Mr Brede, who played a woman's part incredibly well. He was a somewhat effeminate youth. One night when they were at supper he nearly fainted at the sight of a bat! George was given the part of

Rosencrantz in Hamlet. As he told Bess 'you know he is just a sycophant and a courtier and I had nothing for it but, summoning up all my french bows, got through it well.' He was afterwards put down for one of the witches in Macbeth but it could not be staged that season so he hoped he had escaped 'that diabolical character'.

He was having such a social time that he was unable to make as much progress with the languages as he wanted so, as he was now pretty well known, he decided in February 1771 to take a house a few miles from Calcutta where he could be alone apart from his servants. There it was calm and secluded and he could study in his spare time. It was easy to drive in phaetons or other pleasure vehicles from Calcutta to these country or garden houses. In his opinion they were not very well laid out: 'they have seldom anything elegant about them – they have hedges and trees close up to the doors and generally a large pond of stagnant water.' He was attending the militia for two hours a week and an officer invited him to visit the camp at Ghretty, where four battalions of sepoys were stationed. Having obtained leave from the Governor, he set out travelling, mostly by palanquin. On the way he saw crowds bathing in the river. He remarked to Martha that the women reminded him of nymphs and goddesses: 'their fine features, the flowing hair and their dresses answer exactly but it must have required a Don Quixote's fancy to have turned their sultry complexions into sally's roses.' He stayed at an officer's house by the river. Although the camp was only four miles from Chandernagore, the soldiers had very little contact with the French. It was the farthest he had travelled from Calcutta and he was thoroughly pleased with his jaunt.

It was now the warm season, which lasted until the rains fell in June. Due to southern winds it was pleasant enough at night but in the daytime it was like a furnace. They could only go out for exercise in the early morning and in the evening. By April it was 103 degrees fahrenheit. How glad he would be to dress almost naked like the ordinary Bengalis. His father was sending letters imploring him to look after his health, and was entertained by his son's lively descriptions. He found some of them very instructive: much of the information was new to him. He was quite certain that George's behaviour and engaging manner would win the affection of all those friends he wished to cultivate. The latter was not expecting his father to write long letters but hoped his sisters would fill him in about everything that was going on at Daldowie. He had delayed sending his shells to Bess. He feared she would be disappointed as they were not as fine or numerous as he wanted but he hoped to get some from gentlemen who had gone to the Red Sea and China for 'in this country there are no shells and indeed not a stone'. He had still not sent them by August when he had a letter from her describing the frost and snow. In it she gave him all the family news. Archie the gardener had just married Jenny the cook and he was pleased to hear about the way their nuptials had been celebrated – everything seemed 'to have been conducted with much propriety and brilliance'. John was to tell him that the court in front of the entrance was exactly as he had left it except it had been sown with grass seed. He was still suffering from gout but had gone out a little recently and had dined with their friend Provost Colin Dunlop. John was sending goods to the value of about £10,000 annually to the stores in Virginia but there was strong competition and credit was tight. Their father was in good health and was still farming. He had been delighted when Robin visited them for seven weeks that autumn

– Robin was en bon point. Bess was thinking of setting up a scheme with her friends to sew and sell ‘hoods’ (a simple form of head-dress used in Scotland) and sought his advice. In reply he congratulated her on her talents for commerce – had she been studying Child and Locke?⁴ He recommended that she should first make a trial of a small quantity but as it ‘is rather below my character as a servant of the Honourable Company to be concerned in a Packman Business of this kind (for we are proud as Lucifer)’ she should send them to Martha in London, who would he thought get some of her friends to sell them. How he missed an ingle and a clean hearth. There were few family homes in Calcutta. Most Europeans were bachelors and those who married usually sent their children home after the age of four. The ladies in Bengal did not come out to sew – no, they led very different lives. A great many were very low bred and their manners corresponded. ‘They set up for rank and dignity – precedence and place and consider themselves as demi-angels’ but rivalry of this kind spoilt all good company. The best lady in the place had been Peggy Wedderburn, the wife of Henry Wedderburn, the Master of Marine. He had spent many cheerful evenings at their house free from such constraints and was grief stricken when she died in childbirth that summer.

It was the cool season once more and there was plenty of entertainment. Macbeth was being staged at the playhouse and he was asked to play the part of the third witch. He thought it would come to it that!⁵ He performed quite well and got through the singing with the help of a broom and a few other props. The wonderful Mr Brede performed Lady Macbeth. George had recently been promoted to the post of assistant secretary to the Select Committee, which gave him some satisfaction but never-theless tied him to being in Calcutta. However, he was living quite comfortably and had a wide circle of acquaintances. He had even come across some old school friends from Haddington. James Olive and John Yeo, who had shared a house with him when they first arrived, had both died, and with him now was a young relative William Chalmers. His cousin Lawrie Bogle, a young writer, had written to tell him he had arrived at Bencoolen [Bengkulu, Sumatra] but there was not much communication between the two settlements, only two or three ships passed between them each year. However, by the close of 1771, he had at least three Scottish friends with whom he was to be intimate. There was Jack Stewart, whose brother Willy was at the Luckinbooth in Edinburgh. He had just arrived from London and had been appointed Judge Advocate General in Bengal with the right to succeed as first secretary to the Select Committee on the next vacancy. Then there was David Anderson, the son of an Edinburgh lawyer, who was at Murshidabad, and the young Alexander Elliot, the son of Sir Gilbert Elliot and a younger brother of a future Governor-General of Bengal. Events in 1772 would help to shape George’s destiny.

⁴ Probably the East India Company Director Sir Josiah Child, *Discourse concerning Trade, and that in particular of the East Indies* (London, 1689, and many subsequent editions), and the philosopher John Locke, *Several papers relating to Money, Interest and Trade* (London, 1696).

⁵ The word ‘bogle’ in certain Scottish dialect and language dictionaries often comes with the description to bewitch, to enchant, to terrify, an apparition or a scarecrow.

Tragedy and Betrayal: the story of Henry Fowle 1803-1849

By Bill Hall

After having painstakingly, with my cousin in Vancouver, discovered over time the history of an ancestor on my mother's side we have been anxious to find out something about his wife whom he married in Sylhet in 1828. By an extraordinary coincidence, when transcribing for FIBIS some of the Miscellaneous Bonds records, I came across her name. My ancestor, Henry Fowle, the son of the vicar of Kintbury, Berkshire, was born in 1803. His father, although a clergyman, raised a volunteer Rifle Company in 1804 to repel the anticipated invasion of England by Napoleon. He was praised by King George III as being the best preacher, rider to hounds and cavalry officer in the Royal County of Berkshire.

Henry's elder brother went into the Church but Henry was the first of numerous forebears of mine to look eastwards to India for his career. He changed regiments frequently in comparison with another forebear who remained in the same Honourable East India Company regiment for sixteen years until being killed in action at the battle of Miani in 1843. In 1820 Henry became a cadet in the HEIC army and arrived in Calcutta in 1821. His first commission was in the 1st Native Infantry and in 1823 he transferred to the 22nd which became the 43rd. In 1825 he transferred again to the 44th and from 1826 to 1827 was in the 1st Light Infantry. He saw action in the First Burma War including the Arakan Campaign of 1825. All these details I found by chance in a book of biographical notes on Bengal Army officers¹ on the shelves of the Oriental and India Office reading room at the British Library. Hodson also told me that Henry had been court martialled and cashiered, and gave a reference to the *Asiatic Journal* which enabled me to get a summary of the Court Martial and its findings. Meanwhile, in 1828, Henry had married Starlina Hayward in Sylhet.

Henry, now in the 30th N.I., had been dining in the Officers Mess of Her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry in 1829 at Dinapore when, in conversation with another officer, he accused a Major Tulloch of his old regiment, the 43rd N.I., of refusing to repay a loan of Rs.1,500 and had 'grossly calumniated the character of the said Major Tulloch'. His remarks were overheard and passed on to Major Tulloch who reported the matter to Henry's Colonel. Henry refused to retract or apologise and was duly court martialled in April 1830. He was charged with scandalous conduct, unbecoming the character of an officer and a gentleman. The Court, 'having maturely weighed and considered ... the prosecution as well as ... the defence', found him guilty and sentenced him 'to be dismissed the service of the Hon. Company.' This was 'Approved and confirmed by Dalhousie, Commander-in-chief'. It seems a very harsh sentence for such an offence and one wonders if Henry may have, by his attitude, not endeared himself to the Court but it would appear that his intransigence could only be due to the certainty of his cause. The *Asiatic Journal* then quotes the C-in-C's 'Remarks' which in essence say that as Lt Fowle had neither withdrawn his accusation nor

¹ V C P Hodson, *List of Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1834*, 4 vols (London, 1927-28, 1946-47).

apologised, he 'has justly brought on him the punishment the Court has awarded'. The C-in-C added that Lt Fowle will proceed without delay to Fort William where the Town Major will provide him with a passage to England.

I had always been intrigued as to why Henry got married in Sylhet which, in 1828, must have been quite a remote place. I was able to obtain a copy of the marriage certificate from the India Office Records and none of the witnesses present was a Hayward, so who was this mysterious Starlina with such a mysterious name? And then the breakthrough came when, as mentioned above, I found her in the Miscellaneous Bonds. The Bond records show that Starlina, together with three sisters and one brother, was given permission in 1816 to embark for India. The bond demanded was £1,300 which was higher than the average which was normally £200 per head. There is no record of a guardian for the voyage so perhaps a friend acted in this capacity but the first name given is that of her sister Sarah so perhaps Sarah was considered old enough to look after the family. We reckon that Starlina was eight years old at the time.

I now enlisted the aid of Lawrie Butler to whom I am indebted for the following details: Richard Hayward had applied for permission to go to India in 1811 as a Free Mariner for which the bond required was £500 whereas for an individual trader it could be well over £1,000. He was allowed to go for five years which could be extended. However, he is listed in the Calcutta residents directory as being a coach-builder for which the higher bond would have been required. He had left his family behind in England but in 1814 he brought out his wife in the HEIC Extra Ship *Ann* which arrived in November. Just under two years later they brought out their children from England who arrived in Calcutta in the *Moir*a in September 1816.

But tragedy had struck – Richard Hayward had died in April 1816 which must have been just about the time that the children were setting sail in the *Moir*a. Of course in those days there was no telegraph communication so his wife had five months to ponder on how she was going to tell the children when they arrived although the younger ones would hardly have remembered their father. What happened to them then we do not know, perhaps Mrs. Hayward did not have the means to pay for, or did not wish to take, passages back to England though the bonds required presumably were for such a purpose. Bereaved wives were, unfortunately, only too common in those days and most hoped to make a second marriage but we know that Mrs Hayward did not marry again because, tragically for her children, Mrs Ann Hayward, wife of Richard, is recorded as being buried in April 1818.

So now we have five children, four girls and a boy, alone in Calcutta with both parents dead. Some kind family must have looked after them but we don't know who. The next we learn is that Sarah Hayward, a spinster from Calcutta, marries G. Barnes (in the service of the Government at Ishapore) at St. John's Cathedral, Calcutta, on 2 February 1819, and that explains why, nine years later, Mrs Sarah Barnes is a witness at the marriage of Starlina Hayward and Henry Fowle. Possibly Starlina had been living with the Barnes and of course there were no parents present as they had died. Barnes must have been stationed in East Bengal; and presumably Sylhet (in present day Bangladesh), where

Starlina and Henry were married in April 1828, would have been a convenient centre. Starlina gave birth to a daughter before tragedy struck yet again and she had to leave India with her husband when he was cashiered.

We know that they returned to Kintbury where Henry's father, the vicar, helped them out until May 1832 when they set out for Canada. They arrived in the ship *Caroline* at Quebec apparently in connection with an arrangement with The Canada Company which was settling immigrants. This information was found out by chance through a correspondent on the internet. They settled in Hamilton, Ontario, and had more children. It does not look as if the family prospered because their eldest son Bertram was, in a census return, described as a labourer. A later return shows Starlina living with Bertram but there is no reference to Henry. However, Bertram's son Charles rose from obscurity to become a senior figure in the Standard Oil Company in Ohio. But what had become of Henry?

An obscure family note suggested that Henry Fowle had died in Reading, Berkshire, and although a death under that name was recorded in Reading for 1849 there was no means of tying this in with 'our' Henry. Then my cousin, by ploughing through records on the internet discovered that a Henry Fowle had married an Elizabeth Ellis in Liverpool in 1845. I obtained a copy of the marriage certificate and found that it was indeed 'our' Henry because he had given his father's name correctly. However, to my great dismay, he had described himself as a 'widower' and we know for a fact that his wife did not die in Canada until many years later. He had therefore married bigamously. He had a son by this marriage (who as far as we know did not marry) and because, fortunately, Fowle is an uncommon name, I found by elimination, that the Henry who had died at Reading in 1849 was in fact the same person. Someone had paid for a special plot but there was no record as to who had done so.

I routinely assembled all these facts but it wasn't until I sat back and thought about the story as a whole that I realised what a lot of sadness and possibly despair lay behind them. The bright side of the picture is that the descendants of Charles Fowle, Henry's grandson and the man who made good in the Standard Oil Company, are now spread wide across Ohio and other parts of America. I was able to contact one of them, a retired school teacher in Lancaster, Ohio, and pass on the history of their founding father. Whether he told the rest of the clan I do not know!

The Indian Navy Family Fund 1828-1863

An edited version of a talk given to the Annual General Meeting of the Families in British India Society on 28 May 2005 by Peter D Rogers

My last foray into the Army Pensioners of 1895/96 was most enlightening and their returns yielded some interesting conclusions (see *FIBIS Journal* 13, Spring 2005, p38), but my new transcription project on the Registers (with indexes) of 'The Indian Navy Family Fund' (IOR ref: L/AG/23/18/2 and 3) is a far more useful genealogical 'find'. Were it possible for a genealogical researcher to pass a metal detector over the British Library's India Office Records catalogues, it would register a loud 'ping' above the entry for these two short volumes – a gold nugget, a mini gold mine in fact. Rarely elsewhere is there such a complete family history laid out as for those fortunate few who have ancestors in or connected with this Naval Service; most other records give some small detail, perhaps a father's name or a birth place, or a witness named gives a clue to the existence of other relatives. Here there is so much more: the sample folio illustrated overleaf will give an inkling of the depth of information that may be gleaned, but please remember that these records deal only with Officers serving between 1828 and 1863. Most family groupings in the two Registers show the man's name and ranks; rank upon joining the Fund; date of marriage; wife's maiden name; place of marriage and often age of the bride; then names and places of birth of children and later maybe details of the death or marriage of the family members, and, with luck, the name of the widow's subsequent husband/husbands; and sometimes there will be the death notice and some details of the estates of the deceased parties.

Now something about the creation of the Fund and its place in the East India Company's history. After the Napoleonic Wars things were not going well for the Company. They were experiencing more British Governmental interference and by the late 1820's it was decided, among other changes, that the old 'Bombay Marine' was to end and that a Royal Navy Officer would be appointed in charge of a new Indian Navy, albeit with the same officers, men and ships. So in 1828 Capt Sir Charles Malcolm was appointed Superintendent, in 1830 the name of the force was formally changed to 'Indian Navy', and one of the results was the creation of a family pension fund for the widows and children of officers, mates, pursers, midshipmen, and clerks, providing an annuity for widows, for the boy children to 18 years, and for girls until they married or died. The last female recipient of a pension from the Fund did not die until well into the 1960s! The Fund also included provisions for making loans to officers to proceed on sick leave, furlough or to send their families to Europe, but these are beyond the scope of this article.

As with the Army Pensioners my brief was only to transcribe the volumes into an electronic format. This I have done and in the near future they will be incorporated into the FIBIS website along with an index. Other Pension Fund records within the India Office Records about military personnel are much larger and will need either a large group of dedicated transcribers or the use of scanning and OCR techniques.

The first Navy Fund volume has a total of 169 folios showing contributors, and the second has 156 folios. Many of the Vol. 2 folios are updates of those in Vol. 1. All the men entered are there, of course, because they are married. There were many other Officers of the Indian Navy not entered in the two volumes. If the Volumes of the Fund are the gold bearing ore then Charles Rathbone Low's *History of the Indian Navy 1613-1863* (London, 1877)¹ is the refinery! Apart from the fact that it is stirring reading, having been written by a

Register of Indian Navy Family Fund: Entry for
Richard Morgan

IOR: L/AG/23/18/2, folio 1, left hand side.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Rank in which subscribing</i>	<i>From what date</i>
<i>Richard, Morgan -</i> <i>Died on the 26th November, 1832.</i>	<i>Captain</i>	<i>1st January, 1830</i>

Off

<i>Names</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>When born</i>	<i>Where Born</i>
<i>Eugenia, Money, Morgan</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>29th June 1823</i>	<i>Ponahay</i>
<i>Harriett, Morgan</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>13th Dec. 1814</i>	<i>Ponahay</i>
<i>Sophia, Sarah, Morgan</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>27th April 1818</i>	<i>Ponahay</i>
<i>Louisa, Caroline, Morgan</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>5th Nov. 1822</i>	<i>Ponahay</i>

¹ Low's *History* covers a far longer period than this article. An original edition may cost over £200, but fortunately a reprint was published in 2001 (ISBN 0 948130 48 2) and is obtainable through the FIBIS website, price £32 for members, £39.95 for non-members, plus £4.60 postage.

Register of Indian Navy Family Fund: Entry for
Richard Morgan

IOR: L/AG/23/18/2, folio 1, right hand side.

When Married	Where	Wife's Maiden Name	Remarks
8 th June 1809	Chelsea	1 st Wife - Maria Ann.	(deceased -
21 st Sept. 1821	Calcutta	2 ^d Wife - Mary Ann.	Died 23 rd Dec. 1874 Died 23 rd Dec. 1874 -
Spring-			
Amount of Donation paid	When paid	Remarks.	
200	"	Died 6 th Sept. 1878. Buried on Form 37 to Inst. 200798. Dec. 11 th 1878.	
200	"	Died 29 th Dec. 1878. (Letter 2/79)	
		Married - Final Donation paid in England on the	
		Married - Final Donation paid in England on the	
Eaton Road W. Keating.			

A few examples will show the nature and scope of the information available in the Fund Registers and Low's book (F=folio).

Volume 1, F1 (see illustration). Capt Richard Morgan joined the fund in January 1830 and died in November 1832. He was appointed Master-Attendant in September 1828 and also appointed to the Marine Board at an additional allowance of Rs.3,000 per annum! He married twice (1) Maria Ann in Chelsea on 8 June 1809 (a note says she is deceased), and (2) Mary Ann in Calcutta on 21 September 1821 (a note gives her death as 23 December 1874). Neither of these ladies' maiden names is shown. He had four daughters, all born in Bombay: Eugenia Money Morgan born 23 January 1813, Harriett Morgan born 13 December 1814, Sophia Sarah Morgan born 27 April 1818, and Louisa Caroline Morgan

born 9 November 1822. The Remarks say that Eugenia died on 6 September 1898 and Harriett on 29 December 1878. An Executor's name is shown for Harriett's estate as the Reverend Wm. Keating which may be a clue to the married name of Louisa, both Sophia and Louisa having been noted as married but without further details. Eugenia's middle name of 'Money' may also be a pointer for further research as this was the surname of a Superintendent of the Bombay Marine – Capt William T Money who retired in 1815 and who was described as 'a man of enlightened views and great administrative capacity, who had also served in the Company's mercantile service'.

The length of time that a pension could last is sometimes quite long: Mary Ann, Capt Morgan's Widow, received payment for 42 years and the eldest daughter Eugenia for 66 years.

F2, though, does balance the books: Capt W T Graham's widow survived him by only two years. Capt Graham was also appointed to the Marine Board as third Member in 1828 and made General Agent for Transports and Boat Master.

F3. Capt John Crawford joined the Fund in January 1830. He had married his wife Frances in Calcutta on 19 May 1814 and they had five boys, John born 1816, Charles born 1818, Dalrymple born 1820, James born 1822, and Frazer born 1829; but at the time of his death in 1843 the boys are noted 'All over age'. Mrs Crawford died in 1858. Capt Crawford was a sailor noted for his marine surveying activities; he commanded a flotilla of vessels during the First Burmese War in 1824-6 and was later appointed Master-Attendant.

After F10 the maiden names of the wives appear regularly, which makes the researcher's life a little easier and more interesting.

F11. Commander, later Capt, William Rose who had married Jane Falle in Jersey on 14 October 1840 had one daughter Eliza Jane, born in London 10 August 1841,² and it is noted that she married; and furthermore a later notation gives the name of the administratrix of the late Mrs Rose's estate as Eliza Jane, Baroness d'Este, and so another lead opens up. I find these possible connections fascinating and there are so many of them within these volumes; and there are many occasions when a later notation will give a direction for the family historian to follow, for example the value of an estate, an address, a place of death, and so on.

It is probable that most of the men came from a middle class background and so would expect to enjoy a reasonable standard of living. In 1828 a Senior Captain drew some Rs.1000 per month; Junior Captains Rs.700; First Lieutenants Rs.150 per month plus Rs.2. 3 annas per day if in command; Second Lieutenants got between Rs.82 and 122 per month, and Midshipmen between Rs.30 and 50. But as with all things vaguely military there appear to have been lots of little extra bonuses to help out. The exchange rate at the time was about Rs.10 to the British Pound. The rates of pay in 1863 at the abolition of the Indian Navy had hardly risen at all.

² A sad footnote to this folio is that Capt. Rose died three months before his daughter was born. Low describes him as the 'veteran' Capt. Rose, Master-Attendant.

By a Government Order issued from Bombay Castle in 1824 the retirement pay of Marine Officers was amended for those serving twenty-two years and upwards in India: Master Attendant and the Commodore, after serving five years in either of these stations, £450 per annum; Captains of the First Class, or Senior Captains, £360pa; Captains of the Second Class £270pa; First Lieutenants £180pa. Two years later an increase was made for Junior Captains to £293pa, and for First Lieutenants to £191.12s.6d pa.

Pension rates to both widows and daughters vary through the years but are about £40-£50pa for children; £136-£156 for a Lieutenant's or Senior Lieutenant's widow; £210 for a Commander's Widow and £250 for the widows of Captains. There are some indications that some payments might have been made from other Funds but I have not

explored this avenue - e.g. on F143 Lt Lamb's widow is noted as being on the Regular Widows Fund.

A few figures

Children were noted as born in/at/on:-

England	177	India	185	Aden	7
Scotland	13	Surat (India)	2	Baghdad	4
Ireland	3	Bassein	1	Bushire	3
		(Burma)			
Wales	17	Kandy/Ceylon	16	Mauritius	1
Jersey	6	Cape of Good	1	Smyrna	3
		Hope			
Boulogne	2	Australia	2	Suez	1
Montaubon	1	New Zealand	15		
(France)		Hong Kong	1	Aboard Ship or	7
		Macao	2	At Sea including	
		Shanghai	1	one off Cape	
				Horn!	

Sadly 62 children died early, i.e. 'under age'.

The birth 'Off Cape Horn' was that of Alexander son of Lt Wood in F39. Lt, later Capt, Wood was one of many eminent surveyors of both the coasts and rivers of India and South Asia. In 1861 he retired from the Indian Navy and was appointed as Superintendent of the Indus Steam Flotilla, a purely commercial concern, and managed it so successfully that by 1870 it was returning a profit of nearly £50,000 per annum.

It is a little worrying to read that Amy Morris Woolaston, one of the three daughters of Lt Garwood Woolaston, was born 'Dover Rd, Surrey' (F61).

The Officers married in:-

England*	12	Scotland	5	Calcutta	18	New Zealand	1
London	52	Ireland	8	Bombay	51		
Bucks	1	Wales	2	Cochin	2	Penang	1
Chester	1	Jersey	5	Ceylon/Kandy	1	Singapore	1
Cornwall	1	Isle of Man	1	Coonoor	1		
Hampshire	2			Ootacamund	2	Aden	5
Hereford	1	Brussels	1	Poona	1	Baghdad	2
Kent	6	Switzerland	1	Burma	1	Smyrna	1
Lincoln	2	Vienna	1	Arakan	1		
Somerset	4	New York	1	(Burma)			
Yorks	1						

*Some officers simply stated 'England', others gave a specific County.

The Indian Navy was abolished by Order in Council on 22 April 1863, and in 1871 officers of the 'late' Indian Navy were listed as:-

Senior Captains	4
Captains	6
Commanders (Hon. Captains 30 April 1863)	14
Lieutenants (Hon. Commanders 30 April 1863)	22
Lieutenants	37
Mates (Hon. Lieutenants 30 th April 1863)	26
Midshipmen	66
Pursers	20
Clerks	19

Apparently on the abolition of the Indian Navy some men received an increment in rank for pension purposes, a not uncommon perk of Officers serving in India!

So much for the layout and content of the Records, but what of the characters involved? Every one of the contributors to the Fund has a mention somewhere within the 1300 pages of Low's *History*. To tell all their histories would obviously be impossible, but the following are some of the more interesting entries and tales to relate, including a marriage in New York State, many births in New Zealand, and the very precise Officer who recorded his son's birthplace in latitude and longitude.

Examples

Vol. 1, F36. Senior Lt Frederic Webb married his second wife, Fanny Wise, in Buffalo, New York on 21 June 1855 and subsequently had two more daughters, Sophie Martha born 3 October 1856 in Hong Kong who died in March 1858 and Alice Webb, born 6 July 1858 in Shanghai who married Charles William Cooper in March 1889.

F81. Senior Lt King's entry has interesting details apart from the birth at sea aboard the ship *Malacca* on 4 April 1850 of his son; by 1899 the son is Major Thomas Fraser King.

F90. Lt (or 'Leutenant' as in the St Edmund's Parish Register) Rowland Forby Jermyn was married on 4 September 1851 to Louisa Emily Jermyn in Southwold Parish Church - my local church. He was the son of George Bitten Jermyn, Clerk. Emily's father was James Jermyn, Esq, who had been High Steward of Southwold a year or so before this date. Rowland had enlisted in the Indian Navy as a volunteer in January 1840, promoted Midshipman later in that year and Lt in 1850. He served on the *Coote* in 1844, the *Sesostris* in 1846, and on the Steam Frigate *Semiramis* in 1848. In 1852 he was sent to Burma, as Senior Lt, aboard the *Zenobia* under Commander Ball. A quote from Low, p285 by a Lt Aylesbury says:

At the taking of Rangoon we took part in the cannonade and storming of the King's Wharf Stockade, when Lt Jermyn of the *Zenobia* was the first in climbing through the embrasure in the stockade. As I saw his white trousers disappear, I thought it was the last I should see of my old friend and messmate.

He was on sick leave in 1852/3/4/5 and on service in Turkey 1856 and then retired. He withdrew from the family Fund in 1859, no children are shown, and he was on the retired list until 1873. So far I have not been able to trace any other information.

F105. Capt Robert Stradling's wife Georgina died only 14 days after the birth of her eighth child.

Vol. 2, F6. Again, as in Vol.1, F81, there are notes that indicate 'Navy' children joined the Army - John and Richard Lloyd are both Colonels by the time of their sister Juliana's death in 1907.

F11. There was no Means Test in the 19th century before you could receive your pension of £40 per annum: Margaret Augusta Winn, the daughter of Senior Lt Frank Dawson William Winn, left an estate of £10,786. 2. 2 in 1904.

F13. Mrs Abigail Hayman, second wife and widow of Senior Lt W R Hayman, managed to do even better, with an estate in 1900 of £33,725. 16 .5 - about £1,788,000 today.

F16. Go to New Zealand; Lt Francis Robinson's wife had eleven children out there, one child every 18 months except for the last who arrived after a break of three years, but mother lived on to be 84 years old.

F21. Capt Young's second wife Charlotte Turner died in child birth on 28 August 1854 but the boy Augustus Robert Young survived past his 18th birthday.

F30. Capt Campbell's death was noted from *The Times* – one of many folios carrying a *Times* obituary or marriage date reference. It was probably something for the pensions clerk to do while travelling up to the India Office on the horse omnibus each morning.

F34. Commander Grounds, and more of him later, fathered thirteen children between 1847 and 1866 - but at least the last two, Flora and George, were twins.

F35. Mrs Lt Mitcheson is the only widow noted as dying in India (in her 86th year). There may be more but not noted as such.

F56 and F151. Commander Pengelly has a follow-on folio to accommodate his sixteen children born between 1855 and 1877. Only three died in infancy, the last ten being born in Cardiff and Penarth. His wife Arabella Lewis was born on 6 April 1835, and died in December 1919.

F74. Lt Collingwood receives a mention here not for the large family entry on this folio but in the light of current affairs. Low quotes him as follows:

The survey of the City of Bagdad was completed entirely by myself, and under very unpleasant restrictions, as it was to be done unawares. The Turkish Govt. were not to know anything about it, consequently Capt Jones could not move in the matter ... He went away on some other duty, and I was left to survey the whole town as best I could, and under such difficulties that at times I had to note bearings and paces all over my white shirt, where best I could get the pencil at the time, and as you can imagine, had many narrow escapes of detection, and had to resort to all kinds of subterfuges to lull suspicion.

On another occasion Jones and Collingwood surveyed the Shatt-al-Arab waters. His superior, Capt Jones, was one of the more noted of surveyors of the Hon Company and Low notes that on travelling to England on sick leave, after 25 years of continuous service, he brought with him a map of Babylonia, in three sheets, with a detailed memoir of the country. Low adds: 'as an instance of carelessness with which such valuable records are treated in the India Office, it may be noted that these maps were lost in that department' - I wonder if that comment came from Collingwood himself who, after leaving the Navy, joined the India Office staff,³ hence a number of his children were born at South Hackney, Mile End, Bow and Cheshunt.

F79. The last death entry recorded in the folios of the Fund is Miss Ernestine Sweny, born 2 Dec 1871, died 24 February 1960, but information elsewhere in the IOR⁴ shows that

³ The *India Office List* for 1877 shows him as a Clerk specially attached to the Finance Department.

⁴ Accountant General Department Payment Books, L/AG/21/26/60 and 62.

some navy fund pensioners survived even longer, for example Miss Eireen Louisa Cousens who did not die until 25 March 1966.

F88. A Victorian Romance? Lt W W Dawson's daughter, Ada Margaret Massie Dawson, aged 32 years, married Clarence Harcourt, Esq in July 1893. Was it love at first sight? As she appears to have married the Solicitor who dealt with her late mother's estate!

F91. Lt Henry Jackson was another who settled in New Zealand where all his nine children were born, all of them after the disbandment of the Indian Navy, so perhaps he was living on pension out there.

F92. Jane Clarke Rogers died 23 April 1937 aged 98 years having outlived her husband Lt J A Keys by 42 years and in fact she had outlived two of her daughters, Sarah Isabella and Rose Olive.

F94. Lt Georges was divorced from Emma Johnson in 1871.

F105. The large number of entries on this folio perhaps hide a family tragedy: two boys, James and Frank Tozer, had their pensions paid to guardians until their deaths in 1946 and 1951 as 'they were unable to care for themselves'.

F106. After Lt Mason's first wife Amy Guinness died in or just after childbirth in 1865 he married Marion Rouse, then aged 20 years. Marion Mason died in 1952 aged 100 years and 62 years after her husband.

F116. Mrs Lewis, the former Miss Elizabeth Susan Celeste Durant Durant remarried in 1871 Surgeon Wood who died in 1885. She then married William Haughton in 1887 who died in 1890. Each time during her widowhood she picks up her former full pension.

F117. Commander Henry Burn and his wife Louisa Wimbolt had eight children including two sets of twins all born in Singapore 1865-1873; regrettably the pair born December 1866 die shortly after birth and only Lily of the pair born a year later survived.

F119. A long extract from a newspaper tells of the death by drowning in one of the ponds at Kew Gardens of Lucy Brownlow widow of Lt Edward Maxwell Brownlow. Verdict: suicide while temporarily insane.

F131. Lt John Glennie Greig was very sure of the place of birth of his eldest son William on the 24 March 1870: 14degrees. 50mins north, 67degrees. 00mins east, but he failed to note the place of birth of his eldest daughter!

F134. Is an unusual one: Lt Robert Charles Nicholletts is noted as 'An Officer in the Bengal Staff Corps', and by 1877, according to the *India Office List* he was serving as a District Superintendent of Police at Gurgaon, Punjab. His children are shown as born either in Lahore (1867), Multan (1870), or just India.

F143. Junior Lt Lamb gave proof that there's life in an old sea dog. He married at the age of 45 and fathered eight children and they all survived childhood.

F154. Another Army man: Frederic Cooper Turner is shown as a Midshipman/Junior Lt on 17 August 1881 when he married Emma Storey in Surbiton. Then notes tell us that he is

Capt, 4th Foot, Royal Lancaster Regt; Major, 1st Northamptonshire Regt; and finally a Lt-Col when he died in 1921.

A Real 'Daughter of the Fleet'

Sarah Grounds was born on 9 November 1847 aboard the Steam Frigate *Ajdaha*, a new ship launched in London and which sailed from Gravesend on 25 September and cast anchor in Bombay Harbour on 28 December. Lt Grounds was returning from furlough in England having married Martha Lake in January 1847. And so we are pleased to announce the marriage between the eldest daughter of Vol. 1, F70 to Vol. 2, F135: Miss Sarah Alicia Grounds aged 20 years of Vol. 1, F70 and Vol. 2, F34 to marry Lt Parry Jones of Vol. 2, F135 in June 1867 in Shirley, Southampton.

An English Soldier in Persia 1833-1840

By Jo Purshouse and Lawrie Butler

In January 2003, I (Lawrie Butler) had an email from our Secretary, Peter Bailey, asking me to reply to Mrs Jo Purshouse who had a relative born in Persia of a father who was 'a Sergeant in the Army'. After some hesitation I wrote to Jo saying that although some of the books and manuscripts in the British Library related to Persia there were no records of baptisms, marriages and burials. I was reluctant to take on a member whom we probably would be unable to help but offered to check if any information was available in the then Public Record Office (now TNA) and perhaps in the Family Records Centre. I am pleased to say that Jo is now a member.

Jo sent me all available details. The 1851 Census¹ for Whitwell, Creswell in Derbyshire showed a girl of under fifteen, named Ann Jonson [sic] (Jo's great grandmother), said to have been born in Ondar, Persia. This suggested the Whitwell area as possibly being the father's birthplace. A GRO Certificate² detailed a marriage in Middlesex on 11 May 1856 where the bride, Ondar Anna Johnson aged nineteen years, married an Alfred Joseph Vincent; Ondar's father was named as Thomas Johnson, Sergeant in the Army. The 1881 Census³ showed Onda [sic] A Vincent aged 44 years and born in Teheran, Persia. The census records generally indicated that Onda (and possibly her father) resided in the Creswell/Whitwell area of north Derbyshire and in due course Jo concentrated her research in that area and in particular in the estate records of the Duke of Portland. Recent findings in those records are detailed later in this article. Jo went on to say:

I believe Ondar's mother to have been Persian, based on anecdotal evidence, family physiognomy and a family heirloom - a Persian costume comprising silk tunic, baggy trousers, long fitted jacket, tasselled cap and veil. The name 'Ondar' is still used in my family [see *family tree on p33*]; moreover, I believe Ondar's mother to have been named 'Cottoone' as this was the name given by Ondar to her first child.

From an early stage in the research, Jo and her daughter Grace had also made extensive use of the Web search engine *Google* entering 'Ondar Persia' to locate both 'Ondar' a village east of Teheran and the Whitwell Local History Site which carried extracts from the 1851 census (see above). Later Jo was able to confirm an exact date of birth for Ondar as 19 September 1836 taken from a family bible.

The British Interest in Persia

It is necessary to know a little of the history of Persia to understand why an English soldier should be there in the first place. Jo had located Dennis Wright's book *The English Amongst the Persians* and what follows is based upon this book.⁴ The nineteenth century

¹ 1851 Census, Whitwell, Derbyshire. HO107/2122, folio 516/3.

² GRO Marriage Certificate PAS/416917.

³ 1881 Census, Oldbury, Worcs. RG11/2837.

⁴ Denis Wright, *The English amongst the Persians* (London, 1977).

was a period dominated by intense Anglo-Russian rivalry for influence in Persia, inspired on the one hand by Russia's steady expansion into the Caucasus and Central Asia and on the other by Britain's concern for the defence of India, perhaps threatened if the Russians achieved too much influence in Persia. The first British settlements in Persia dated from the early 17th century when the East India Company began trading in the Persian Gulf and established a 'factory' or trading post at Jask. Later, in 1778, the EIC transferred its Persian headquarters from Basra to Bushire on the coast, which then became the principal British centre in the Persian Gulf. Just as in India itself, the EIC's original interest in Persia had been commercial but with threats from Afghanistan, France and Russia, the British interest in Persia became more and more one of ensuring that Persia maintained its independence as a vital element in the defence of the Indian Empire. Following the signature of treaties between Britain and Persia the first Military Mission was sent to Persia to help train the Persian Army, arriving at Bushire from Bombay in February 1800. After a brief French intervention, other British Military Missions followed but by the end of 1815 most of the Mission had been withdrawn except for a small group of officers and seven or eight sergeants. Some of these continued in Persia into the 1830s. A new Military Mission was recruited in India from all branches of the military service but only reached Bushire in December 1833. This mission consisted of eight officers, fourteen sergeants and an Assistant Apothecary all under the command of Col Passmore of the Bengal Native Infantry. Other officers included Capt Sheil, Ensign Rawlinson, and Lts Farrant, Stoddart and D'Arcy Todd. From headquarters in Tabriz, the officers were posted to outlying districts to raise and train troops. Finally a team of eight sergeants of the Rifle Brigade under the command of Capt Richard Wilbraham arrived in Persia from England in mid-1836, with instructions to train Persians in the use of the rifle. Thus around the time of Ondar's birth in Persia, there were representatives of three different missions in Persia, the 1815, the 1833 and the 1836.

Progress of the investigation

In retrospect it is always easy to marshal the facts in order and decide that Sergeant Johnson must have originated from a particular one of the three missions. Unlike a professional researcher who has to produce results for financial income, a voluntary one has limited time and is often pressured into working as a 'grasshopper' moving from one enquiry to another and it is surprising how the weeks and months pass by. Fortunately Jo not only has contributed gems of information from time to time but has displayed remarkable patience. Initially I checked readily available sources. At the IOR, from Hodson's *Officers of the Bengal Army*,⁵ I verified that Col Pas(s)more was definitely Indian Army based on Calcutta. He was 'appointed to command Persian troops as disciplined by British Officers 19 Jan 1833'. He sailed for Bushire from Bombay on 20 November 1833. A Board of Control collection confirmed his instructions as being sent from Calcutta.⁶ At the

⁵ V C P Hodson, *List of Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1834*, 4 vols, (London, 1927-28, 1946-47).

⁶ Collections of the Board of Control for the Affairs of India, IOR: F/4/1355, collection 53809.

TNA, I viewed a Foreign Office file which mentions a Capt Stoddart of the Royal Staff Corps and goes on to record that on 30 March 1836, Lt Wilbraham was to take a party of one officer and eight NCOs of the Rifle Corps (Brigade) to Persia. The same file goes on to mention 'officers of the EIC army who are currently in Persia'.⁷ I was drawn to the conclusion that Wilbraham's mission would probably have arrived in Persia too late for any member to be responsible for any child born on 19 September 1836!

I then assumed that Ondar's father, Sergeant Thomas Johnson, was from the EIC Army. I checked for a Sergeant Johnson in all of the alphabetical Presidency Registers of European soldiers in the Honorable Company's service: firstly Bombay 1795-1839,⁸ since this is the nearest to Persia, then Madras 1786-1839,⁹ but both searches proved abortive. Since Col Passmore had come from Bengal, I then checked Bengal 1793-1839.¹⁰ I found a Thomas Johnson but he was still only a Corporal in 1839. Of another two, one was from Middlesex and had gone out in 1818 and became a Conductor (a senior NCO) and eventually died in Bengal in 1878, the other from the Leeds area had gone out in 1825 but was only a bombardier in 1834 so unlikely to be our man. The most likely one was the Conductor but why should he take a daughter to England, leave her there and return to retire in India?

From the National Archives Website¹¹ I obtained a listing of British soldiers discharged to pension prior to 1854 using WO 97. These records do list the dates of service of some 52 Thomas Johnsons! The most likely one was reference WO97/73/41, shown as Thomas Johnson, *alias* Thomas Johnston, born Sheffield, Yorkshire serving in the 4th Dragoons and 14th Dragoons 1826-1843 and discharged aged 39. Later Jo was to suggest the same reference due to Thomas being born in Sheffield close by the known location of the 1851 census; however subsequent inspection of his WO97 service record showed no reference to Persia. From the *Bombay Calendar and Almanac* I noted the regiments that were garrisoned in the vicinity of Bombay over the period 1832-1837. These included the 4th Light Dragoons, 2nd Queen's Royal, 1st Warwickshire, 20th East Devonshire and the 40th/2nd Somersetshire Regiment. Preliminary checks revealed three of the Sergeants in the 1815 party - Stewart, Ditchfield and Gibbons.

In a process of elimination, I went to the TNA to check for the sergeants of the Rifle Brigade, otherwise known as the 95th Regt or Derbyshire Regt of Foot.¹² I went through WO12/9534-9537 covering the years 1832-1837 looking for sergeants of the name of Johnson and any others who might have been seconded to Persia. I found none but even

⁷ TNA: FO/60/44, 1836, Persia.

⁸ IOR: L/MIL/12/109, 1786-1839, A-K.

⁹ IOR: L/MIL/11/101, 1786-1839, A-K.

¹⁰ IOR: L/MIL/10/122, 1786-1839, A-K.

¹¹ www.catalogue.nationalarchives.gov.uk: 'Thomas Johnson, 1800-1850, WO97'

¹² Sir William Cope, *History of the Rifle Brigade (The Prince Consort's Own) formerly the 95th* (London, 1877).

more disturbing I did not find the officer in charge, Lt Wilbraham. I then wondered whether there was a Rifle Brigade in existence at the same time as the 95th? It appears that the two formations overlapped; while the 95th had one battalion (which I had checked) the Rifle Brigade had three. I found Lt Wilbraham and four sergeants of the 1st battalion, all from England, and four other sergeants who joined the party from the 2nd battalion, then in Cephalonia. None was a Thomas Johnson and so we now had final confirmation that our Thomas Johnson did not arrive with the 1836 mission.

In October 2004, I began to search the Bombay C-in-C General Orders file¹³ and eventually located a list issued at Poona and dated 1 November 1833 saying:

2. The undermentioned men being under orders for special Service, are appointed Serjeants, while so employed, from this date:—

To be Serjeants of HorseArty.	{ Rough Rider James Murdock. Corporal Christopher Hackett.	} Horse Brigade.
To be Serjeants of FootArty.	{ „„„„ George Fearnley... Bombardier William Burgess.	
To be Serjeants of Cavalry.	{ Serjeant Thomas Johnson... Corporal Charles Duperier...	} His Majesty's 4th Dragoons.
	{ Serjeant Peter Clarendon... „„„ W. Hart Mason...	
	{ Bugler.. James Steek... Serjeant Henry Ware.....	} Queen's Royals.
To be Serjeants of Infantry.	{ „„„ John Beech..... Color Serjeant James Petters..	
	{ Private..... George Page...	} European Regiment.

There is nothing written that identifies the special service as being in Persia but fortunately others on the list were known from my previous research to have gone to Persia. The mention of the HM 4th Dragoons also indicated that the Thomas Johnson listed in WO 97/73/41 and noted by Jo as coming from Sheffield was most probably our man, although there were still problems with the *alias* and the service in the 14th Dragoons.

Final confirmation

The next priority was to check in detail the service record WO 97/73/41, the record of TJ's discharge to pension. His Regimental Number is shown as 1022 but this only refers to the 14th Light Dragoons. At the foot of the page is the addition of the town Worksop (North Notts) which is likely to be the place where he might have gone after discharge from the Army. His occupation prior to joining the Army is shown as 'cutler' a typical occupation for one living so close to Sheffield. The use of the *alias* Johnston appears to be a spelling aberration introduced by the Surgeon in Kirkee, Bombay, when writing his report. Although this service record is almost illegible, it is very detailed but there is still no mention of his service in Persia.

While the *History of the Rifle Brigade* gives good coverage of Lt Wilbraham's party going to Persia, the *History of the 4th Light Dragoons*¹⁴ makes no mention of the detachment of two of its soldiers to duty in Persia, one of whom, Duperier, later became an officer. I looked for

¹³ IOR: L/MIL/17/4/403, p109.

¹⁴ Otherwise the 4th Hussars. David Scott Daniell, *4th Hussar. The Story of the 4th Queen's Own Hussars, 1685-1958* (Aldershot, 1959).

the Muster Rolls of Thomas's service in the 4th Dragoon Guards but again without result. Then I located the Muster Rolls of the 4th Light Dragoons and specifically WO12/637 (1826-27) and 645 (1835-36).¹⁵ The first shows TJ's enlistment on 20 April 1826 and the second shows him as Regt No 300 Sergt Thomas Johnson. Against his name is written: 'On Command Persia'. Although completion of the Muster Rolls is extremely erratic in that he is sometimes shown in Persia and at other times in Kirkee, Bombay, he does appear to have been in Persia from the end of 1833 to June 1840 where he is shown 'en route to Joun [?] from Persia'. On 30 Sep 1841 he is shown along with many others as 'transferred to 14th Light Dragoons'. The 4th Dragoons left for England in Nov 1841 and a call for volunteers to make up numbers in the 14th Light Dragoons resulted in his transfer as No 1022. He may have liked the climate and conditions in Bombay and it is likely that he had a wife and child, so staying in Kirkee was more attractive. But in Muster Roll WO12/1162, the 31 December 1842 muster shows him as 'invalided to Bombay' and later on 20 January 1843 he is shown along with six other invalids as being sent to England.¹⁶ The *Bombay Calendar and Almanac* shows that on 20 January 1843, the Barque *Maitland* departed for London carrying, *inter alia*, invalids 126 men, 11 women and 25 children,¹⁷ and it is very likely that these included Thomas and Ondar.

As is usual with Army records of this time, no reference is made to his wife and child. Jo and I had assumed that he returned to England with Ondar only, and the wording of a General Order published in Bengal in 1822 had supported this assumption:

Doubts having been entertained as to whether the Children of Soldiers whose mothers are natives of this country, are allowed to accompany their fathers or friends to England, the Commander in Chief thinks this is a fitting opportunity to explain to His Majesty's Corps in India that no prohibition exists to the children of European Soldiers, whoever their mothers may be, accompanying their fathers or relations to Great Britain at the Public Expense.¹⁸

No mention is made of the mothers who might have accompanied them. Early on in this enquiry, Jo had noted from Denis Wright's book that 'a number of the men in the 1815 mission married girls from the Christian Armenian population, the marriages being annulled when the men were posted home.' However, subsequent research was to show that Thomas Johnson must have taken his wife, Cottoone/Kautoon, home with him as well as his daughter Ondar.

In the Discharge to Pension papers, the Surgeon at Kirkee reports that:

Sergt T Johnson labours under dyspeptic and pectoral symptoms evinced in badly assimilating power, tumultuary action of the heart, and shortness of breadth, with cough,

¹⁵ TNA: WO12/637 and 645.

¹⁶ TNA: WO12/1162.

¹⁷ IOR: *Bombay Calendar and Almanac*, 1844, p301, Departures.

¹⁸ As quoted in *Bengal Hurkaru*, 29 July 1822 (IOR); see also Dian Montgomerie Elvin, 'The Condell Family in India' in *FIBIS Journal* 9.

which have induced great debility and emaciation and are in a great measure irremediable, from which I am of opinion that he is permanently disqualified for the active duties of a soldier.

Finally the Principal Medical Officer at Chatham on 29 May 1843 says he is of the opinion that 'TJ is inept for service and likely to be permanently disqualified for military duty.' The War Office on 13 June 1843 approved his discharge after 17 years 55 days service.

After reading these discharge papers I suggested to Jo that the Surgeon's report indicated perhaps that TJ might have had a short life span in England. Within days Jo, after another visit to *Google* entering 'Khatoon Johnson Persia', had located a copy of a Death Registration Certificate indicating that Thomas Johnson, 37 years old, Sergeant of the 4th Dragoons had died of Consumption on 4 November 1843 at Whitwell, Worksop, and within weeks acting on another of her brainwaves sent me a copy of a death certificate for Kautoon or Catharine Johnson. She had died of Pulmonary Phthisis on 6 December 1847 at the age of 27 years at Belph, Whitwell. Sadly she had in fact succumbed to the same disease as her husband. Life in the mountains of Persia had proved to be exceedingly harsh for both of them. Fortunately Ondar lived to the age of 65 years, bringing up nine children including twins. Judith, Jo's cousin, has pointed out that Ondar and Alfred Joseph spent most of their married life in Oldbury, Worcs (now Sandwell) and are buried there. Two years ago she arranged for a new stone to be emplaced. Judith goes on to point out that while Ondar is shown as a British subject in the 19th century censuses, curiously once she becomes a widow as she is in the 1901 census, she is shown as Persian!

Jo's most recent research indicates that in May 1854 Ondar was still lodging with Sarah Windle as on the 1851 Census with her rent being paid by the Lady Harriet Bentinck, the eldest daughter of the Duke of Portland.¹⁹ The importance of family legend which had always indicated a connection with the Portland estates should be kept in mind and Jo has done that to the extent that further investigations in the Nottingham Archives and elsewhere are still being carried out.

In conclusion

I must thank Jo for her steadfast encouragement for the best part of two years; also for that of Judith, of whose help I only became aware in the last six months. For my part I have learnt that there can be confusion between regiments of similar names and secondly, where unusual projects are undertaken, 'special services' are often cloaked in secrecy.

As ever I have to mention how grateful we in this country have to be that we have such wonderful historical resources available in both the British Library and The National Archives and indeed the County Archives.

Postscript

¹⁹ Nottingham Archives: Portland Papers.

In the early stages of investigation, I had checked all IOR indexes for both marriages and baptisms but without success. Then, after the article had been written, I came across a marriage record in the Bombay index showing a totally unrelated marriage that had been performed by the British Envoy to the Court of Persia. Was it possible that the Johnson marriage had been recorded under Consular Marriages? But the records at the Family Records Centre and TNA only start in 1849. Was it possible that the marriage could have been included in the Army Chaplains' Returns? I checked these at the Family Records Centre and found under Army Returns, 'Thomas Johnson Bombay 1836-37 page 778'.²⁰ I ordered the certificate and found:

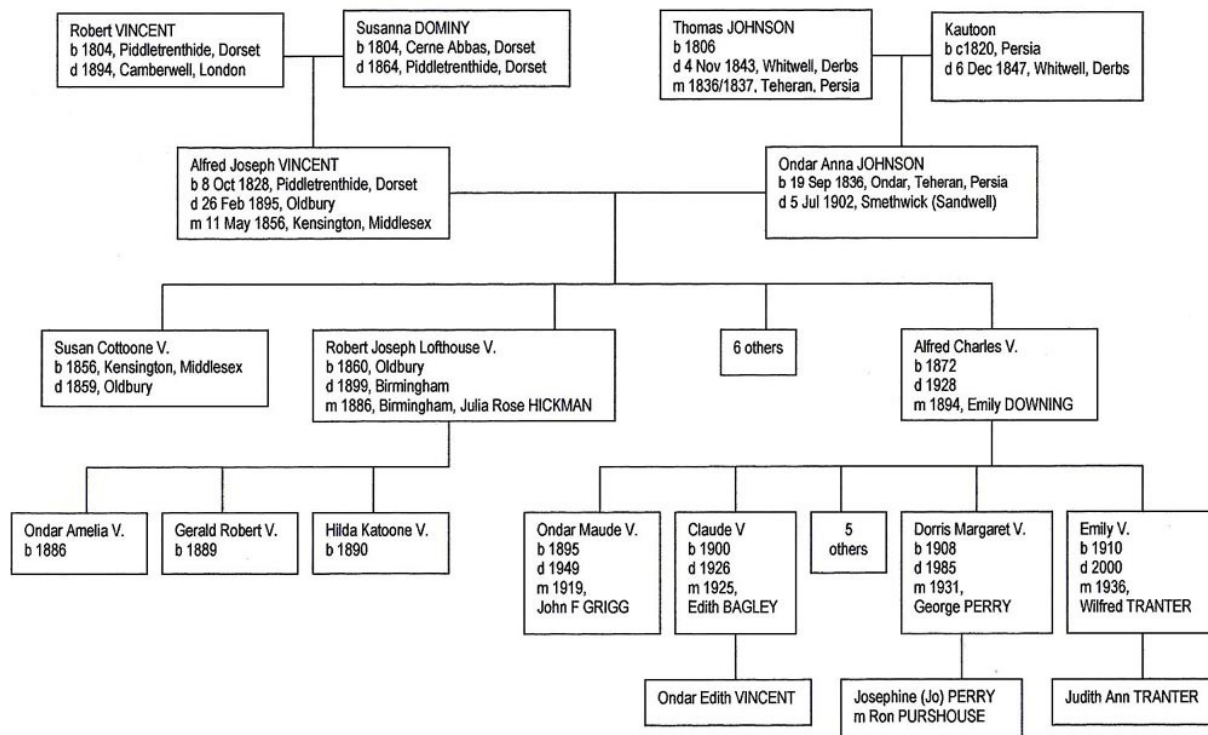
**Half Yearly Return of Marriages in the Fourth Queens Own Regiment of Light
Dragoons, Headquarters Kirkee, 1 Jan 1838**

Sergeant Thos. Johnson B(ach), 31yrs of Sheffield York, Protestant, was married in the Camp of Her Britannic Majesty's Legation near Teheran, Persia on 30 July 1837 to Kautoon S(pinster), 17yrs Teheran, by John McNeil, British Envoy to the Court of Persia under authority of Lt-Col Shee Commanding British Detail in Persia.

If only I had looked at these rarely used records earlier I would have saved both Jo and myself considerable time. It was only in the latter stages that we were aware that Sergeant Johnson was a British soldier but it does indicate that, however implausible, all records have to be checked as early as possible. I would also add that it is probable that an Armenian marriage ceremony perhaps not recognised by the British authorities may well have taken place much earlier.

Vincent – Johnson Family 1804-1944

²⁰ Army Returns, Index to Marriages 1796-1880.



Brigadier-General Octavius Edward Rothney 1824-1881

By David Blake.

For fifty years the India Office Private Papers section has exerted itself to acquire India-related papers in private hands. The results of these labours can now be seen in the India Office Private Papers catalogue on the British Library website; and though the biggest, the BL is by no means the only institutional collector in the field: the Cambridge Centre for South Asian Studies and the School of Oriental and African Studies, to name but two others, also have important collections of private papers. Yet there is a vast quantity of India-related material still out there in private hands. Perhaps a family has preserved only a few papers, but even so, these can still give a fascinating glimpse of a an ancestor whose lot was cast in India. One such case has recently been brought to light by FIBIS members Dave and Brenda Barnett who have sent me five documents relating to Brenda's ancestor Octavius Edward Rothney (1824-1881) of the Bengal Army.

Document No. 1, entitled 'The Rothneys', is a brief family history compiled in 1942 by Mrs Dolly Turnbull (née Dora Elles) a granddaughter of Octavius. The earlier portion dealing with Octavius and his forebears relies on the memories and family lore recollected by his youngest sister Emily (b 1830) and taken down by one of his daughters Violet (b 1865). According to family tradition thus recorded, Octavius's father, Alexander Rothney, was descended from either John or James Hay, sons of the Earl of Erroll, who had participated in the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 and then fled to America where they had taken the name Rothney from a Scottish village. One of their sons, Alexander's father, had evidently returned to Scotland, and Alexander was born on 11 June 1790 at Fort George, Inverness. As a young man he joined the army as a volunteer probably about 1807. In 1811 he married Martha Stonard, and in 1815 fought at the battle of Waterloo. Following the disbandment of his regiment, he was left penniless in France, and this seems to be confirmed by the fact that one of his sons, James Hay Rothney, was born in 1817 at Cambrai in the 'Union House' (presumably a French workhouse?). By December of that year the family had reached London and were living in the parish of St Mary, Whitechapel, and by the time of Octavius's baptism in April 1824 they had moved to Stepney.¹ These districts may not have been so poor then as they subsequently became, but even so they do not suggest that the family was well off, and Emily's recollection of family tradition may not have been far wrong when she said that 'Martha cooked, scrubbed, and looked after her babies. But she had her pride – she rose before daybreak to wash the front door steps and she went to church in silk on Sundays'.

At some point Alexander obtained employment in the Home Establishment of the East India Company as Sub-Inspector of Military Stores, and there is good reason to think that he held

¹ Applications in 1839 and 1841 of James and Octavius Rothney to become respectively an assistant-surgeon and a military cadet in the East India Company's service, which include details of their births/baptisms. IOR: L/MIL/9/386, ff238-43, and L/MIL/9/197, ff607-09.

this or a similar post for over 35 years, probably retiring in 1858.² The *East India Register* lists him in the post (which it terms 'Sub-Inspector' – the difference from Deputy-Inspector is unimportant) from 1841 to 1858, but he was already in it when his son applied to be an assistant-surgeon in 1839, though he did not sign his bond for good behaviour until 1841.³ Possibly the status of the post was raised in 1841, thereby necessitating a formal bond for good behaviour and at the same time earning a mention in the *Register*. Whatever Alexander's status and financial circumstances, he was at least able to mobilise influential patrons to obtain appointments for his sons: Lady Carmichael Smyth (he had known her husband in the army) for James's assistant-surgeonship, and Lt-Col Bonner (his boss the Inspector of Military Stores) for Octavius's cadetship in 1841. His reputation at India House must also have been good, since in addition to a recommendation from a patron, a nomination by an East India Company Director was required. The Rothney family in fact illustrates the well known fact that once a man had entered the service of the Raj, members of his family for several generations thereafter would be quite likely to follow him, either by a combination of patronage and merit, or in later years by merit guided in the direction of India by family tradition. Thus not only did two of Alexander Rothney's sons, James and Octavius, go to India, but so did Octavius's two sons Alex and Claude. Both the latter died young, but the family connection with India continued through his daughter Clare who married Edmond Elles, a British Army officer who spent almost his entire career in India, as did his brother William. Both of them were knighted and eventually became Lt-Generals. Clare herself seems to have been much loved by all who knew her, and was universally mourned when she died at Simla in 1904⁴ while her husband was serving as head of the Indian Military Department. Furthermore, Octavius himself had married Maria (Minnie) Dempster, the daughter of Thomas Erskine Dempster, a member of the Bengal Medical Service, many of whose family also served in India. These two marriages illustrate another well known facet of British India: the almost infinite web of family connections among the personnel of the Indian services.

Turning now to the main subject of this article, Octavius Edward Rothney, the ninth child but the eighth son of Alexander and Martha Rothney (she went on to have thirteen children in all), we find an outline of his career in the family's Document No. 2 which is evidently a copy of his son's application in 1871 for a Queen's India Cadetship. These cadetships were awarded by the India Office, with Royal approval, to the deserving sons of fathers who had served the East India Company or the Crown in India. Preference was given to those whose fathers had seen long and distinguished service or had been killed in action.

² The application of Octavius's son for a Queen's Cadetship (see note 5) states that his grandfather was 'an old servant' of the Company 'having served in the Home Department as Deputy Inspector of Military Stores for upwards of 35 years'.

³ IOR: Z/O/1/6, p133 The bond was for £500, Sarah Stonard, spinster (Martha's sister?) being the surety.

⁴ David Gilmour, *Curzon* (London, 1994), p306fn.

It was therefore obviously in the interests of the applicant to give very full details of his father's career which, in Rothney's case, were as follows:⁵

The Father entered the service on June 27th 1841 and has served upwards of 30 years. He passed the Interpreter's Examination in the native languages in 1843 and from May 1844 till July 1848 held the appointment of Interpreter and Quartermaster in four regiments successively.

Was appointed Adjutant of the 4th Sikh Infantry in July 1848 and second in command of the 3rd Sikh Infantry in 1852. Served with the 3rd Sikh Infantry in the Hussunzye Expedition under Col Mackeson in Dec 1852. In 1853 a portion of that regiment mutinied and was disbanded and the Governor General, Lord Dalhousie, was pleased to mark his sense of Capt Rothney's conduct on the occasion by appointing him in Dec. 1853 to the command of the 4th Sikh Infantry then on service in Burma. While commanding the 4th Sikh Infantry, held command of a chain of outposts in the disturbed district of Tharawaddy in Burmah throughout the year 1854 and was engaged during that time in several military operations against the enemy.

On the outbreak of the Mutiny in May 1857 marched with the 4th Sikh Infantry to Delhi. Was at Loodiana [Ludhiana] when the mutinous troops from Jullundur and Phullour [Phillaur] arrived there en route to Delhi. A portion of the regiment opposed, with great loss, the passage of the enemy across the river Sutlej, while the remainder kept in check the disaffected town of Loodiana and protected the Treasury. Afterwards pursued the enemy with Major Olphert's Column. Joined the British force before Delhi on the 23rd of June 1857 in time to take an active part in the severe engagement of that day. Served in command of his regiment throughout the siege and at the assault and capture of Delhi and in the subsequent actions in the city. Was honourably mentioned in the despatches for Delhi and obtained a Brevet Majority and medal and clasp. In Feb. 1858 was selected by Sir John Lawrence to be Military Member of a Special Commission with two Civil Officers for the trial of rebels and acted in that capacity till May 4th 1858.

Served with Gen. Chamberlain's force in command of the 4th Sikh Infantry in the expedition against the Caubul Khail Wuzeerees [Kabul Khel Waziris] in 1859 and was present at Maidanee. Was transferred to the command of the 5th Goorkha Regiment when it was proceeding on service in 1860. Served with it in Gen. Chamberlain's Expedition against the Mahsood Wuzeerees [Mahsud Waziris] and was present in the actions of Palooseen and Burrarra Pass. Was honourably mentioned in the despatches of Col Lumsden, C.B. and Gen. Chamberlain, C.B. and his name afterwards brought specially to the notice of Government with a view to his being rewarded with a step of Brevet Rank.

Was appointed to the permanent command of the 5th Goorkha Regt. in Dec 1860 and has retained that appointment up to the present time. Was appointed a Companion of the Star of India in 1868. Served in command of a force in Agrore against the Black

⁵ Details can be verified in Octavius's entries in the 'histories of service' in the India Office Records, e.g. L/MIL/10/89, ff285-86.

Mountain tribes in Aug 1868. Was wounded in action on Aug.12th. Received the thanks of the Viceroy and the Commander in Chief.

Served in the Hazara Campaign of Oct.1868. Was honourably mentioned in the despatches by Gen. Wilde and the Commander in Chief. Promoted to Brevet Colonel.

Served in command of a force in Agrore with special powers from Oct.1869 till Sept. 1870 to check the border tribes of the Black Mountain. Received in Nov.1870 the thanks of the Government of India for his services while in command of the troops in the Agrore Valley. Medal for N.W. Frontier Service.

Document No. 3 is a testimonial letter, dated 21 April 1851, from General Sir Colin Mackenzie which gives some insight into Rothney's work fairly early in his career as Adjutant of the 4th Sikh Infantry between 1848 and 1852:

I have never had an officer under my command with whom I have uniformly had so much reason to be fully satisfied in every respect as with yourself. As Adjutant and at one time as Acting Second in Command of the 4th Sikh Infantry, which I raised and commanded, you invariably performed your duty in a manner that could not be surpassed and I freely acknowledge that, in forming a highly disciplined and most useful body of soldiers out of most discordant and unpromising materials - viz. disbanded Afghans and the refuse of the population, the province having been previously drained of its best men by former levies, - I owe my success principally to your zeal, temper, tact and knowledge of your work. Lord Dalhousie once did me the honour of asking my opinion of you. My reply was that if opportunity were afforded you in the civil, political or military line, I was quite sure that you would distinguish yourself. My sentiments as to your qualities and qualifications are even more favourable now than they were then. My private estimation of you, my dear Rothney, can only be expressed by my signing myself

Your very sincere and affectionate friend

Colin Mackenzie

Evidently he was an able manager of men, with a good understanding of indigenous Indians, and perhaps it was the latter quality which led to his selection in February 1858 by Sir John Lawrence to be Military Member of a Special Commission for the trial of rebels captured during the Indian Mutiny in the Delhi area. Lawrence had been a member of the Punjab Board of Administration from 1849, and Chief Commissioner of the Province since 1853. His work in the Punjab, culminating in his strenuous efforts to collect and support troops for the suppression of the Mutiny, earned him a reputation as the foremost member of the Indian Civil Service of his generation and perhaps of the entire nineteenth century. He has the distinction of being the only member of the ICS to ascend the Viceregal throne – an honour normally reserved for aristocratic politicians. Document No. 4 is a letter from Lawrence's Secretary, Richard (later Sir Richard) Temple, who was himself to build a formidable reputation as an Indian administrator, to C B Saunders, Commissioner of Delhi Division, in which Saunders is ordered to establish a Commission to try mutineers consisting of the two Magistrates of Delhi District and Capt Rothney. The latter evidently

kept it since it was virtually his letter of appointment, but it shows how a document in private hands can sometimes illuminate matters of broader historical importance. This particular document throws an interesting light on British policy towards rebel prisoners in the aftermath of the mutiny, marking a move by Lawrence to return to a semblance of proper judicial process which had been largely abandoned when the mutiny was at its height. Temple explained that the Chief Commissioner considered that:

the time has arrived when the executive government must secure ... to the prisoners ... a trial, which though summary and rapid, will yet be complete and to a certain degree formal. The Chief Commissioner therefore, after having weighed what has been advanced to the contrary, deems it absolutely necessary that more than one officer should sit on these trials involving as they do, either death or lengthened imprisonment, in the event of conviction.

Less serious cases could still be dealt with by only two members of the Commission, or even by just one, but all serious cases were to be tried by all three members. There was, however, no appeal from their decision – the justice meted out was still summary. One small safeguard was the provision that in every case the charges, defence, and evidence must be recorded – the implication being that this had not always been done hitherto. Punishments should also become more lenient, i.e. imprisonment or in most cases flogging (to avoid overcrowding the jails). The death sentence should be reserved for prominent mutineers, those ‘concerned in the destruction of European life’, or those bold enough to commit fresh offences even in conditions of returning normality which, if unchecked, might retard the restoration of peace and order. Finally, Lawrence warned the Commission to beware of false witnesses, so that ‘our loyal subjects’ will see that ‘with such tribunals, there is no danger from informers or extortioners’. One hopes that Rothney and his fellow commissioners duly exercised the moderation in punishing mutineers which Lawrence enjoined. If they did, they would have been acting in tune with Lawrence’s master, the Viceroy ‘Clemency’ Canning, a nickname which, it has regrettably to be said, was conferred by his fellow Europeans in anger rather than in admiration.

Meanwhile, what had happened to Rothney’s wife and family during the mutiny? The last of the family’s documents gives us just a brief glimpse of them. Like Document No 1, it is by Mrs Turnbull. Simply entitled ‘In 1857’ it records that

During the Mutiny my grandmother Minnie Rothney and her children were at Abbotabad. I never heard my grandmother speak of the Mutiny at all. She never spoke of her husband, or of the two sons whom she lost. If their names were mentioned she would get up and leave the room. The children whom she had at that time were Aunt Allie, who was the eldest, aged about eleven, Uncle Alec, who I think was the second child; Amy; my mother Clare, and Eva, born during the Mutiny. The others Constance, Claude, Ada, Violet and Helen were born afterwards. ... My grandfather was away fighting – he was in the assault on Delhi – and the women were left in Abbotabad, which is a small place neither right up in the hills nor quite down in the plains. Aunt Allie told me that they had an *ayah* [Indian nurse] whose child was sick and that my grandmother visited it and gave

it medicine. This woman came to her in a great state of distress one night. She could hardly speak for crying, and she said: 'you have saved my child, and I cannot let your children be killed.' All the children in the station used to go for their evening walk to a big tree on the outskirts of the cantonment. The woman said, weeping, that there would be men waiting there to kill all the children. She was very much distressed, and convinced my grandmother, who told the man commanding the station. He sent to the place and found the armed men waiting to kill the children, of whom my mother was one. ...My grandmother came home after the Mutiny on a sailing boat round the Cape. She had nine children on board, five of her own, Alice, Alec, Amy, Clare and Eva, and four little Mutiny orphans whom she was taking to their relations in England. They ran into a prolonged calm and could not make any headway. She said that the men passengers used to go out in the ship's boats and fish, while the Captain walked up and down the deck cursing so horribly that they trembled to hear him. Travelling wasn't easy in those days.

Our ancestors' activities can also sometimes get them into the newspapers, for better or for worse. In Rothney's case it was for the better. Quite by chance I came across a news cutting describing the Black Mountain expedition which Rothney mentions at the end of his career details in Document No. 2. The cutting is enclosed in a private letter of 14 December 1869 from the Viceroy Lord Mayo to the Secretary of State for India. Mayo had reason to be pleased with the expedition's success since it vindicated his 'softly, softly' approach to policing the frontier. The report states that:

the advanced camp on the Black Mountain has removed all apprehension of disturbances for the present season. The Hill Tribes have been made to feel that the least attempt at rapine would be immediately visited, and at the small price of one or two burned villages, the frontier has obtained a year of rest. Colonel Rothney, C.S.I., has managed the expedition with admirable tact.

In that last sentence we see again Rothney's skill in dealing with people indicated earlier by Mackenzie's testimonial and Lawrence's selection of him for the Special Commission. The report goes on to say that the villages within the British line had been completely free from depredations by the Black Mountain plunderers, that Rothney and his 'gallant little band' would soon return to winter quarters at Abbottabad, and that while it might be necessary to form the advanced camp again in the Spring, in the meantime 'nothing can be more complete than the success which has attended the experiment'. Three months ago the whole Frontier Force had been indignant at Mayo's refusal to embark on a large scale, costly and bloody retributive expedition, but 'by a judicious selection of a leader' Mayo had justified his firmness.

Everyone knows how a contest between British Artillery and native valor [*sic*] must end. There is but little honor to be got by the victors in such a struggle, and it will be a source of unmixed satisfaction if this experiment of an advanced camp, inaugurated by Lord Mayo, and so successfully conducted by Colonel Rothney, should furnish a substitute for Frontier wars.



Brigadier-General Octavius Edward Rothney near the end of his life. Reproduced by permission of the family.

This last hope was not to be fulfilled, but nonetheless it is clear that Rothney had led a very successful expedition. His service after this can be found in the last of his entries in 'the histories of service' already mentioned (see note 5). In April 1870 he was offered but for some reason declined the command of the Corps of Guides, and so remained in command of the 5th Gurkhas until October 1873 when he was promoted to Brigadier-General and posted to the Agra Brigade, which in May 1875 became the command of the Gwalior District. Finally, in August 1878 he was promoted to the Divisional staff of the Army and posted to the Lahore Division. He had received the thanks of the Punjab Government on leaving the Frontier service in 1873, and a CB in 1877. In November 1878, he was granted a year's furlough on medical certificate. In fact he stayed in Europe for the remaining two years of his life, though he was still in theory on the active list when he died on 1 January 1881 at Tunbridge Wells at the comparatively early age of fifty-six.

Looking back over his career, one cannot help feeling that he was perhaps unlucky not to reach more senior rank, but at any rate the words recording his Good Service Pension of £100p.a. seem fully justified: it was granted for 'distinguished and meritorious conduct'.

Biographical Sources within the L/MIL/14 Series

By Lawrie Butler

On the 'open shelves' in the India Office Records there is a well-used guide labelled L/MIL/1-17 being an index to the records of the armies whose details are kept in the British Library. These armies included those of the East India Company (EIC), the British army and an Indian one and there is no better explanation than that of Ian Baxter of *Baxter's Guide* fame. In an article in the *Family History News and Digest* he wrote:

There were (from the mid 18th C.) three separate East India Company armies, based in Bengal, Madras and Bombay, each consisting of regiments of local infantry and cavalry together with European corps of artillery and infantry, the whole under a small cadre of British officers who were largely born and recruited in the UK. At the same time, regiments of the British Army served alongside the EIC's armies but their records are now largely held by the National Archives (TNA) at Kew. After the government of India had been transferred to the Crown in 1858, the EIC European regiments merged with the British Army, the infantry becoming regiments of the line and the artillery and engineers part of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers. Meanwhile the EIC local army after extensive reorganisation continued in being (as three units) within the Indian Army, largely with the same officers as pre-1859.¹

British Regiments still went on tours in India but again their records are held by TNA.

Within this L/MIL/1-17 guide, there are indexes covering the three earlier EIC armies with some records particularly for officers extending well past the 1860s mark, e.g. L/MIL/10/75-107. There is an index covering the British army but this is limited to Army Lists and similar material. **L/MIL/14** lists the records of the Indian Army post the 1860 changeover and the dates of the available records indicate gaps that occur immediately post the 1860s. In part, these gaps can be filled by reference to the records of the three earlier EIC armies as indicated above. The following volumes each prefaced by L/MIL/14/ are of use for biographical sources, some more so than others. Where numerical gaps occur, these indicate that the volumes are of little use for our purposes.

Vol	Description
1-49	These contain brief Records of Service of Indian Army officers and warrant officers, forwarded to London when the officer took furlough in Europe. They are printed forms, with details of total service, leave already taken, along with a note of the leave granted. They run from 1892 to 1916 and are indexed in Z/MIL/14/1 and 2.
51-107	These give lists of promotions and alterations in all services 1866-1947.

Vol	Description
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¹ *Family History News and Digest*, vol 13, no 2, Aug/Sep 2001. European cavalry regiments serving in the Company's armies likewise transferred to the British Army following the Mutiny.

- 108-127 These give lists of Government of India appointments, promotions and retirements 1885-1935 as notified in the Gazette of India.
- 128-136 Indian Army **Casualty Returns** 1869-1948 - Home Casualties, being monthly returns of casualties among Bengal, Madras, Bombay and Indian Army officers on furlough or on the retired list but with no indexes, except by date.
- 137-141 As previously 1895-1938 but with Foreign (non-UK) Casualties, being weekly returns among serving Indian Army officers. These list corps, place and date.
- 142 Alphabetical lists of casualties by death among British officers of the Indian Services in the Great War, giving rank, age, unit, date, place and cause, 1914-1921.
- 143 Alphabetical lists of casualties by death among British officers and warrant officers of the Indian and Burma Services with details similar to Vol. 142 for the period 3 September 1939 - 30 June 1948.
- 144-175 India **Unattached List** (UAL) Annual Returns 1908-1944, being alphabetical lists of NCOs, arranged by department and giving original corps, present department, rank, date of joining Unattached List, station, date of attestation and remarks. Non-departmental warrant officers like band staff and vets are also included.
- 144 UAL, Jan 1908.
- 145-158 UAL, Invalids and Pensioners 1909 -1922.
- 159-174 UAL, Signal corps 1923-1939.
- 175 UAL, Hq Company Royal Engineers 1932-1934.
- 176-182 UAL Annual Returns , Burma Division 1904-1910.
- 195-212 **Registers of Passage Cases** 1909-1947. These registers cover claims to passage arranged by regiment and giving ship and date of sailing, reason and whether accompanied by a family. Each contains an index.
- 213 Indian Army and Indian Army Reserve of Officers (IARO) **WILLS** c1917-1921. These are wills of British army officers granted temporary commissions in the Indian Army and IARO, with index. Very basic wills but most give next of kin and beneficiaries.
- 214-215 **Indian Army Pensioners** 1896, giving forms of identification for pensioners and widows (these are covered in detail by Peter Rogers' article in FIBIS Journal 13, Spring 2005).
- 237 **War Rewards** to the Indian army 1915-1921, being a roll of rewards(awards) and promotions appearing in the *London* and *India Gazettes* to Aug 1918, annotated to Aug 1919, with index.

N.B. All the above files are shown on the Access to Archives (A2A) website at <http://www.a2a.org.uk> soon changing to <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a>.

Vols. 239-72,849, Indian Army Records of Service c1900-1947

These are the last volumes of the L/MIL/14 series and the best of all for researchers of family history/biographical sources and include both 'open' and 'closed' files. The index to 'open' records is enclosed in a red binder on the IOR open shelves, largely ignored by researchers but containing some 793 pages with some fifteen records per page so there is a total of some 12,000 personnel listed. I say personnel since though predominantly European officers and men there are several Indian-named officers, mostly medical officers, and there are some women personnel, in particular members of the Women's Auxiliary Corps (as well as non-military personnel).

I was first introduced to these volumes after comments as to their usefulness were made by a FIBIS member (Malcolm Bradley) at a meeting in the British Library in 2002. Since then, whenever I come across a military query spanning the years 1860-1950, I have returned to this volume and found it to be a veritable treasure-trove of information. Please note the dates I have quoted; while the spine of the index reads c1900-1947, the relevant IOR Fact Sheet² refers to the index as the Personal Files of British Officers and Warrant Officers in the Indian Army 1890-1947 but some contents do go back prior to the formation of the Indian Army in 1861! There is no foreword or fact sheet within the red binder, but an introduction is in the course of preparation.

A perusal of the index shows that all Army ranks are covered: from private and gunner, to lance-corporals and corporals, sergeants, staff sergeants, sub-conductors and conductors, lieutenants and lieutenant assistant commissaries, captains and captain deputy commissaries, majors and major/lieutenant-colonel commissaries to colonels, brigadiers, brigadier-generals, major-generals, lieutenant-generals, generals and the odd Field Marshal (Auchinleck). I hasten to say that the numbers of those below the rank of sergeant are few and the contents of their files are extremely limited so that one feels that the series became a useful repository for any odd files that did not fit within other categories. The typical layout is shown below, the essential items being the name and the L/MIL/14 number. Several entries show an additional shelfmark such as L/MIL/(L/MED/M/5). In such cases, the person's medical file has been amalgamated with the L/MIL/14 file and the latter reference will produce both. There are still a number of medical files yet to be processed which are therefore unavailable. Typical entries from the index, page 286, read:

Handley, Frederick
Maj (Comm) IOD
L/MIL/14/5447

Handoo, Hari Krishna
Cpt IMS
L/MIL/14/68751

Handley, Leonard Maurant
Maj RDH; 8 KGOLC; RBR
L/MIL/14/61532

Handy, Cebert
S-Cdtr IOD
L/MIL/14/5448

² British Library, Asia Pacific and Africa Collections, *Military Records Fact Sheet*.

The files with the most rewarding results are those of ranks from sub-conductor through to lieutenant-colonel. Many of these have passed via the Unattached List route. It should be explained that the term UAL was the name given after 1859 to the European NCOs who served away from their British Army regiment. Nominally they continued to be borne on the strength of that 'parent' regiment,³ they could be returned to it if they misbehaved or did not perform, and technically reverted to it for pension and discharge. They were part of an élite group who were in fact seconded to local regiments filling many of the backbone posts. Commonly they were promoted when they joined the list. The UAL personnel served mainly in the Ordnance, Commissariat and Public Works Departments as well as in many miscellaneous posts but only became a substantive part of the Indian Army if and when subsequently promoted to the warrant officer rank of Sub-Conductor.⁴ Précis of two files are given below: -

L/MIL/14/5445 Mallock Hanley

Enlisted at Warrington 1859 for a bounty of £3 and a free kit. List of promotions - Cpl 1862, Sgt 1863, Staff Sergeant 1866, reduced to the ranks (a most unusual and interesting court-martial - found guilty on the grounds of aggravating circumstances of which it was thought fit not to inform the Court!), promoted again to Sgt on UAL 1872 and finally to Sub-Conductor in 1885. Lists of garrisons and illnesses. Initially in 37th Regt, transferred to UAL but attached to 65th Regt, York and Lancs Regt and finally Connaught Rangers. Details of second marriage in 1873 with baptisms of children.

L/MIL/14/5620 Edward McPoland

Born 1883, joined Royal Engineers 1904, discharged after 61 days on grounds that he was never likely to become an efficient soldier! (There's a diagram of his teeth and an agreement that he would pay for a set of dental plates). Re-enlisted in Limerick-Northumberland Fusiliers in 1905, promoted L.Cpl 1905 and moved from 4th to 2nd battalion and finally first. To India in 1907 and served on N.W. Frontier. In 1910 moved to the UAL as Sgt; in 1922 jumped to Sub-Conductor, then Conductor in 1927. Promoted to Commissary Major in 1928, then Commissary Lt Col. in 1936, having been awarded the OBE in 1931. Pensioned 1938 when he was around 55yrs (not a bad achievement for an inefficient recruit!).

The BL Fact Sheet comments on the coverage of these files as follows:

There is sometimes not as much detail held on Indian Army service files as people think. The files are paper-based records that follow the career of the individual and, in most cases, make little mention of theatres of operation or action seen. Medals and awards are recorded but citations are hardly ever included. Only very rarely does a file contain a soldier's photograph. Some files contain more information than others and we have no way of knowing what any particular file holds until we have looked at it.

³ The 'parent' might change during their UAL service because it had to be one serving in India.

⁴ See Ian A Baxter, *Baxter's Guide: Biographical Sources in the India Office Records*, 3rd edn (FIBIS in association with the British Library, 2004), p70.

Information in a few files might cause distress. Some files contain descriptions of, for example, death in action or by accident, psychiatric reports, diseases, wounds, post-mortem examinations, eye-witness accounts given in evidence, and misconduct. Confidential reports are often included.

The list is diverse. Besides British officers and NCOs, there are Indian soldiers including many officers in the Medical Service as well as officers of regiments. There are numerous 'Khans'; there's a *jemadar* and a *risaldar*. There's a Captain and a Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Indian Navy as well as a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve. As for civilians, there's a member of Bombay Customs, a member of the Forest Department., a Deputy Traffic Manager, a member of the Education Department, a Principal of Ajmer College, a pilot of the Bengal Pilot Services, a sub-inspector of Indian Police in Madras, an Assistant Collector, a Postmaster, and others. Amongst lady members there's a member of the Women's Auxiliary Corps and a lady who was a housemaid. But all these odd ones are a very small minority and you will indeed be very lucky if you are investigating a non-military relative and you find him or her in this list.

Many of the files include records of soldiers who were transferred to the Unattached List in the late 19th century and more recently and many contain the attestation papers and other documents that normally for British staff would be within the WO 97 Discharged to Pension series at the National Archives, Kew. The files were originally created in India but, as the Fact Sheet explains, 'after Indian Independence in 1947 the Military Department of the India Office in London received files of Europeans recruited from the UK who had served in the Indian Army, mainly for calculations concerning pay, leave and so on.' Files not required for such purposes were not transferred, which is why there are only a few relating to Indian personnel or European soldiers killed during the war - presumably slipped in by mistake. There are also very few files for personnel serving during World War I, but the reason for this is not known. The files were ultimately numbered by several IOR staff working simultaneously using 'blocks' of numbers', say 239-, 10,000-, 20,000-, etc. Few blocks were entirely completed so that while the last number is at least 72,849, the actual quantity of files is as low as c35,000. With the 'open' files already noted as c12,000, the closed ones therefore number c23,000.

Access to files L/MIL/239 onwards

The Fact Sheet states:

These files were originally classified under the Public Records Act as 'documents about individuals, containing information which if disclosed could cause either substantial distress or endangerment from a third party, to persons affected by the disclosure, or their descendants'. In compliance with the Data Protection Act, these files are closed to the general public for 85 years from the date of entry of the serviceman/woman into the service. The files are opened on an annual basis.⁵

⁵ In fact a number of files from 1928 onwards are also open because the legal requirement until 2004 was to close them for 75 years from the date of entry into the service.

A complete catalogue of the 'open' L/MIL/14/239 and later files from the database of British officers and Warrant Officers of the Indian Army service personnel is available in the red binder in the Oriental and India Office Reading Room. Please use the catalogue to find the reference to the relevant file, then follow normal procedures to order the file from the storage areas.

If the subject of your enquiry is listed within the L/MIL/14/239, etc, catalogue, there should be no problem except perhaps one of cost! One just orders up the file on computer and after verifying the contents are of interest requests a quotation for photocopies. Unfortunately it is usually demanded that the whole file contents should be scanned and this often includes duplicates and unused forms, etc. Hence the cost can vary from £10 to £40 and more. However, a number of the files have been microfilmed, in which case you will be able to do self-service printouts from the film. This is likely to be much cheaper, and certainly quicker. A list of the files on film will become available in the Reading Room in due course. Meanwhile, ask the staff to check if it is on film.

Closed files

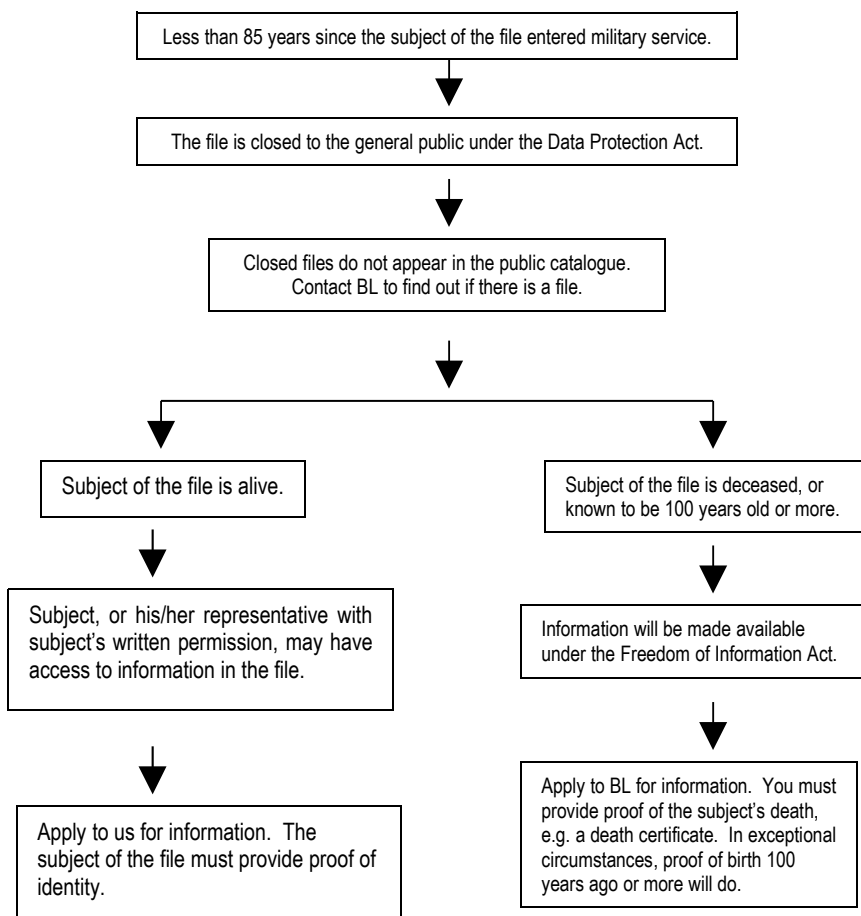
If the name you are looking for is not included in the 'open' catalogue, the BL will carry out a search on your behalf to discover whether it is among the files still closed. In this case a special form has to be completed and information can only be released under one of the following conditions:

- A. You are the subject of the file and still living. Proof of identity must be enclosed (e.g. copy of passport, driving licence, or utility bill).
- B. You have the signed, written permission of the subject of the file which must be enclosed along with proof of the subject's identity as above.
- C. You can provide proof that the subject is deceased (e.g. photocopy of death certificate). The information is then made available under the Freedom of Information Act. If proof of death is unavailable but you believe the subject died during active service, ask IOR staff to check whether this fact is contained within the file, in which case no further proof of death is required. In exceptional circumstances proof of birth 100 years ago will be accepted.

The BL has to observe legal obligations regarding confidentiality and is careful to protect personal information, and therefore must ask for these proofs of identity or death. Please note that files relating to people who are deceased may occasionally contain sensitive information relating to other people who are or may still be alive. In these cases, which are expected to be rare, the Data Protection Act will apply. The BL will advise you about the situation and will release as much information as possible about the subject of the file without revealing sensitive information about anyone still living.

It is mandatory to give the full names of the subject on the form, and helpful to supply as much other information about the subject as possible, e.g. date of birth, dates of service (entry and discharge), regiment, personal number, and the kind of information you are trying to find. Relevant details found on the file which relate to specific questions submitted by the enquirer (e.g. when did he/she die, where did he/she serve, what ranks did he/she hold,

what medals did he/she receive?) will be included in the BL's reply. For ex-Indian Army personnel, their widows or widowers, the BL can supply statements of service or confirmation of particular aspects of service, and will provide the same information for members of the family or other members of the public, subject to the conditions outlined above. Urgent welfare enquiries from organisations helping ex-service men and women are given priority over family interest enquiries. The BL endeavours to supply you the information as soon as possible but, if there is high demand for this service, the reply may take up to four weeks. The flow chart below may help to clarify the procedure outlined above.



It should be noted that information on closed files is provided free, but it is at the BL's discretion whether they provide photocopies or a précis of information. It is always possible that if the BL receives a deluge of requests for information on closed files, they may reluctantly have to levy a charge. So, unlike the India List where on the offer of a 'look-up', the requests pour in, please use your discretion and think seriously whether your subject is likely to be in the closed list. For anyone not within easy reach of the IOR, checks can readily be made by myself or others in FIBIS from the London area.

Also on the 'open' shelves is a black folder with a green spine tab entitled 'Index of the Indian Army Prisoners of War 1941-1945' containing information relating to over 800 Indian Army personnel who were captured during World War Two and were 'recovered'. Strangely it does not have a reference but the obvious one should be from the L/MIL/14 series since

several of the POWs figure within the L/MIL/14/239, etc series. The India Office Military Department maintained a card system to keep track of those members who had been taken prisoner. All appear to be officers or senior NCOs. The cards usually include the name and rank of the individual, the regiment, names and addresses of next of kin, date of capture and release and in some cases medical details. Those that occur in both the L/MIL/14 and the POW sequences show the same unique military file numbers as used in India.

The Fact Sheet referred to above also covers Indian Navy personnel whose details are in L/MIL/16 but these have not been considered in this article.

I wish to acknowledge assistance received from Penny Brook and the late Tony Farrington, present and former heads of the IOR.

Reviews

English County Regiments, revised edition by Ian F W Beckett (Shire Books, 2003)

ISBN 0-7478-0506-7. First published 1970, original author - Arthur Taylor

Available in the FIBIS Bookshop, price £8 for members, £9.99 for non-members, plus £1.60 postage: see FIBIS website www.fibis.org for further details. Prices correct at time of publication but subject to change.

This is a fabulous compact guide to the confusing world of British Army regiments. The guide lists all the Regiments of Foot from the 2nd to the 107th and cross-references the regimental names with the regimental numbers. Equally as importantly, it covers when regiments were raised, disbanded, and amalgamated with other regiments (including battalions). Each regiment has a brief history, and includes additional information such as battle honours, Victoria Crosses, nicknames, mottoes, memorials and details for the regimental museum. There are also numerous colour and black and white illustrations throughout the book. Please note that this book does not cover the Royal Artillery or the Royal Engineers.

If you have a number of ancestors in different regiments (or ancestors that moved between regiments), then this is an *essential* addition to your bookshelf.

Anne Kelsall

***Passage from the Raj: story of a family 1770-1939*, by Nora Naish (Champak Press, 2005), pp257. ISBN 0-9548323-0-2**

Obtainable from Gazelle Book Services Ltd, Hightown, White Cross Mills, South Road, Lancaster, LA1 4XS; or email sales@gazellebooks.co.uk. Price £17.99 including p&p in UK, add £3.50 per copy overseas.

As a teenage girl Nora Naish wanted to become a writer, but her father disapproved. Instead she became a doctor, but in retirement she has achieved her youthful ambition. For she has become the author of five excellent novels and now this absorbing and very honest account of her childhood in India where she spent her first seven years and then of growing up in England in a family of seven children presided over by a retired and rather despotic member of the ICS. Her skill as a novelist is particularly evident in the imagined conversations (doubtless based on family letters and papers and a good memory) with which she tints her picture of her Indian childhood and her evocation of the lives of her ancestors. This is genealogy with a light touch – worthy of her distinguished Prinsep forebears who included among their number two painters as well as many who saw service in India. The book closes in 1939 with the author having just passed her finals at King's College Hospital in 1938.

Her mother was de-scended from Indian administrators on both sides, but her father, John Reid, was a first generation member of the ICS, and it is he who becomes the dominating

figure of the book though not, ironically, until the family has left India for good. He seems to have been a complex character: an Irishman whose boy-hood hero was the Irish leader Charles Parnell, and who supported Irish nationalist aspirations throughout his life, who likewise sympathised with the Indian nationalist cause, and yet who was an official of the imperial regime in India. Doubtless he saw his role as ultimately contributing to the good of the Indian people, but nevertheless one wonders whether there may have been inner tensions which contributed to the high blood pressure causing his early retirement in 1922. He worked hard on land reform in Bihar but apparently made little headway. Again were there tensions between an urge for reform and improvement on his side, and the intractability of age-old Indian social and economic customs (not to mention British bureaucracy) on the other? Be that as it may, back in England, he became a despot to his seven growing children, while playing on his ill health to secure his wife's acquiescence in whatever he demanded. One of the author's elder sisters, Mary, rebelled particularly strongly and was eventually banished from the family home. The author's reaction to this incident at the time was to say to herself 'I hate him! I hate him!'; as for Mary, even after forty years, when dying of a brain tumour, she would tell her sister 'I hate him, Nora, I hate him still!'. But he did have good qualities too. Occasionally he would unbend. He was devoted to his wife. He did not regard women as belonging to an inferior sex, an attitude in advance of his time and one which helped to give the author self confidence. He passed on to her a love of books, insisted that she had a good education, and 'first planted in my consciousness the moral imperative of continuing the struggle to attain justice for all': a man, it would seem, with many enlightened views, but an unduly stern father with a rigidly Victorian attitude to child rearing and questions of sexual behaviour. Needless to say, a feature of his regime was that his teenage children were allowed out in the evening only if they were back by 9.30pm, and this even applied to the two boys when they were old enough to earn a living or drive a car. One of them, however, became adept at climbing out after that hour and climbing in again undetected early next morning – a training which, as Major Pat Reid, he was to put to good use as Escape Officer at Colditz Castle during the war.¹

Her father's inflexibility is not the only source of painful memories. Also here are some of those themes of alienation and family separation encountered by so many 'empire families', recently explored in the abstract by Elizabeth Buettner,² and experienced in actuality by the Reid children. Nora herself, aged about eight, was dumped in a Belgian convent (somewhat unusually on the return journey home from India), a sister Daphne was left to board with nuns from the age of not quite four, and the veteran of Colditz would weep at the age of seventy when remembering the parting from his mother at the age of seven. Were not such children innocent of imperial 'guilt'? Were they not among the victims of the imperial project?

David Blake

¹ He is the author of *The Colditz Story* (London, 1952 and several later editions).

² See her book *Empire Families*, reviewed in the previous issue of the Journal.