

## Table of Contents

The Great Van Someren Obsession	1
Faith and Family in South India: Robert Caldwell and his Missionary Dynasty	8
The Defence of Lucknow: letter from Lt Clifford Henry Meham Part Two	19
150 years on: the secrets of William and Stuart William Howard	26
Searching for Allen, Alan or Allan Buchanan and his MC	32
The Police Officer and the Dacoit: Freddy Young and Sultana the 'Robin Hood of British India'.....	38
Reviews	46

## The Great Van Someren Obsession

*By Liz Wilde*

My interest in British India began inadvertently as a result of researching my son-in-law Peter's family for the benefit of my two grandchildren, having already gone as far back as I reasonably could with researching my own family in Aberdeenshire and Lancashire and that of my husband in Norfolk. Having gone back to the 17th century with Peter's father's family, all conveniently based in Gloucestershire, I started on his mother's family, not knowing that both her parents, although living in England, were not English and little realizing it would be the beginning of an obsession that has lasted for the past five years and shows no sign of abating. Peter's maternal grandfather came from Aberdeen, so that was comparatively easy. Scottish records are superb and as I was already a member of the NE Scotland Family History Society, they were polished off in no time. But his maternal grandmother was another story. She was the only daughter of Godlieb August Wolff. Born in India, and in later life a proof reader for the Oxford University Press, he married in London a German woman, Antoinette Schottl, whom I have still not managed to track down. They presented a new set of challenges, so I wrote to several of Peter's relatives begging for help but no-one seemed to have any more information. Then I was sent a copy of a scrap of paper by one of my son-in-law's maternal aunts, with the short list of names as shown below, but no dates.

*Pieter Van Someren (Dutch Governor of Java)*

|  
*Gottlieb (missionary ?)*  
*married Pascal/Avenal*  
|  
*Mary Crisp Van Someren*  
*married Reverend A F Wolff*

|  
*Emilia Antoinette*  
*married Reverend Joseph Taylor*  
|  
*Birdwood*  
*Fanning*  
*Reynolds*  
*Addis*  
*Taylor*  
*Grant*  
*Van Someren*  
*Lechmere*  
*Evans*

Using only the on-line material available (as I live in a hill town in Italy well away from reference libraries and other useful sources) I began by first searching the IGI (International Genealogical Index), looking at Cathy Day's 'Families in British India' site, posting numerous requests to the INDIA-L mailing list, using (and joining) FIBIS and just simply Googling names. Slowly (with a lot of help) I began to build up a picture of the Dutch family who were resident in the port of Negapatam, south of Madras, in the late 18th century and then mainly in Madras in the 19th century and in the process made e-mail contacts in the UK, India, Chile, the Netherlands, Malaysia, the USA, Canada and South Africa, many of whom I now count as old friends and who all proved incredibly generous with information and suggestions. I soon discovered that there was never a Pieter Van Someren listed as a Governor of Java, but as with most family legends there was a kernel of truth. Much later I found a link with the Dutch East Indies and the island of Ternate that might account for the story, as there was a Dutch Governor involved.

Peter William Van Someren, married to Catherina Dorothea, was the father of Gottlieb Maximillian born 1790 and Emilia Antoinette born 1796. Peter was a Free Mariner and merchant in the formerly Dutch settlement of Negapatam, a seaport in the Tanjore District, south of Madras and one of the earliest Portuguese settlements on the Coromandel coast until it was taken by the Dutch in 1660. It remained the major Dutch possession in India until it was, in turn, taken by the English in 1781. Another Van Someren, also of Negapatam, Tamericus or Jamericus Carolus Van Someren (either a brother, son, or some other relation of Peter William) married Susanna Terloen, the Dutch widow of an Englishman, William Lightburne, and became the father of five more Van Somerens whose descendants I have also traced. Unfortunately I have been less successful with the earliest Van Someren family connections in India as the Dutch records prior to the British takeover of Negapatam are unobtainable, lost in a genealogical limbo between Chennai and Holland, as another Van Someren descendant working for the UN in Chennai discovered when attempting in vain to find information for both of us.

It is likely that the Van Somerens living in the Madras Presidency in the 18th century were a Dutch family who had worked for the VOC<sup>1</sup>, the Dutch East India Company, from the time of the first Dutch settlements along the Coromandel coast. What is more difficult to ascertain without access to the original Dutch records is exactly how they were related to one another and to Van Someren ancestors in the Netherlands, and how and why they came to remain in India after the Dutch possessions there had been handed over to the British East India Company before the end of the 18th century.

The second generation of Van Somerens, the children of Peter William and Jamericus Carolus, were deeply committed Christians, several of their daughters marrying LMS (London Missionary Society), CMS (Church Missionary Society) and Lutheran missionaries who had come to India from various parts of England and Europe before 1850. Peter William's daughter, Emilia Antoinette Van Someren, married the Reverend Joseph Taylor of the LMS in 1814. The Prussian Reverend C.T.E. Rhenius of the CMS married Anna Van Someren (daughter of Jamericus Carolus) in 1817. Anna's sister, Harriet, married the Austrian Reverend John Kindlinger of the CMS in 1825. Another sister, Susanna Emilia (Emily) married the English Reverend William Bawn Addis of the LMS in 1827, after having been orphaned and then adopted in 1815 by Nancy, the first wife of American Baptist minister Adoniram Judson and taken to spend some years with them in Burma. Three of Gottlieb Van Someren's daughters by his first marriage to Lydia Pascal were married to missionaries. The eldest, Angelica Juliana, to the Swiss Reverend Paul Pacifique Schaffter of the CMS in 1830; Mary Crisp to the German Lutheran Reverend August Friedrich Wolff in 1848 and in the same year the youngest, Henrietta Page was married to the English Reverend George Uglow Pope of the Bishop Cotton Schools and later Chaplain of Balliol College, Oxford.

---

<sup>1</sup> Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie.

Both the SOAS Library at London University and the Special Collections Department at Birmingham University were most generous with their help in providing the career details of the LMS and CMS missionaries who married these Van Someren and Taylor daughters in the early 19th century, and a Wolff descendant kindly sent me a copy of a family history written by a grandson of Emilia Antoinette Van Someren Taylor which provided more information on both families.

Finally, having exhausted on-line sources, I spent several days at the India Office Records at the British Library in London, where with much help from various people, especially from FIBIS member Steve van Dulken, I managed to fill in more gaps including births and deaths and even obtained a copy of Gottlieb Van Someren's 1853 will.

As the Van Someren and Taylor families chose to regard themselves as belonging to England rather than Holland by the early 19th century, the UK censuses from 1841 onwards were a great source of information as many family members spent their long furloughs in rented houses either in Scotland or southern England and finally retired there towards the end of the century.

By this time my interests had spread to cover other names that had cropped up in relation to the Van Someren and Taylor families, trying to track down all the descendants of both Gottlieb and Emilia Antoinette, their children's marriages and husbands' names and occupations and their subsequent grandchildren and great grandchildren. The family trait of using each others' surnames and the surnames of respected missionary friends such as the Reverend Adoniram Judson (who visited Madras several times) and the Revs. Edmund and Henry Crisp as second given names, as well as the tendency for many of the Van Someren and Taylor families to marry first or second cousins made this task a lot easier. It also indicated the depths of religious fervour and closeness within the families. Four examples of close relations marrying include the following:

- Dr. William Judson Van Someren (Gottlieb's son) and Harriet Taylor (Emilia Antoinette's daughter);
- Emma Jane Van Someren (Gottlieb's daughter by his second wife Martha Avenal) and Henry Addis (the son of Reverend William Addis and Susanna Emilia (Emily) Van Someren Addis);
- Elizabeth Addis (daughter of of Reverend William Addis and Susanna Emilia (Emily) Van Someren Addis and Andrew Taylor (son of Emilia Antoinette);
- Dr. Edward Drake Brockman (son of Col Henry Brockman and Harriet VS Kindlinger Brockman) married Isabella Pope (grand daughter of Gottlieb VS and daughter of Henrietta VS and Reverend George Uglow Pope).

Anyone I found with the surname Van Someren, Taylor, Birdwood, Reynolds, Lechmere, Schaffter, Cullen, Pope, Addis, Brockman, Drake-Brockman, Evans, Fanning, Avenal, Grant or Rhenius, together with one of the other same listed names as a second given name was sure to be a relative of some sort. Examples of this habit of naming in subsequent generations include the following:

Reverend Dr. Birdwood Van Someren Taylor;  
Gertrude Addis Lechmere Taylor;  
Arthur Grant Taylor;  
Lechmere Taylor Birdwood;  
Frederick Van Someren Schaffter;  
John Van Someren Pope;  
Katherine Avenal Van Someren;  
Ralph Rhenius Evans Brockman;  
Edward Van Someren Cullen;

Ellen Fanning Taylor;  
and Avenal W C Addis, among many others.

Also, the fact that many sons and grandsons became missionaries themselves or joined either the HEIC Civil Service or the Indian Army, while the daughters married missionaries, HEIC officials or army officers and sent their children to Dollar School in Clackmannanshire or to schools in Devon to be educated, and then their sons on to Edinburgh University or to Cambridge, helped identify each family of descendants.

Gradually the number of names that interested me began to increase at an alarming rate, although few were more intriguing than that of Samuel Garling, a Writer in Fort Marlborough from 1811 and Resident Councillor and Senior Merchant with the HEIC in Malacca and Penang from the mid 1820's to the late 1840's. Samuel was the son of John Frederick Garling and Caroline Burr of London, and married in Fort Marlborough in 1822 a widow, Caroline Eliza Hindes Hayes (born at Negapatam and I suspect a Van Someren grand-daughter). They were the patrons of Peter Robert Van Someren who was the orphaned son of Tamericus Carolus Van Someren and Susanna Emilia Terloen Lightburne (and a relative of Gottlieb and Emilia Antoinette and of Caroline Eliza Garling) who left India at the instigation of the Garlings and spent most of his working life in Malacca and Penang (or 'Prince of Wales Island') then known as the Straits Settlements, now part of Malaysia. As I had lived in Penang for three years as a teenager and had very fond memories of the island, this sent me off in an exciting new direction. My husband and I made a short visit to Penang two years ago, pursuing Peter Robert's family, especially the family of his wife, Cornelia Rodyk and her father John Rodyk, formerly Jan Rodijk, who had arrived in Penang in about 1802 from the Dutch spice island of Ternate. While in Penang I had help from a Chinese student, Winson Saw and FIBIS member Leslie James, which made life much simpler and more pleasant, although the few surviving records there were a disappointment.

Later I found one source on-line which indicated that Jan Rodijk had been a traitor to the Dutch, surrendering Ternate to the British after imprisoning the Governor of the island, Willem Von Cransen, but my incredibly erudite Garling correspondent, Juan Carlos, in Chile found another, more interesting version, saying that as this all happened during the Napoleonic Wars, the Dutch had been ordered by the Prince of Orange to hand their possessions to the British (temporarily) rather than risk their capture by the French. The VOC were not happy with this decision and refused to comply, hence the actions of the Dutch merchants Jan Rodijk and his companion Van Dockum. Van Dockum and Jan Rodijk then moved to Penang, where the latter changed his name to the more English John Rodyk and fathered a family of distinguished lawyers and civil servants. There is still a legal firm in Singapore, Rodyk and Davidson, founded by one of his sons.

What made the whole Ternate story more fascinating, was that the island was taken by a British force commanded by a Colonel Daniel Burr, coincidentally the same surname as that of the Malacca and Penang merchant Samuel Garling's mother, Caroline Burr Garling. Were they related? This induced a flurry of more e-mails between Chile, Italy and the USA, and the beginnings of research into the Burr family, especially the career of Colonel (later Major General) Daniel Burr, who turned out to be the brother of Caroline Burr Garling, and thus Samuel's uncle. The Burr family were also originally Dutch merchants from Amsterdam who moved to England when William of Orange became King after the Revolution of 1688 and the deposition of James II. They prospered and became Lords of the Manor of Dovercourt and resident in the village of Ramsey in Essex. Receiving a scanned copy of a portrait of Daniel Burr and his detailed army service record from a kind connection in the USA showed that early in his career he had also served in Negapatam, so the connections continued to mount.

To say that all this research has done wonders for my long forgotten British, European and Far Eastern history would not be an exaggeration. The discovery of the deaths of the Reverend Joseph Taylor and

Emila Antoinette VS Taylor's daughter Eliza and husband Lt Gregor Grant and one of their three children at the siege of Lucknow in 1857 set me re-reading Christopher Hibbert's *The Great Mutiny* and two contemporary memoirs of that event by 'A Lady' and by Martin Gubbins<sup>2</sup>, and promptly ordering Pat Barr's *The Memsahibs* and Richard Holmes's *Sahib* plus sundry other books on India from Amazon.

The production on CD-rom of various East India Registers and Directories has proved invaluable for tracking residents of India and army officers' careers, as have army lists and the London Gazette on-line as well as the BACSA cemetery lists and the increasing information on FIBIS. But most helpful of all have been the dozens of other on-line British India genealogists who have read my messages and requests and given up their time to find answers or look up information for me. I am more grateful than I can say, and I hope they will all continue to help for a long time to come, as I cannot see my 'Great Van Someren Obsession' ending any time soon.

*For summary see next page.*

**First generation names of interest:**

Van Someren, Pascal, Taylor, Hayes, Hinds/Hindes, Avenal, Breithaupt, Rodyk/Rodijk, Garling, Burr

**Second generation names of interest:**

Addis, Birdwood, Brockman, Cullen, Drake-Brockman, Evans, Fanning, Grant, Kindlinger, Lechmere, Pope, Reynolds, Rhenius, Schaffter

**Incidental names of interest:**

Ironside, Gahan, Mahony, Oxley, Powys, Muller, Lons, Bogle (Sumatra), Judson (Burma), Crisp, Thomson (Penang), Money

**Places of interest:**

Negapatam, Nagore, Porto Novo, Madras (Royapooram), Vellore, Bellary, Belgaum, Bangalore, Cannanore, Ootacamund, Chidambaran, Lucknow, Penang, Malacca, Singapore, Temate, Fort Marborough, Sumatra

*If anyone has more information on the above names Liz would be pleased to hear from them. Her member number is 0591 and her address is in the Members Interests Supplement.*

---

<sup>2</sup> *A Lady's Diary of the Siege of Lucknow* (attributed to 'Mrs Harris' by BL Catalogue) and Martin Richard Gubbins, *Account of the Mutinies in Oudh and of the Siege of the Lucknow Residency* (both published London, 1858).

**Table summarising Burr – Garling – Van Someren – Rodyk connections**

BURR	GARLING
<p>Children of <u>Daniel BURR</u> and <u>Elizabeth DAVALL</u> of Ramsey, Essex include:</p> <p><u>DANIEL BURR</u>, b.19 Aug 1749, on the family estate at Ramsey, Essex; d.1823.</p> <p>In 1767, aged 17 or 18, Daniel Burr was appointed a cadet on the Madras Establishment. In July 1768 he arrived at Madras. In 1774 he served with the East India Company Army in Negapatam, where the Dutch garrison surrendered to British. In 1800 with the rank of colonel he was in charge of an expedition by the British to seize the island of Ternate in the Moluccas, from the Dutch. On 21 June 1801 Ternate finally (at the second attempt) surrendered to the British - thanks to Dutch merchants, <u>JAN RODYK</u> and <u>VAN DOCKUM</u> who handed the island over to the British. Daniel Burr retired with the rank of Lieutenant-General.</p> <p><u>CAROLINE BURR</u> b circa 1754 younger sister of Daniel Burr married John Frederick Garling in 1878.</p>	<p><u>John Frederick GARLING</u> b.1750 in London, England, and died 22 Aug 1835 in London, England. He married <u>CAROLINE BURR</u> sister of <u>Daniel BURR</u> on 14 Apr 1778 in St. Marylebone, London. Their children include:</p> <p align="center"><u>FREDERICK GARLING</u>,</p> <p>b.14 May 1779, d.Aug 1819 Employed in the Indian Civil Service. In March 1805 to PoW Island to be Artificer in the Dockyard. Aug 1806 Apptd. Clerk and Mustermaster of the Marine Yard. Jan 1810 above job abolished. Feb 1811 appointed Head Clerk in Marine Stores, PoW Island. Assistant in Resident's Office, Ft. Marlborough, Sumatra (<i>EIR &amp; Dir.</i> 1813 2nd ed.) Sub-accountant, Fort Marlborough (<i>EIR &amp; Dir.</i> 1814). Death Aug 1819, Sumatra (<i>EIR &amp; Dir.</i> 1820)</p> <p align="center"><u>JAMES GARLING</u>,</p> <p>b.1784, London, d.1820 Madras. Lt. James Garling was an instructor at the school of surveying in Madras, and subsequently carried out surveys in various parts of India.</p> <p><u>SAMUEL GARLING</u>, b.c.1790, m.1822 Sumatra, Caroline Eliza HINDS HAYES, b. Negapatam and widow of W H HAYES (thought to be a Van Someren grand daughter). <u>Resident Councillor Malacca and PoW Island.</u></p>

VAN SOMEREN	RODYK
<p><u>T C VAN SOMEREN</u> and <u>Susannah TERLOEN</u> TC died in 1811, Susannah in 1808. They had eight children, all born in Negapatam including:</p> <p><u>PETER ROBERT VAN SOMEREN</u> Born 1807 Negapatam, died 1861 PoW Island. Married c.1837/9 <u>Cornelia Josephine RODYK</u> youngest child of <u>JOHN RODYK</u> (Jan Rodijk) of PoW Island and formerly Ternate.</p> <p>Moved to Malacca at request of relatives from the Garling family (presumably Caroline Eliza Garling – probably his older cousin – since he was not related to Samuel Garling, his patron). His siblings all remained in the Madras area.</p> <p>Land Agent in Malacca</p> <p>Land Agent in PoW Island</p> <p>Coroner of PoW Island at the time of his death in 1861.</p>	<p><u>JAN (Johannes) RODIJK</u>, chr. 25 Sep 1746, Amsterdam, married <u>CORNELIA WILLEMSE SCHUURMAN</u>, buried 9 Jan 1770, died Amsterdam, leaving one child behind a son, <u>JAN</u>, chr. 1 April 1772 Amsterdam.</p> <p><u>JAN RODIJK</u> went to the Dutch East Indies from Amsterdam in 1790 on a ship the <i>Vasco da Gama</i>. In the Muster Roll of Ternate taken on 30 Jun 1796 he is listed as 'absoluut assistant'. Alan Harfield's <i>Christian Cemeteries of Penang and Perak</i> states that John Rodyk was active in the defence of Ternate when the Dutch fort was blockaded for 52 days by the British in 1801. However, Dutch sources (<i>De Nederlandsch oudheden in de Molukken</i> by V.I. van de Wall, 1928, p 237) states that Jan Rodijk and Van Dockum, who were both members of the council of Ternate, were traitors and had betrayed governor Willem Jacob Cranssen by 'locking up the governor' so as to be able to surrender the fort of Ternate to the British on 21 June 1801. Rodyk was taken prisoner by the British and was brought to the Malay Peninsula where he remained in British employment, anglicising his name.</p> <p><u>John Rodyk m Gerharda Caterina Westerhout</u> . They had twelve children born in PoW Island. Several of their sons became lawyers and officials in Penang, Malacca and Singapore. Peter Robert Van Someren was their son-in-law.</p>

# Faith and Family in South India: Robert Caldwell and his Missionary Dynasty

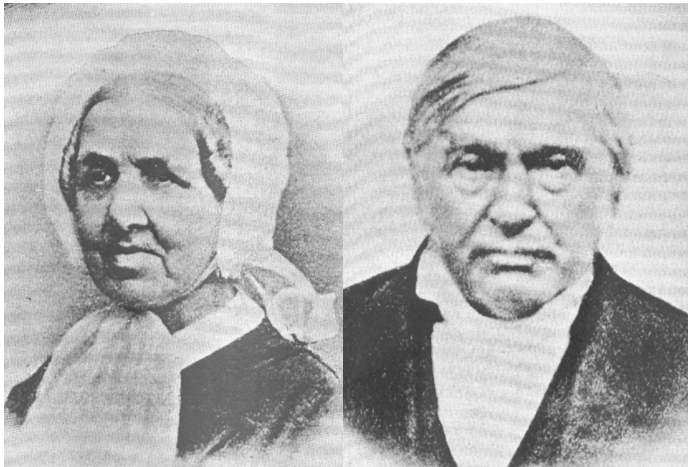
By David Gore

*This is a shortened version of an article which first appeared on the website <http://www.britishempire.co.uk/article/faithandfamily.htm>*

There were three generations of christian missionaries in this 19th century dynasty, and the common strand that linked them together was the wives. The belief, commitment, strength of character and health demanded of missionaries and their families in those days is difficult to imagine in our more comfortable times. When in 1837 Robert Caldwell, on setting off from Glasgow to sail to India, kissed his mother goodbye, he knew he would never see his parents again, and that, if he survived, he was unlikely to return home for twenty years (in 1841 this was reduced to 10 years, with 7 year gaps between subsequent home leaves). In the event, it was 17 years before Caldwell took his first leave at home, while his father-in-law, Charles Mault, never had a home leave throughout the 35 years he worked in Travancore.

## First Generation: Charles Mault 1791-1858 and Martha Mead 1794-1870

The earliest of the three generations of this 'female dynasty' was led by Martha Mead from St Neots in Huntingdonshire. A formidable lady, she was reputed to be a descendant of Oliver Cromwell. In 1818, she was married at St Neots aged 24 to Charles Mault from a Shropshire family. He had trained for the priesthood at the Missionary Academy, Gosport (near Portsmouth) under the auspices of the London Missionary Society (LMS) and had been ordained a week before their marriage. A month later they sailed together for India.



Their ultimate destination was the mission station of Nagercoil in the princely state of Travancore which they eventually reached in December 1819. Nagercoil is near Cape Comorin at the southernmost tip of the Indian peninsula, on a coastal strip five miles from the sea with the mountains of the Western Ghats behind rising to 6000 feet.

By 1821 Charles had established the first printing press at Nagercoil while Martha had started the first of many schools for Indian girls. In the following decade Martha gave birth to five children, but in 1833 she became

ill and had to return home to England for her own health, and also to settle her children at schools with her brother as guardian. The welfare of her children became a frequent subject of letters to the LMS after her return to India in 1836.

Meanwhile Mault's reports to the LMS give a full picture of his mission's successes and problems, the latter including the occasional persecution of low caste converts to christianity by high caste hindus. In 1843-44 and again a year later, South Travancore was beset by cholera. Charles was suffering exhaustion as a result, and Martha pointed out to the LMS that 'it is five years since my husband had permission to go to England on leave but he is still awaiting a replacement'. The plea went unanswered, and was forgotten because in 1851 Charles rashly wrote, 'after 31 years in this country, I thank God that my good health continues. I was never more able to carry out my duties than now'. A year later his long-time missionary partner, Rev Charles Mead, resigned. Mead had three times lost a wife to disease in Travancore and then married the daughter of an Indian poet. It left the sixty year old veteran missionary with a much increased



workload. Mead was replaced by C. Leitch the following year, but in 1854 Charles Mault's health finally broke down. He and Martha were forced to return home and retire, settling at Stoke near Coventry.

## **Female education and welfare**

One of the achievements of Charles Mault's 35 year ministry in Travancore was in the growth of female education, for which he and Martha had to overcome the natural prejudices of much of the population that girls were too valuable in the home to attend school and no purpose was served in educating them. Female education and welfare became primarily Martha's work. Little more than a year after their arrival, helped by contributions from church 'friends' at home, she had established the first girls' boarding school in South India. Within it was a lace-making class. Martha herself had brought with her from England the equipment and the special thread needed for making lace, having learned the techniques at home in St Neots. Her school primarily taught reading and writing through religious study, plus some basic arithmetic and geography. At an appropriate stage, girls were taught lace-making (or later a similar saleable industrial technique like embroidery) which provided them with the means of earning money, and hence gave both them and their families a sense of their worth. To some unfortunate girls, who were virtual slaves, it gave the means of buying their freedom. Martha wrote that:

Many of these children are orphans without a friend to care for them who, but for this asylum [the school], would be left to perish in ignorance, vice and wretchedness – such a child is pitiable beyond expression. Moreover not a few of these girls are slaves ... We teach them in preference to others to make lace, and as soon as their earnings amount to more than their support, a portion of their work is reserved for the purchase of their liberty.<sup>1</sup>

Yet progress in overcoming the prejudice against female education was at first very slow and exacerbated by problems of caste, but by 1830 Martha was able to report 'we were determined to persevere ... and were permitted to realize our hopes, for as the improvement of the children began to manifest itself ... those who formerly opposed, now in some instances become friends to the object'. And so it grew. Eventually lace-making was providing employment for thousands of women and especially widows: 'The lace industry started by the missionaries grew to large proportions and continues to this day, making available most beautiful hand-made lace that will rival any made in the world'.<sup>2</sup>

In 1841, when Martha's daughters Eliza and Sarah, both fluent in colloquial Tamil, were working full time with her, she reported the girls' boarding school at Nagercoil to be virtually full with 94 children. Thirty of them were entirely dependent on resources provided by friends in England. Martha and Charles had also established 26 village day-schools for girls in both christian and heathen communities in the district. Half these new schools had female teachers whom Martha had recruited to avoid the previously accepted situation that all teaching should be done by men.

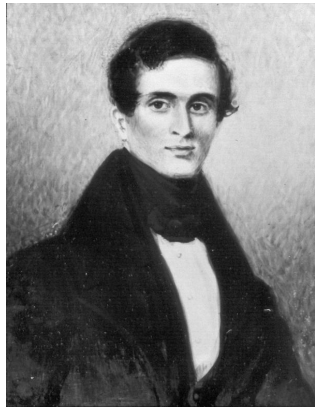
## **Second Generation: Robert Caldwell 1814-91 and Eliza Mault 1822-99**

---

<sup>1</sup> Martha to LMS, 2 June 1830.

<sup>2</sup> Emily Gilchrist Hatch, *Travancore: A Guide Book for Visitors* (OUP 1933).

The Maults' three sons did not become missionaries, but their two daughters both married missionaries in the adjoining state of Madras. Sarah married J O Whitehouse in 1849, but three years later his ill-health (due to neuralgia) drove them back to England's temperate climate. In 1844 her elder sister, Eliza, had married Robert Caldwell, a Scot born near Belfast in Ireland, and brought up in a Presbyterian home. He trained as an artist for three years in Dublin, where he attended an Independent chapel and was exposed



*Robert Caldwell, aged 23, painted for the LMS*

to the piety of the Church of Ireland. Despite some success with his painting, he gave up that career 'to give myself to God'. Returning to his family home in Glasgow, he worked with the Congregationalists and, on acceptance by the LMS, studied at the University of Glasgow. He proved to be a brilliant student, winning a half share of the Robert Peel prize for graduating top of his year, and developing a deep interest in 'comparative philology' through Sir Daniel Sandford, his Greek tutor. He was ordained as a non-conformist minister, and arrived at Madras in January 1838.

Caldwell had always been a voracious reader, remembered what he read and had an extraordinary gift for language. His memory for the etymology of words was compendious. In Madras he not only learned Tamil but was so attracted by the beauty of the language that he also explored its rich literature and poetry. In the process he became familiar with many of the other languages of the region. After four years working in Madras

he transferred from the LMS to the (Anglican) Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG). He felt he could do most good by ministering not to the privileged higher castes in the towns and European settlements but to the poorest and most isolated rural communities. In his case this meant Tinnevely (now Tirunelveli) the SPG's southernmost District of Madras, extending fifteen miles along the coast and between two to six miles inland with a population of some 27,000. The mission station itself was at Idaiyangudi three miles inland and 30 miles east of Cape Comorin. Despite having once been told by a doctor that he was 'unlikely to be ever able to bear the trials of a tropical climate', he decided to make the 800 mile journey there on foot 'to get acquainted with the people and their ideas, manners, and to talk in a way in which I could never expect to do if I travelled in a palanquin or even a cart' – the normal European conveyances.

## Eliza



It was at Idaiyangudi three years later that Eliza Mault joined her new husband. She found herself living in a remote village among poverty-stricken *shanars*<sup>3</sup> in one of the hottest districts of India, shaded only by the tall palmyra trees standing on red infertile sand. Having been brought up in Travancore, Eliza spoke Tamil as a native, and for the last four years had worked full time with her mother in the girl schools that they had set up there. It is not surprising therefore that her main contribution to her husband's work was in the field of female education incorporating lace-making classes. Her example was followed in other SPG missions in Tinnevely District, notably by the Cæmmers at Nazareth. In 1845, the year in which her eldest son was born, Eliza described the problems of female education and welfare which they were facing. Because of

their degraded condition, the females of the district had no desire for improvement, nor had they any wish for the education of their

<sup>3</sup> A lowly caste whose hereditary occupation was to cultivate the palmyra palm, the juice of which they boiled into coarse sugar; thought to have emigrated from Ceylon.

children ...They were not only extremely ignorant but filthy in their habits, rude in their manners, and quarrelsome. If this was the state of the Christian females who, though long neglected, were in every respect superior to the heathen, it may be imagined how very low the heathen women were sunk.<sup>4</sup>

Soon after her arrival, Eliza expanded the girls' day school (set up by her husband) into a boarding school and, with it, also took over control of the existing boys' boarding school, of which the Rev D Vedamuthua, a native Tinnevely clergyman (1866-92) was to write:

The boarding school is the stronghold of a mission, from it comes forth the educated members of the congregation, the schoolmasters and mistresses, the catechists, the native clergy and the best counsellors.

It was the beginning of a long campaign which Eliza and Robert waged to improve the prospects of native girls, and through them convince their families of the value of education. Much of the financial support for this depended on their personal reputations at home, as it came direct from private donors in England, as well as from SPG, SPCK and other sources in India. Their campaign continued unabated in the following years while Eliza gave birth to four sons and three daughters. Indeed, by the 1860s, her two elder daughters, Isabella and Louisa, were working alongside their mother in superintending the boarding and day schools that she and Robert had by then set up.

## Caldwell and his people

A missionary in the field in rural Tinnevely faced many adversities. There was the pressure of the climate, and that of a large population. Caldwell had to walk many miles on sandy tracks under the sun to reach his people, most of whom were grindingly poor, being dependent almost entirely on the products of the palmyra tree, and many lived in ignorance and were often enslaved by superstition and idolatry. In July 1877 a severe drought caused famine in Tinnevely and Ramnad; then just as it was subsiding the same districts were struck by heavy rain and destructive floods. This whole disaster lasted for seven months. Caldwell and his missionaries were seen on the ground throughout this terrible time helping to relieve distress without favouring any religion or caste. One surprising after effect of this help to the sufferers without distinction was a prolonged increase in the 'accessions' to christianity after the floods had subsided. Critics referred to these newcomers as 'rice christians', although only a small proportion of them actually reverted back to heathenism. SPG accessions up to January 1878 numbered 16,000 and by the following November had reached 22,000.

From the start, Caldwell was at one with the Tamils and their thought processes. They valued highly his Tamil sermons propounding the simple truths, and eventually came to look on him as their patriarch. The strict system of evangelism he adopted seemed to suit the *shanars* who were the majority caste in Tinnevely. The *shanars* are simple, hardworking and frugal. They have a strong loyalty to their 'race' and are remarkably biddable. Thus, when a village chief gives up demon worship, the whole village together will follow him. Caldwell's method was to use the old existing village hierarchical structure to raise congregations, establish a pattern for christian villages based on the model at his mission at Idaiyangudi, and to build churches. At the same time, despite opposition from the Madras committee of the SPG, he set up committees and other structures to encourage the development of independence within the native church including the raising of their own funds, and the building of many 'daughter' churches in the district, most from money contributed locally by the villagers themselves. In the words of his obituary, Caldwell 'had seen the christians in Tinnevely increase from 6,000 to 100,000'. Few of these accessions, however, came from the higher castes despite his efforts towards them.

Caldwell lived his life for his flock, bringing to bear all his great intellectual and spiritual powers on their behalf, and identifying himself with their concerns. As he once wrote, 'my residence in India for by far the larger portion of my life, and the deep interest I have always taken in India and everything Indian makes

---

<sup>4</sup> Eliza to Rev Vincent Shortland, Secretary to Madras Diocesan Committee (SPG), 14 Jul 1845.

me more an Indian than anything else'. An illustration of the charismatic effect he had was the occasion of the consecration in 1880 of Holy Trinity church at Idaiyangudi of which he was the architect, and which had taken him 33 years to build, having himself laid the foundation stone in 1847. With space in the church for only 3000, the consecration was attended by nearly 9,000 natives of whom 7,000 were christians and nearly 2000 hindus. That there were 35 native clergymen present reflected the efforts Caldwell had made towards the indigenous future of the church. Robert and Eliza Caldwell are buried beneath the Chancel

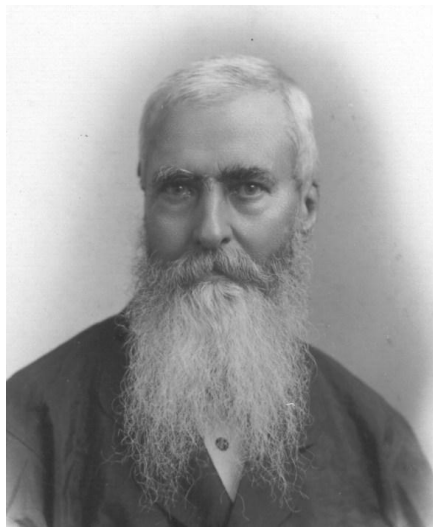
## **Fame as an author and scholar**

Caldwell was a prolific author (a complete list of his published works numbers 29) and a reviser of the Tamil Bible, Prayer and Hymn Books. His books on Dravidian languages, history and the ancient civilisation of the peoples of South India, to which he devoted much of his life, were described as 'one of the monumental works of the age' and lifted him to European fame as a scholar. This extensive research activity included not only the study of palm leaf manuscripts and vernacular literature but even archaeological digs. His conclusions raised the reputation of the Tamil language by demonstrating its antiquity and also showed a common cultural heritage among the speakers of the Dravidian or South Indian family of languages. His work thus gave a linguistic and cultural identity to the lower castes, Tamils in particular, brought thousands into the christian church by giving them access to education, and over the intervening years has helped to raise their status. In short, perhaps without knowing it, Caldwell was a pioneer of what is now known as the 'Tamil Renaissance'.

## **The Bishop and the Madras Diocesan Committee (MDC)**

At Calcutta in March 1877 after nearly forty years in India and at the age of 63, Caldwell was consecrated as bishop. It had long been felt that Tinnevely should have a bishop of its own and in many ways Caldwell had been carrying out the coordinating function in his district. Sadly, his episcopate was to be blighted by various disputes among missionaries and between Caldwell and the Committee 500 miles away in Madras. The latter was dominated by men influenced by the Oxford High Church movement some of whose practices were already being imposed under protest on Indian congregations. These men tended to distrust Caldwell because of his background in the Nonconformist evangelical tradition, and they seemed intent on frustrating his measures for the self-government of the native Church. They almost succeeded in closing Caldwell College by withdrawing its funding, and did withdraw recognition from Eliza's long standing Female College at Tuticorin on a technicality. Something of her formidable personality can be seen in her magnificent rejoinder (dated June 1887) to this uncalled for act of spite:

I beg to call your attention to the fact that the Committee were never asked to recognise my school so that it was gratuitous on their part to pass such an unfeeling and uncalled for resolution. I cannot help feeling that an insult has been offered to my life-long voluntary labours of forty-three years in the cause of female education. ... Now that the Committee have thus gone out of their way to ignore my labours, I consider myself quite independent of them (for I receive no help from them) and I intend acting henceforth on my own responsibility without reference to them. When the action of the Committee is known to friends at home I wonder who will be the sufferers.



The Caldwell name had considerable influence in England, and Eliza's last sentence was not an idle threat. Caldwell had twice appealed success-fully to the President of the SPG, the Archbishop of Canterbury Edward Benson, to reverse

decisions by the MDC, and now did so about this ruling and the whole role of the MDC. The Arch-bishop in December 1887 advised the SPG to call the MDC to order and to restructure its organisation abroad so that proper account was taken of the views of bishops and others working at a distance in the field. Unfortunately his 'advice' seems to have had virtually no effect on the MDC in Madras. In particular they took further steps to counteract the measures Caldwell had taken to foster self-governance in the native church on the grounds that it was in its infancy. Subsequent events proved how wrong they were:

That ..in 1896 [five years after Caldwell's death] it was possible for Tinnevely to become, by contemporary standards, a properly-constituted Anglican diocese, is a measure of the reactionary, negative and misguided character of the opposition Caldwell faced, and a measure, too, of the soundness of his own vision and aspirations.<sup>5</sup>

Now, looking back over more than a century, these irritants to Caldwell's work during his last days seem insignificant in the light of his achievements. His life story and saintly qualities are still remembered, and the influence of his name and the schools that he and his wife founded echo today in the lives of the men and women of South India whatever their faith. At the end of his last visit to England when friends tried to persuade the old missionary to remain at home, his reply illustrates his affection for the people of Tamilnad: 'I wish to die amongst the people for whom I have lived', and in 1891 after half a century of labour, his wish was fulfilled.

### **Third Generation – Joseph Light Wyatt 1841-1936 and Eliza Isabella Caldwell 1848-1933**

The birth of Joseph Wyatt at Bishopsworth in 1841 was surely an omen, foreshadowing the important role he was later to play as acolyte to a great bishop. Wyatt's name still resounds in Tinnevely along with that of Robert Caldwell, his mentor, father-in-law and later his bishop.

Wyatt was the second oldest of seven brothers and two sisters, the family of Joseph and Martha Wyatt, tenant farmers of 65 acres at Home Farm, Kings Head Lane in Bishopsworth (today a suburb of Bristol). He received his training at St Augustine's College, Canterbury, and came out to South India as an SPG missionary in 1867 aged 26. He went to Idaiyangudi to be the assistant to Caldwell, who was then exactly twice his age. The following year Wyatt married Caldwell's eldest daughter Isabella, who was working with her sister Louisa in their mother's mission schools. Wyatt remained at Idaiyangudi for ten years during which Isabella bore three daughters, Mabel, Lilian and Pauline. With his sharp intellect and powers of organisation he was an ideal foil to his colleague and made a huge contribution to the work of the mission



*Joseph Wyatt and his wife Isabella nee Caldwell*

especially in the practicalities of developing the model village and the raising of funds. He not only took full charge of the mission when Caldwell was in England in 1873-5, but also had his two older daughters to look after while Isabella returned home with baby Pauline and her father.

Wyatt went on his first home leave when Caldwell returned from his consecration as bishop in Calcutta in 1877. His 'leave' was spent, as was usual, working and speaking for the SPG. On his return in 1879, his father-in-law had intended him to become the new headmaster of Caldwell College,

<sup>5</sup> Y Vincent Kumaradoss, *Robert Caldwell: a scholar-missionary in colonial South India* (ISPCK, 2007).

but the MDC. had decided otherwise and instead had appointed him missionary-in-charge at Trichinopoly (now Tiruchirappalli) or 'Trichy' for short.

## Trichy

Trichy is a busy town about 200 miles north of Idaiyangudi, famous for its great Vishnu temple with walls four miles in circumference sheltering 20,000 brahman inhabitants. Trichy had a long history of roman catholic and protestant missionary endeavour. In 1864 the SPG had established a High School which by the time Wyatt arrived was offering university degrees. There were then a thousand students of whom the majority were brahmans. Despite this preponderance, it was considered that the College was usefully exerting christian moral and religious influence among high caste hindus. For Wyatt it was a very different environment to that he had left at Idaiyangudi:

As I looked down on the crowded houses and the seething multitudes that filled the streets of the town, and then on the surrounding countryside including that beautiful island of Srirangam with its enormous Vishnu temple visited yearly by hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, my heart seemed to sink at the magnitude of the work which lay before me.

Apart from the College, little more than christian pastoral work had been possible in the district. Elementary education among the rural population was almost non-existent. 'There is much stagnation among the older Christians, many of whom were received in former times from the Roman Catholics'. Little evangelistic work had been attempted for many years and in 1894 the Church had adherents in only 32 of the 3000 villages and hamlets in the district. Even the vigorous efforts made by Wyatt's 1895 successor, John Sharrock, who in a year visited 600 villages, treated 4000 medical patients and preached the Gospel to 8000, made little apparent headway. 'Often the evangelistic band are stoned and otherwise ill-treated. They see little fruit from their labours but have faith enough to wait'.

Wyatt and Isabella established themselves at Worior near the native portion of the town and began by opening a girls boarding school with a combined industrial (lace-making) class, and several separate schools for the higher classes of hindu girls for whom nothing had hitherto been done. With no suitable teachers being available in the district, they obtained volunteers from among their old Tinnevely pupils. A year later they opened the first SPG training institution for female teachers in the Madras Presidency. A boarding school for boys was opened, and then girls day schools in both town and countryside. They had bible-women attached to each of the town schools who also went out to teach the women in the neighbourhood, and ex-pupils of the schools in their homes. Their progress at Trichy was acknowledged by one experienced clergyman who remarked, ambivalently, that female education here is 'in itself a grand work, even if there were nothing else being done'. Sad to say even this progress was later checked in 1897-98 'due to the organised opposition of the brahmans who opened rival schools'.

## The children at home

The long separations that occurred between a missionary wife and her children, generally when they were being educated in England, sometimes became an issue. So it was with Isabella whose two sons, Ernest and Frank, were born at Trichy in the early 1880s. In 1893 when the boys, whom she had not seen for five years, were having problems at school, she took the first boat home. Her letter asking the SPG for a refund of her fare, even though they were not due for leave for another two years, highlights the difficult conflict between the demands of family and the importance of the wife's 'honorary' work:

It will be 30 years in September since I went out to my father [Robert Caldwell] in Edeyengoody, and for more than 25 years I have been actively engaged in mission work as an honorary worker. For 15 years I was in Edeyengoody and superintended the girls and boys schools and raised the numbers in those schools from 60 to nearly 300 and left more than Rs2000 invested for hard times.

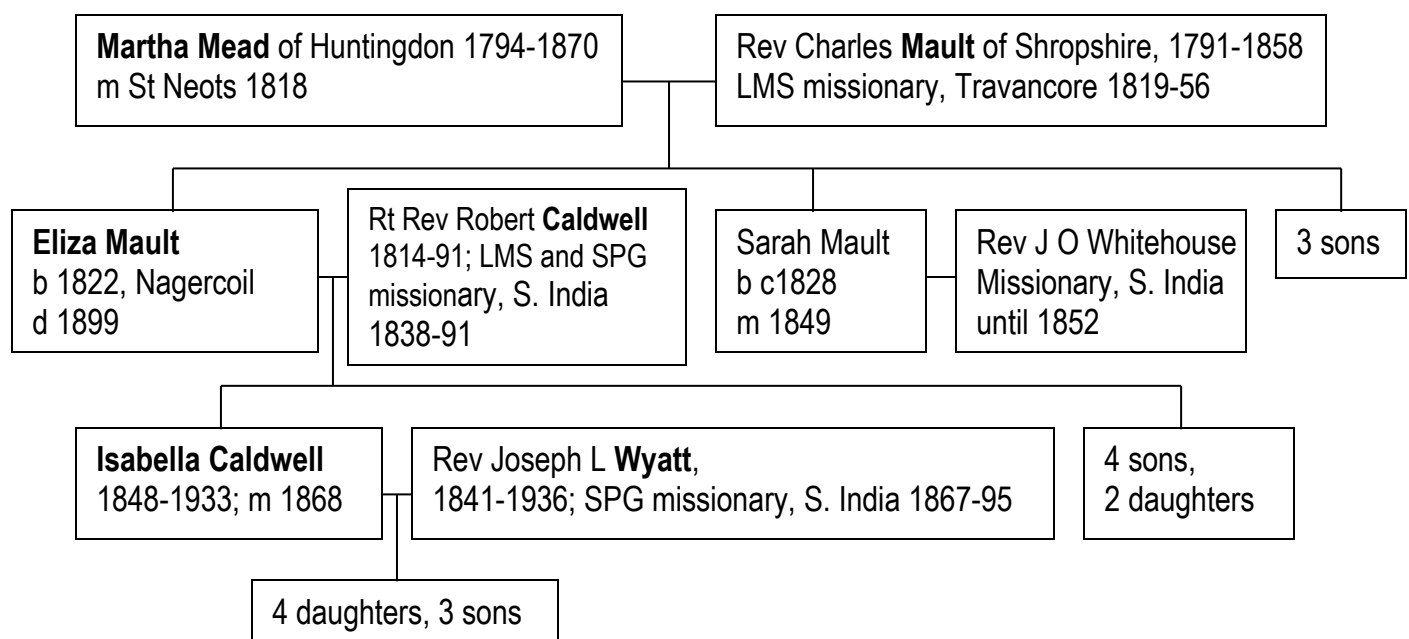
At the time she had six children aged between 13 and 26. These separations were undoubtedly a factor two years later in 1895 when her husband finally left Trichy to return home, where he resigned from the SPG – the last missionary of the dynasty. He then became a lecturer in Tamil at Cambridge, and in 1899 Rector of Brandon in Suffolk.

## Conclusion

The very different circumstances and difficulties that Wyatt faced in Trichy from those in Tinnevely make one wary of drawing general conclusions about the results and effectiveness of this three-generation missionary dynasty. It is said that by 1947 after a hundred years of unrestricted missionary effort in India as a whole, christianity had made little headway with the masses. And for the most part the new christians were drawn from marginal groups – the lower castes, hill tribes, anglo-indians. Certainly the large accessions to christianity made by Caldwell, Wyatt and their colleagues were primarily among the lower castes of Tinnevely, and the *shanars* in particular. Yet it was not each accession itself but the elementary education and the encouragement to benefit from it that proved to be important, leading to the rising self-confidence of the Tamil people, to which Caldwell's scholarly work on local languages and history had also greatly contributed.

Today Tinnevely is a thriving diocese of the Church of South India. The Caldwell name is still remembered by the students and teachers at the schools which he and Eliza founded, and by the many christian descendants of those he taught, baptised and ordained. But it was the wives who were clearly the backbone of this dynasty – from Martha Mault to Eliza and Sarah, and finally to Isabella – they set up homes and managed their large families between two continents, and quietly worked with extraordinary devotion for the education of native children, and in particular for the encouragement and well being of young Indian women. That was more than a century ago, but even in a report on skills training in the late 1960s which included Nagercoil an echo of their work still remains: 'a flourishing lace-making and embroidery industry is still going on here, but reduced from the past when it involved thousands of women'.

## Missionary dynasty by female descent



## Primary Sources

London Missionary Society Records (School of Oriental & African Studies, London)	Candidate Papers: Charles Mault 1818-42 and Robert Caldwell 1833-42 Travancore and Ceylon Correspondence 1817-99: Rev and Mrs Charles Mault 1825-54
Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) Records (Rhodes House Library, Oxford)	Madras Letters Received: Caldwell and Wyatt – Shelfmark CLR 46-54 (Dec 1841-Dec 1899)
Jacob, Lt Gen Sir Ian Neill, Rt Rev Stephen	Bishop Caldwell - family papers Letter from Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, 12 Jan 1980

## Secondary Sources

Abbs, Rev John	<i>Twenty-two years missionary experience in Travancore</i> (London, 1870)
Appasamy, Paul (Judge, Madras City)	<i>The Centenary History of the CMS in Tinnevely</i> (Palamcottah Press, 1923)
Buckland, C E	<i>Dictionary of Indian Biography</i>
Hacker, Isaac Henry	<i>A hundred years in Travancore, 1806-1906. A history and description of the work done by the London Missionary Society</i> (London, Allenson, 1908)
Hatch, Emily Gilchrist	<i>Travancore – A Guide Book for the Visitor</i> (OUP, 1933)
Hermitage Day, Rev E	<i>Mission Heroes</i> (London, SPCK, 1896)
Illustrated London News, 31 March 1877, pp300-301	<i>Bishop Caldwell</i>
Kumaradoss, Dr Y Vincent	<i>Robert Caldwell – a scholar-missionary in colonial South India</i> (Delhi, ISPCK, 2007)
Latourette, Kenneth S	<i>A History of the Expansion of Christianity 1800-1914 – Asia</i>
Muller, D S George, and Abraham, Rev V Joseph	<i>The Trail of the Tirunelvely Church</i> (Tinnevely Diocesan Council, 1964)
O'Connor, Rev Dr Daniel (ed)	<i>Three Centuries of Mission – The USPG</i> (Continuum, 2000)
Pascoe, Charles Frederick	<i>Two hundred years of the S.P.G., 1701-1900</i> (London, 1901)
Pettifer, Julian and Bradley, Richard	<i>Missionaries</i> (BBC Books, 1990)
Pettitt, Rev George	<i>The Tinnevely Mission of the Church Missionary Society</i> (London, 1857)
Sharrock, Rev J A	<i>Bishop Caldwell: A Memoir</i> (Calcutta, 1897)
Sibree, James (ed)	<i>A Register of [LMS] Missionaries</i> (4th edn, London, 1923)
Smith, George, CIE, LLD	<i>Twelve Pioneer Missionaries</i> (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1900)
Stock, Eugene	<i>History of the Church Missionary Society</i> , vol 3 (CMS, c1916)
Suganthary, D	<i>Man of Vision</i> (The Sunday Standard, 1968)
Western, Rt Rev F J (Bishop of Tinnevely)	<i>Register of Tinnevely Clergy 1776-1936</i> (Madras, SPCK, 1937)
Wyatt, Rev J L (ed)	<i>Reminiscences of Bishop Caldwell</i> (Madras, Addison & Co, 1894)



## Missionary Research Sources

### Missionary Societies

**Baptist Missionary Society for World Mission** [www.bmsworldmission.org](http://www.bmsworldmission.org)

PO Box 49, 129 Broadway, Didcot, OX11 8XA Tel: 01235-517700.

[Projects: Suzanne Linell Tel: 01235-517626 E-mail: [slinnell@bmsworldmission.org](mailto:slinnell@bmsworldmission.org)]

**Church Missionary Society (CMS)** [www.cms-uk.org](http://www.cms-uk.org)

CMS, Watlington Road, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 6BZ

Tel: 01865-7874000. E-mail: [ken.osborne@cms-uk.org](mailto:ken.osborne@cms-uk.org)

**Church of Scotland World Mission Council** [www.churchofscotland.org.uk/councils/worldmission](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/councils/worldmission)

Dr Kenneth Ross, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN

Tel: 0131-2255722 E-mail: [worldmission@cofscotland.org.uk](mailto:worldmission@cofscotland.org.uk)

**Council for World Mission - formerly London Missionary Society (LMS)** [www.cwmission.org](http://www.cwmission.org)

Ipalo House, 32-34 Great Peter Street, London, SW1P 2DB

Tel: 0207-2224214 E-mail: [sylvia@cwmission.org.uk](mailto:sylvia@cwmission.org.uk)

**USPG - formerly Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG)** [www.uspg.org.uk](http://www.uspg.org.uk)

200 Great Dover Street, London, SE1 4YB

Tel: 0207-3785678 E-mail: [rachelp@uspg.org.uk](mailto:rachelp@uspg.org.uk)

### Libraries Holding Missionary Society Records

**Birmingham University Library (CMS Archives)** [www.special-coll.bham.ac.uk](http://www.special-coll.bham.ac.uk)

Susan Worrall, Head of Special Collections, Main Library, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston,

Birmingham B15 2TT Tel: 0121-414-5838. E-mail: [s.j.worrall@bham.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.worrall@bham.ac.uk)

[Main Library tel: 0121-4145828].

**Rhodes House Library (SPG Archives)** [www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/rhodes/](http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/rhodes/)

Rhodes House Library, South Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3RG.

Tel: 01865-270908 (Library), 270911 (Office) E-mail: [ljm@bodley.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ljm@bodley.ox.ac.uk)

**School of Oriental and African Studies (LMS Archives)** [www.soas.ac.uk/library/](http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/)

Archives, Manuscripts and Rare Books Division, The Library, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street,

Russell Square, London, WC1H 0XG Tel: 020 7898 4180 E-mail: [docenquiry@soas.ac.uk](mailto:docenquiry@soas.ac.uk)

### Other (Mission) Libraries

**Henry Martyn (Missionary) Centre** [www.martynmission.cam.ac.uk](http://www.martynmission.cam.ac.uk)

Jane Gregory, Librarian, Henry Martyn Centre, Westminster College, Maudslayi Road,

Cambridge CB3 0AA

Tel: 01223-741088 Librarian Tel: 07973965430 E-mail: [jg230@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jg230@cam.ac.uk)

**Indian Institute Library** [www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/)

The Indian Institute, Bodleian Library, Oxford OX1 3BG

Tel: 01865-277082 E-mail: [gillian.evison@bodley.ox.ac.uk](mailto:gillian.evison@bodley.ox.ac.uk)

**Royal Asiatic Society** [www.royalasiaticsociety.org](http://www.royalasiaticsociety.org)

14 Stephenson Way, London, NW1 2HD

Kathy Lazenbatt (librarian) Tel: 0207-3884539 E-mail: [kl@royalasiaticsociety.org](mailto:kl@royalasiaticsociety.org)

**Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies** [www.queens.ac.uk](http://www.queens.ac.uk)

The Queen's Foundation Library, Somerset Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2QH

Tel: 0121-4522621 E-mail: [library@queens.ac.uk](mailto:library@queens.ac.uk)

*Note also Mundus* [www.mundus.ac.uk](http://www.mundus.ac.uk)

A web-based guide to more than four hundred collections of overseas missionary materials held in the United Kingdom

## **Indian/South Asian Study Centres**

**Centre of South Asian Studies** [www.s-asian.cam.ac.uk](http://www.s-asian.cam.ac.uk)

Laundress Lane, Cambridge, CB2 1SD

Tel: 01223-338094

E-mail (Administrator): [jt219@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jt219@cam.ac.uk); or [webmaster@s-asian.cam.ac.uk](mailto:webmaster@s-asian.cam.ac.uk)

**Centre for South Asian Studies, Edinburgh** [www.csas.ed.ac.uk/index.php](http://www.csas.ed.ac.uk/index.php)

Dr Crispin Bates, History, School of History and Classics, 50 George Square, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH8 9JY Tel: (home) 0131-6683320; (office) 0131-6503765; (sec) 0131-6503780;

E-mail: [crispin.bates@ed.ac.uk](mailto:crispin.bates@ed.ac.uk) or [south.asian@ed.ac.uk](mailto:south.asian@ed.ac.uk)

**Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-western World (CSCNWW)** [www.div.ed.ac.uk](http://www.div.ed.ac.uk)

School of Divinity, New College, Mound Place, Edinburgh, Scotland EH1 2LX

Director: Jack Thompson Tel: 0131-6508934 E-mail: [t.jack.thompson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:t.jack.thompson@ed.ac.uk); or Tel: 0131-6508902.

## **South Indian Village Charities**

**The Eliza & Robert Caldwell Trust**

The Dumb Flea, 23 Chiswick End, Meldreth, Royston, Herts, SG8 6LZ

E-mail: [juliedraper@dumbflea.co.uk](mailto:juliedraper@dumbflea.co.uk)

**Kings World Trust for Children** (Residential care, education and health in South India)

Websites: [www.kingschildren.org](http://www.kingschildren.org) and [www.kingsenglishschool.com](http://www.kingsenglishschool.com)

(UK) 7 Deepdene, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 1RE E-mail: [kwtc@haslemere.com](mailto:kwtc@haslemere.com)

(INDIA) 940 Chinnammalpuram, Dhalapathi Samudram PO, Tinnevely 627 101, Tamil Nadu, South India E-mail: [trust@kingsindia.in](mailto:trust@kingsindia.in)

**Reaching the Unreached (RTU) of Village India** [www.rtu.org.uk](http://www.rtu.org.uk)

Max Philbrick, RTU, 11 Crofts Avenue, Corbridge, Northumberland NE45 5LY

Tel: 01434-632707 E-mail: [info@rtu.org.uk](mailto:info@rtu.org.uk)

**University of Withywood** [www.universityofwithywood.org.uk](http://www.universityofwithywood.org.uk)

Anton Bantock, 131 Queens Road, Withywood, Bristol BS13 8QD.

Tel: 0117-9641667 E-mail through: [mrsl@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mrsl@blueyonder.co.uk)

## The Defence of Lucknow: letter from Lt Clifford Henry Meham Part Two

*Again our thanks go to Sylvia Murphy for so painstakingly transcribing the original letter and to Michael J Meham, on behalf of the Meham family, for permission to publish it. Since the first part of Meham's letter was published in the previous issue of the Journal, Sylvia has had access to a scanned copy of the original manuscript which occupies 83 pages of a small notebook. She has therefore been able to make a more accurate transcription which now faithfully reproduces Meham's abbreviations, spellings, capitalisation and underlinings. However, to aid readability his punctuation has been modified and paragraphing has been introduced (perhaps he thought paragraphs unnecessary in his small notebook).*

*The narrative resumes immediately following the arrival of Sir Henry Havelock's relieving force on 25 September. Sir James Outram had been appointed to succeed Sir Henry Lawrence as Chief Commissioner of Oudh and to take over military command from Havelock. He refrained from superseding Havelock until the latter had achieved the relief of Lucknow towards which he had already done so much hard fighting. However, Outram took over command the day after the force entered the city. Outram realised that his force was not strong enough to evacuate the non-combatants and he therefore had to hold out in Lucknow until a larger force could effect a final relief; but he did occupy a large area to the east of the existing entrenchment which relieved much of the pressure on the original defenders though not in Meham's position (see map on p24).*

The incessant fire on our beleaguered Garrison, however, still continued, & for the next few days increased instead of diminishing, & the Enemy invested both Outram's & Havelock's force in the same manner & with the same desperation as they did our original Garrison. This job will be much better described in Papers & Despatches, so I will not waste time over it, but proceed to give you an account of the wonderful escape that befell me on the 18th of August, which is a day that will always occupy a prominent place in my calendar.

My post (as I previously mentioned) was in the rear face of our defence, & was a large one-storied building in the corner of a yard (the Sikh Square) with a terraced roof, round which was erected a 6 foot parapet (loopholed ) thro' which we used to fire on the Enemy in the surrounding houses, from which it was only separated by a very narrow lane. I had long been suspicious of mines, & had already discovered two large ones (one of which I previously mentioned). The Enemy had also evidently serious designs on my post, as we caused them an immensity of annoyance from our loopholes, shooting down anyone that appeared, which we were enabled to do with certainty owing to their proximity. I now got a supply of hand grenades which I used now & then to amuse myself by administering to them, & one dark night they managed to get under our walls, & began digging out the bricks in the bottom of them, with a view evidently of blowing us up with bags of powder. I heard my gentlemen at work, & dropped a hand grenade or two on top of them, which bursting just when they ought, blew upwards of 8 of them literally to pieces. This was a sickener to them, & made them speedily desist, tho' they still continued to keep up a daily continued pepper on our loopholes, which were so breached every day that they had to be repaired every night. However, they found that two could play at that game & as we had heaps of ammunition we used completely to breach & knock to pieces all their loopholes. The hand grenades were administered whenever they showed themselves in force & of them they had doubtless (from previous experience) a most wholesome dread, for I managed to kill a great many by them.

I had constantly urged the Brigadier to have some horses that were picketed in my yard removed, but the same was never done & the end of it was our blow up, as, from the noise they made stamping the ground with their feet, I got dreadfully confused in listening for the Enemy's mines, which it was very difficult to detect, owing to their mining in the most cautious manner, making little or no noise. Notwithstanding, therefore, our greatest attention, they managed to carry a mine completely under the building, which was

totally destroyed, as also many poor fellows. Almost all day & night I remained on the top of the building superintending operations, & on the eventful morning, after having slept in the same place, I was, as usual, at my post on the top, when I remarked an unusual silence on the part of the Enemy. I had just fired at a man thro' a loophole from which I hardly had drawn my rifle, when the sentry who was standing at my elbow exclaimed: "A mine. A mine." I peeped thro' the loophole, & saw a jet of white smoke issuing from an enclosure on the opposite side of the road, which proved to be the smoke issuing from the shaft of the Enemy's mine caused by the fuse igniting. I had not time to give the alarm before the house shook beneath me, & before I was able to leap from the parapet the whole broke up under my feet & ascended into the air! Further than this I, of course, have no recollection of what took place, till I found myself on the ground, buried up to the waist in rubbish & considerably stunned & bruised, with a hellish musketry fire all round me. Knowing not a moment was to be lost, & feeling certain that my only chance of escape consisted in at once extricating myself if possible, I struggled violently to accomplish this, being considerably stimulated by the very strong chance of being bayoneted by the Enemy. While in this helpless & pityable plight, on freeing myself, & finding I was (by the blessing of God) blown inside instead of outside our defences, I speedily made a run for it, thereby presenting myself a perfect cock-shy to the bullets of the Enemy, which rattled round me as thick as hail, but fortunately without doing me any damage. On my way I came across my brother officer, whom I found on his face with his hands & head considerably cut, & covered with blood, from which I at first took him to be killed, but thinking it was as well to satisfy myself on that point before deserting him I turned him over, & on his uttering a confused grunt, I pulled him up by the neck of his coat & brought him under shelter. On attaining this point, we found the space occupied only a few minutes previously by the building which formed my post entirely vacant, & in lieu of the edifice (of which, by the by, not a square foot of masonry was left standing) a breach upwards of 30 yards broad presented itself, exhibiting to our full view the buildings on the opposite side of the lane, which swarmed with the Enemy, who rained a storm of bullets both thro' & around the breach. The explosion, which shook the whole of our defences to the very foundation, speedily brought reinforcements to our relief, tho' not before the Enemy possessed themselves of part of the square, which they quickly perforated with loopholes, & poured a most deadly fire therein. But a 24<sup>th</sup> Howitzer being fortunately brought to bear on them, they were in an hour or so driven out, tho' it was not till evening that we succeeded with the greatest difficulty in gaining the ground we had lost.

As if I had not had escapes enough that day, I was all but blown up again that evening, for having volunteered with a party of Europeans, (8 in number) to sally out & hold a house which was situated a short distance outside our walls & which had always been a source of annoyance to us, I proceeded there, & planting my men in the most advantageous positions to answer the fire of the Enemy, I waited for the signal of the Engineer officer (Fulton, who was afterwards killed), who was laying the powder, to withdraw my party. This however, was omitted to be done, & the train was exploded, blowing the house to pieces & sending the walls about our ears in all directions. One man of my party was severely injured so much so as to die afterwards, & we should all have inevitably been destroyed had not the train failed properly to ignite. This blowing down of houses was done with a view of destroying the Enemy's cover about us, & as such did material service, as we gained complete possession of the ground we had that morning lost, & judging from the numbers of bodies we found, committed tolerable havoc on our foes. When my sketches make their appearance you will be better able to understand the day's disaster, as in them is a sketch of the breach as it appeared after the explosion, & also the Battery we erected to protect the same. This Battery, in which were 2 nine pounders & an 8 inch mortar, was placed under my charge, & I held command of it till the evacuation of the Garrison. In a short time I became quite a gunner, & managed to work the mortar with considerable effect. From long experience I knew perfectly the range of all the houses about, also the Enemy's Batteries, & a wholesome administration of 8 inch shells used to form one of my greatest delights, more especially as one had a full view of the effect of the same, & the range I usually fired at was so short, that it entailed keeping close under cover to avoid the pieces of one of our bursting shells.

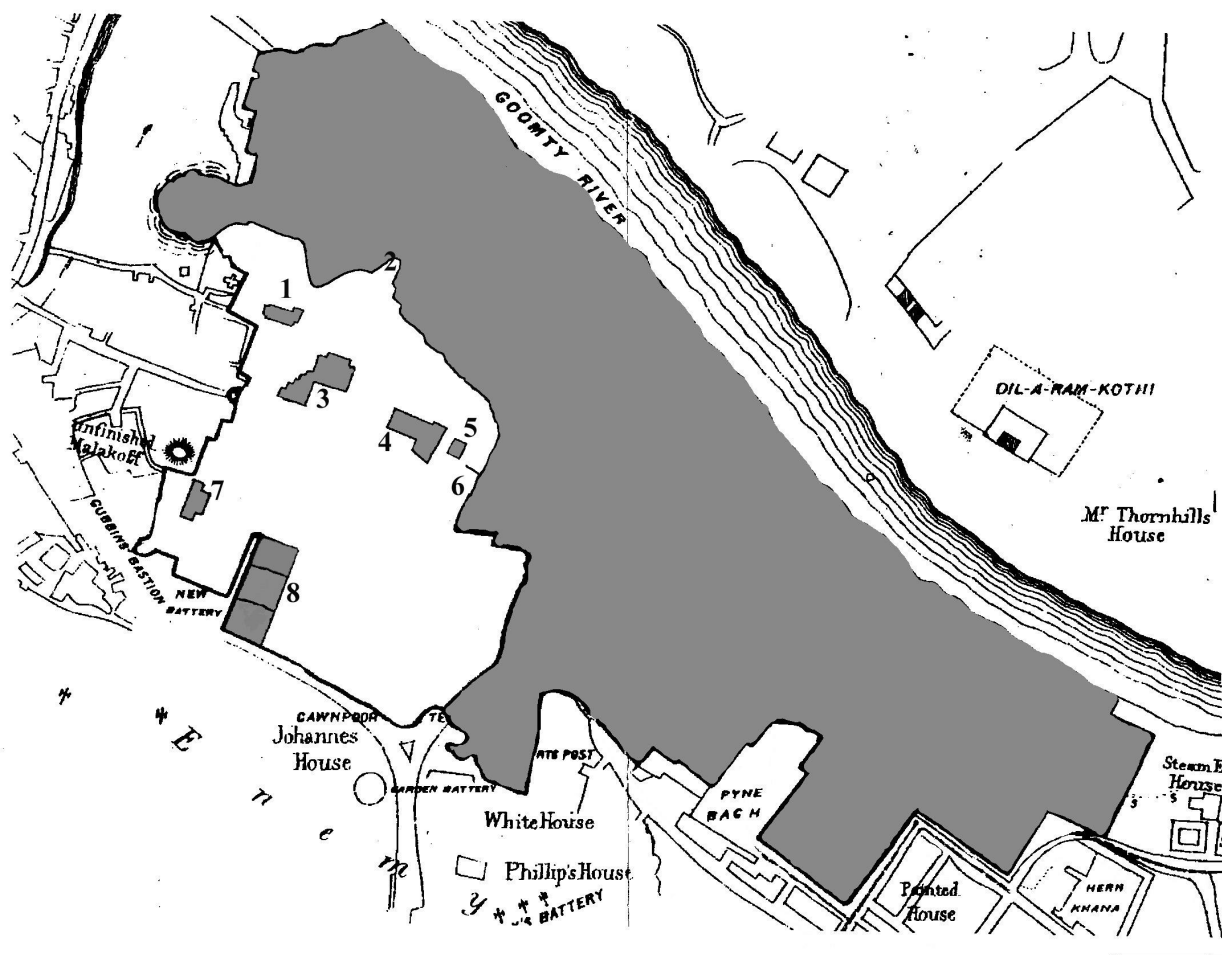
On the arrival of Havelock's force, two large mines were discovered by them, running under the two most important posts in our defences, the Redan Battery & the Treasury. The former mine was complete, chambers cut for the powder, which it only wanted to render it ready for springing. Of these we had not the least idea, & had Havelock's force not come when it did, in a few days the above two posts would have been blown in, entailing thereby the loss of many lives & some of our heaviest guns. There is no doubt that Havelock just arrived in time, & it is my firm belief, as also that of almost all the Garrison, that we could not have held the position beyond the end of September. It was not on the score of provisions that we had anything to fear. Of these we had enough, as was afterwards proved, but it was on account of the Native portion of the Garrison who for a long time had been in a very rickety state, & naturally very anxious & suspicious at seeing such an immense time elapse before succour was at hand. We had the difficulty in pacifying them at the end of August, & a general desertion was fully anticipated about that time which was Providentially averted by a spy coming in with a report that a force was being collected at Cawnpore for our relief. This induced them to determine to remain with us till the end of September, but it was openly stated amongst them that did not succour arrive by that time, they must go. This must inevitably have caused our destruction, as even with them we had not men enough to man the defences, which were of such a wretched description that had the Enemy once succeeded in gaining a portion of them, the whole must to a certainty have fallen.

A deal of very hard fighting took place for the first fortnight after the arrival of Havelock's Brigade, owing to General Outram endeavouring to open the communication with the Alum-bagh outside the City, where a portion of the force & all the baggage had been left. Every day was a continuation of storming houses, in which many brave fellows were uselessly laid low, as after a short time it was found that the Enemy were so numerous & obstinate that to effect the object with the men we had (which, by the way, was upwards of 4000) was impossible. Consequently all the ground we had fought for & held so nobly had to be given up, & it ended by Outram & Havelock's force only keeping sufficient space outside our original defences for their own accommodation. This they fortified, & in this they found themselves as closely besieged as we had been hitherto, till the arrival of the C. in Chief. One good thing, however, was that we succeeded in destroying most of the Enemy's formidable batteries & positions, tho' some dreadful failures were made at first. In one of them I happened to be a participator, & narrowly escaped with my life. You will see my name mentioned in G<sup>l</sup> Outram's Despatches which no doubt will make the best of the failure, tho' a most lamentable one it must be acknowledged to be by all who know the true state of the case.

We were ordered one day [to] sally out & destroy a certain number of guns around us, for which purpose about 200 Europeans & 80 Natives were told off. We accordingly went, & in a few minutes were hammer & tongs with the Enemy, who poured a killing fire of musketry upon us from the houses on either side of the streets we had to traverse before reaching the guns. In this said fire the party carrying the spikes & bursting powder were all killed or wounded. We therefore, on storming the first Battery, which was done in gallant style, found neither of the aforesaid most necessary materials at hand. We had therefore to hold possession of the guns under a most deadly fire for upwards of a quarter of an hour, during which lots of poor fellows were laid low, as the Enemy had time to collect in numbers around us, & pepper us most unmercifully from all the buildings about. It now for the first time became known to us what had been the fate of the unfortunate party, & the guns being spiked by bayonets broken short off at the vents, we proceeded to the next Battery, but unfortunately here the man who had volunteered to show us the way knew nothing about it, & instead of taking us to the point in question, pioneered us into the strongest portion of the Enemy's position. This we speedily discovered to our cost, as an advance further was impossible. The retreat was therefore sounded, & a headlong one indeed it speedily became; the Enemy in full cry after us & so close on our heels that as fast as a man was wounded & fell, his head was cut off. This was the sad style in which we entered our defences, leaving a sad list of killed behind us.

### Map of fortified area of Lucknow following arrival of Havelock and Outram, 1857

Based on map in Martin Gubbins, *An Account of the Mutinies in Oudh* (London 1858), p354.



*The area occupied by Havelock and Outram is shaded.*

*In the original entrenchment: 1 Church; 2 Redan battery; 3 Residency; 4 Hospital; 5 Treasury; 6 Baillie Guard Gateway; 7 Gubbins' House; 8 Sikh Square (Mecham's position).*

I had this day another narrow escape, for in advancing a man rushed out of a house just behind me, & taking a deliberate pot shot at my august person, succeeded fortunately in committing no further injury than cutting the neck of my coat. Finding his shot fail, & seeing I turned about with a view of despatching him with my rifle, he made a straight rush at me with his *tulwar* [sword] in hand, evidently with the hope of making speedy minced meat of me, but my rifle was at my shoulder just before he had succeeded in seizing the muzzle with his hand, & a steady pull of the right barrel trigger sent its contents crashing thro' his brain, which brought my friend to a sudden stop, & he rolled over as dead as mutton. Had the rifle missed fire, nothing could have saved me, as I was separated from the party, which probably induced my friend to select me for his vengeance, tho' I am happy to say, thanks to a kind Providence, & my trusty rifle, I was enabled to turn the tables.

On its now being discovered that to open the communication was impossible<sup>1</sup>, it became doubly necessary to economise our provision. Accordingly we were placed on half rations, which was subsequently reduced to quarter, & ultimately one fifth, which was, I can assure you, barely enough to keep life & soul together, &

<sup>1</sup> i.e. communication with the Alum Bagh.

had it not been for the cold weather numbers of us would have sunk under it. But here again the hand of a kind Providence was perceptible, as during our greatest miseries, when we were worked to the highest pitch of endurance, we had fortunately abundance of food & liquor, which it would have been impossible for us to have done without. Our rations latterly were of the worst description, the coarsest flour & the most sinewy indigestible beef, into which all our battery bullocks were converted. However, a good appetite with me generally served as excellent sauce, & I managed to devour all I could get, & as much more as possible, which, by the way was precious little. Owing to this coarse food, nearly all of us became afflicted with a species of dysentery, which killed many & reduced one's small amount of strength materially. I got it about three weeks before the evacuation, & was terribly reduced. However, I managed to shake it off immediately on getting outside.

If these were miseries to us, what were they to the poor women & children, neither of whom were a degree better off. But they behaved most nobly throughout, no grumbling, no complaining of any kind, tho' too many of them were left widows & childless. There were several births during the siege, but I believe only one child survived. Poor Mrs. Banks bore her loss most heroically, & I am delighted to say managed to save her only child, a little girl, which was of course an immense comfort to her. Poor woman! She was so kind to me latterly when I was laid up with dysentery, & it is entirely to her attention that I owe my speedy recovery & indeed my life. The Despatches & other accounts that will be published will give you a full & detailed account of every day's sufferings, which has been officially journalized for Government, so you must wait for them to get a more full idea of all we went thro', which I have but feebly expressed here. I forgot to mention, however, that about the time that I was blown up & all those poor fellows were destroyed on my post, another labour was added to our already overtaxed exertions in digging countermines & this proved to be the hardest work of the whole, as we used all to take our turn with pick & shovel in common with the men, who, without our example would in all probability have given in. In a short time we were rewarded by discovering lots of the Enemy's mines which they were driving under our defences on all sides, & the only way in which we could guard against them was by making listening galleries at close distance all round our line of defence, by means of which we were enabled, by listening attentively, to detect them at work, & in several instances we sprung these countermines, blowing lots of them up in their own mines. This extraordinary mode of warfare became a perfect underground battle one burrowing against the other, & extremely unpleasant work it was, I can assure you, lying listening for an hour together at the end of one of our mines, probably some 40 feet underground & in pitchy darkness, the Enemy so close to you that you constantly pictured to yourself their suddenly springing their mine & burying you alive! You see all this capitally described in my work, so I will not say any more about it here.

My escapes, you will see, were considerably narrow & numerous, tho' I have not enumerated half of them, & I did not experience any more wonderful than most other members of the Garrison. Every moment we were exposed to the Enemy's fire, & death around & in the midst of us in every shape, which continued in unabated fury for 88 long days till the arrival of Havelock & Outram. We felt ourselves then tolerably safe from total destruction, tho' we stood almost as great a chance as before of being knocked over. Our hardships by no means ceased tho' they were mitigated, & many a gallant fellow of our original Garrison was laid low between that time & the Chief's advent after their names had appeared in the list of survivors.

I shall now bring my story up to the Commander-in-Chief's arrival with 6000 men, who were only enough to open the communication with us, & terrible hard fighting they had to undergo before they could reach us, which happy event took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> November (my birthday), a peremptory order came therewith to totally evacuate the position, tho' this was kept as secret as possible, but from steps that were taken it soon became evident to all that we were to abandon the ground on which we had fought so long & so nobly against the hordes of the Enemy. All the ladies, wounded, sick & children were first sent off, & on the night of the 27<sup>th</sup> (I think it was) at 12 o'clock, in the greatest silence, we marched out of the Defences in small bodies, having previously withdrawn all the guns, ammunition etc. & destroyed everything that could have been of service to the Enemy. Many a bitter pang of regret was expressed by all of us of the original Garrison on marching out, & knowing that the position, every inch of which we of course knew perfectly by

heart & in which so many of our poor fellows had been sent to their long homes, would speedily be in the hands of the Enemy. The communication with the outside of the City was kept open by a powerful chain of posts for upwards of 5 miles, which closed in & withdrew in the most perfect silence as we passed on, till the whole line was evacuated, which was done so splendidly that not a life was lost. The Enemy had evidently not the slightest idea that we were abandoning the place. About 4 o'clock in the morning we found ourselves outside the City close to Sir Colin's Camp, & many a hearty shake of the hand was given amongst us, & many a prayer of gratitude uttered in silence on being once more able to look around us at the open country, which at one time none of us dared hope ever to feast our eyes on again!

I applied at this time to be attached to the [Madras] Fusileers, & three days after marched with them from the "Dil Khoothan" position to the "Alum Bagh", where we are now, forming one of the corps which compose the rearguard of Sir Colin's army, which started for Cawnpore the day after we reached this post, in time to catch the Gwalior scoundrels who had laid siege to that place.

I have now brought, my yarn up to the present time, so here we are, waiting for the Chief's advent with 15,000 men, to proceed once more against the City, which stands full in our view about 6 miles distant, & which the Enemy are fortifying & rendering as impregnable as possible, as a precious warm job it promises to be, tho' with such a force as we shall then number a regular investment will doubtless take place.

*He describes the C-in-C's probable moves preparatory to returning to Lucknow to retake the city. The mutineers have moved their guns nearer the Alum Bagh and effected some damage but a successful counter attack was mounted the other day. The Governor-General wishes to see his sketches before they are sent home, which should help sales in Calcutta. He hopes the Queen will allow them to be dedicated to her [she did]. His agents say 100 copies have already been ordered.*

We are, I see, all granted 6 months' batta<sup>2</sup> which is about the least Government could have given us. This, for me, amounts to £75, which, together with my regulation compensation, will make up about £200. This will help to mend matters, tho' it falls very far short of what I have lost. But I am taking to grumbling, so shall bring this volume to a close as a dawd goes out from camp this day, the 29<sup>th</sup> of Dec'.

Adieu, then, my dearest Mother, & with best [*conclusion of letter shown in facsimile below*]

---

<sup>2</sup> An extra allowance paid to officers and soldiers in the field or on other special grounds.



82  
Love to my dear Father, Emily, Louisa, Mary  
& all the family also to G<sup>d</sup>. Hamme. Aunt  
Sophy & Uncle, & till next opportunity  
believe me your ever loving & affectionate son  
Clifford

P.S. As I rightly expected, I sat my  
Xmas dinner in solitude as outlying  
picket, with the Enemy's force that occa-  
sionally playing at long snobs outside  
my tent. However, this did not prevent  
my thinking of you all, & drinking  
all your healths in a bumper of Beer!!  
No other liquor to be had - I hope  
you'll be able to make out this book  
for letter is no name for it, but I have  
written it as legibly as the worst of ink  
& pen can enable me to do

Reproduction of last page of letter (actual size 210mm\*133mm - very nearly A5).

[For summary of Mechem's later career see introductory note in previous Journal]

# 150 years on: the secrets of William and Stuart William Howard

*By Ian Howard*

While 2007 marked the 150th anniversary of the Indian Mutiny and the beginning of the British Raj, the period during which the Crown assumed direct control of the Indian subcontinent, on a personal level it was also 150 years since my great-grandfather joined the Bengal Artillery and left British shores for India. On 29 June 1857, William Howard, allegedly aged 23yrs 4 months, height 5'11', of sallow complexion, hazel eyes and brown hair, enlisted at Westminster for twelve years' service with the East India Company. According to the Register of Recruits<sup>1</sup>, he was born in Aberdeen (Old Machar) and had been a clerk. On 4 July he marched to the depot<sup>2</sup> and on 28 July sailed on the *Sir Robert Sale*<sup>3</sup> arriving on 25 November for a lifetime in India.

Regrettably, it was only after my father, William's grandson, died in 1994 - in Scotland, his ancestral home - that I was inspired to discover his family's roots. It was 2000, however, before early retirement enabled me to embark on the research which answered many questions, yet posed so many more. How often have I wished he was still around so I could share and enjoy the results of my research with him - and quiz him about the secrets that remain. But that, alas, is the sorrow in family history research - you usually start too late!

## First steps

Apart from barely remembered family legends and a number of mostly unidentified, but sometimes recognisable, old photos, a few documents nevertheless provided vital early clues:

- my father's original baptismal certificate - Stuart Roy Thomson Howard, baptised in St. Peter's Church, Panchgani, India on 23 June 1913, born 19 May 1913, parents Stuart William and Mabel Violet Howard, father an Engineer.
- a scrap of paper, about 5x3in, headed 'Family Register' with the dates of birth of five Howard children, one of whom I recognised as my grandfather, Stuart William Howard, born 4 October 1873. It also recorded the births of two Rossiter girls - the significance of which mystified me at the time.
- a postcard photo of my grandfather, in army uniform, 'to Stuart [my father], to wish you a happy New Year. Your Daddy'. Dated New Year's Day 1920 from the 'NWF Field Force, Landi Kotal'.
- my grandmother's passport, issued in November 1924 at Camp Ajmer by the 'Agent to the Governor-General, Rajputana' with the observation 'travelling to Kenya Colony to join her husband' with her son [my father]. The stamp in the passport shows they landed at Mombasa on 22 November 1924. Two years later, when my father was thirteen, they came to England - but without my grandfather, of whom the only later evidence is:-
- a very formal letter sent to my father for his 21st birthday in 1934, addressed 'My dear Stuart' and signed 'your affectionate father, S.W. Howard'. It was written on headed notepaper from the Grand Oriental Hotel, Colombo, Ceylon. The name of the hotel was crossed out, and underneath was inserted 'c/o Messrs. Thos Cook & Son Ltd'.

Searching the internet, led me to Cathy Day's invaluable Family History in India website, and then the Rootsweb India List. I posted a note on the List summarising what I knew. By return, I received four replies filling in small but significant gaps in my knowledge. Then a fifth, from Donald Jaques, with details not only of my grandparents' marriage in 1906 but my grandmother's line right back to 1800, complete with source

<sup>1</sup> IOR: L/MIL/9/8. Register of Recruits.

<sup>2</sup> That would have been Warley in Essex, where coincidentally I spent the last 7 of 30 years with the Ford Motor Company, my office overlooking the Essex Regiment Chapel originally built by the EIC in 1857. For a short history of the military at Warley, see *FIBIS Journal* 9 (Spring 2003).

<sup>3</sup> IOR: L/MIL/9/34. Depot Register.

references from the India Office at the British Library. Clearly I needed to get to this goldmine myself - I got my 5-year reader's ticket in May 2001 and spent many a day there - until moving from Essex to Devon in 2004 made regular day trips impossible. I was quickly able to confirm the birth and baptismal dates for the five Howard children on the 'Family Register' and soon found the record of William Howard's marriage at Bareilly in 1859 to Margaret Rossiter, the widowed daughter of Patrick Wall.<sup>4</sup> Her origins [perhaps Ireland?] and the fate of her first husband have so far eluded me, but at least I had an explanation for the two Rossiter births on the 'Family Register' - Elizabeth Catherine Rossiter (b.1853) and Helen Rossiter (b.1855).

### William Howard (1834?-1912)

William was described in his marriage record as a Pay Serjeant, H.M. Bengal Artillery. Muster rolls show that he arrived four months after sailing, on 25 November 1857. He was posted to the 1st Company, 5th Battalion, of the Bengal Artillery, where he rose from Gunner (1858) to Corporal (1859), Sergeant (1860), and then Quarter Master Sergeant (1861)<sup>5</sup> at which point power was transferred to the British Army and he volunteered for General Service.<sup>6</sup> From 1865 William Howard is shown by *Thacker*, and later by his children's baptismal records, as Head Clerk to the Political Agent in Jeypore until at least 1876.

William and Margaret's five children from the 'Family Register', together with information found in the Ecclesiastical and other records at the India Office, were:

- Joyce Howard (b.1860 Bareilly) - nothing further yet known.
- Henry Charles Howard (b.1862 Agra) - married in 1887 in Allahabad to Mary Annie Burbridge; she died 6 years later in an 'accident' at Banda. In 1896, aged 34, he married 19 year old Agnes Isabella Mary Park. By 1900 he had become Head Clerk in the Office of the Commissioner at Allahabad <sup>7</sup> and died in Allahabad in 1904 aged 42.
- William Conrad Howard (b.1869, Jeypore) - died in 1873 aged 3. He is buried in Agra.
- Stuart William Howard (b.1873 Jeypore) - my grandfather.
- Arthur George Oscar Howard (b.1876 Jeypore) - became Assistant Commissioner in the Salt Revenue Dept. and died at Kohat (NWFP) in 1929. The records of Deaths of Uncovenanted Civil Servants<sup>8</sup> confirm he married but I have found no confirmation of his wife's name. Consecutive entries in *Thacker's* directories document his career:

1902-3	Asst, Didwana salt source, Jodhpur, Rajputana
1904-7	Asst Supdt N.I. Salt Rev., Worthganj Depot, Jhelum
1908-10	Asst Supdt N.I. Salt Rev., Kalabagh, Jhelum
1911-12	Supdt, Sambhar Salt Lake, Marwar
1915-16	Supdt and pers asst to commsr, N.I. Salt Rev Dept, Agra (on leave)
1919	Supdt, N.I. Salt Rev, Sambhar
1920-21	Supdt, PWD, Jaipur State, Rajputana
1922	Asst Commsr, N.I. Salt Rev Dept, Ghazipur
1923	Asst Commsr, N.I. Salt Rev Dept, Khewrah, Jhelum
1924	Asst Commsr, N.I. Salt Rev Dept, Ghazipur

<sup>4</sup> IOR: N/1/96/257. Bengal Marriages.

<sup>5</sup> IOR: L/MIL/10/180, 182, 184, 185. Bengal Artillery Muster Rolls.

<sup>6</sup> IOR: L/MIL/10/325. Bengal Artillery, Volunteers for General Service.

<sup>7</sup> IOR: L/F/10/207. Annual List of Uncovenanted Servants, North Western Provinces.

<sup>8</sup> IOR: L/AG/34/14A/14, ff 117/117A.

Burial registers record the death of a William Howard in Allahabad in 1912, a Government Pensioner 'aged 70 years'.<sup>9</sup> Margaret, 'widow of late Mr W. Howard, Pensioner Jaipur Estate [State]', died in Allahabad in

1921 'aged 81'.<sup>10</sup> Taken together, I may reasonably assume these are my great-grandparents, though their ages introduce a degree of uncertainty, as will be apparent later.



### Stuart William Howard (1873-193?)

My grandfather, Stuart William, was the fourth of William and Margaret's five children. He was born in Jeypore on 4 October 1873 and married Mabel Violet Rix in Girgaum, Bombay on 31 December 1906.<sup>11</sup> Mabel's father, Walter Burton Rix, joined the EIC army at Westminster in 1860<sup>12</sup> and was posted to the Bombay Engineers, but soon joined the PWD so it seems likely that they met through a mutual involvement in engineering projects.<sup>13</sup>

In his 1934 letter to my father, Stuart William had quoted his school's motto *Labore et Constantia* which an internet search revealed to be the motto of La Martinière school, so I presumed he had been there, but I wanted to know how he had then come to be trained as a railway engineer. Years later, I now recall how I pencilled, set aside, and then 'buried', a note to check on the Roorkee Engineering College. For the time being, however, I was grateful again to *Thacker's* for evidence of his early career:

1897-98	Asst Eng'r, Indian Midland Railway, Jhansi
1899	Asst Eng'r, Indian Midland Railway, Adhrrar
1900-01	Asst Eng'r, Indian Midland Railway, Damoh
1906	Asst Eng'r, Khurda Dst. Bengal & Nagpur Railway, Waltair
1908	Asst Eng'r, B.N. Ry (on leave)
1915	Asst Eng'r Itarsi Nagpur ry constr. divn. G.I.P.Ry, Kalmeshwar
1916-17	Asst. Eng'r, Yeotmal, C.P

Cross-referenced against the invaluable history of the Indian Railways on the IRFCA website, these entries provided my first connection with the inscription on a family heirloom, a ceremonial trowel - 'Weinganga Bridge foundation stone laid 25<sup>th</sup> March 1906' - corresponding with the opening of the narrow-gauge Bengal-Nagpur-Railway (BNR) line from Gondia to Nagbhir across the Wainganga river in 1908.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> IOR: N/1/383/314. Bengal Burials.

<sup>10</sup> IOR: N/1/453/251. Bengal Burials.

<sup>11</sup> IOR: N/3/96/279. Bombay Marriages.

<sup>12</sup> IOR: L/MIL/12/116. Registers of the Bombay Army.

<sup>13</sup> For an account of the Rix family in India, see *FIBIS Journal* 9 (Spring 2003) - it needs updating.

<sup>14</sup> Indian Railways Fan Club [www.irfca.org](http://www.irfca.org)

Likewise, the record of his marriage in December 1906 showed him resident in Purulia (NW of Calcutta) - the narrow-gauge line opened from there to Ranchi in 1907.<sup>15</sup>

I also found a railway connection for this postcard photo he sent of himself to his seven year old son from Landi Kotal on New Year's Day 1920 - it was the year construction of the Peshawar to Landi Kotal railway commenced, up the infamous Khyber Pass to the Afghan border. Six months earlier, in July 1919, he had been given a temporary commission as a 2nd lieutenant in the Infantry Branch of the Indian Army Reserve of Officers.<sup>16</sup> But medal ribbons point to earlier service and already he was in the uniform of a Captain. A chance find via the A2A website explained his rapid advancement. In a memorandum to Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India (Simla, 28 June 1918), the Chief Commissioners in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan wrote:

having recently represented that it was desirable, as far as possible, that British Officers with the Frontier Militias and Levy Corps in their respective provinces should not be below the rank of Captain in view of the responsible duties they are called upon to perform, [they had] sanctioned the grant of the temporary rank of Captain to all Indian Army Reserve Officers doing duty with their corps.<sup>17</sup>

## Secrets Uncovered

And there my knowledge of my grandfather's life and career as an engineer might have languished, had it not been for a totally fortuitous discovery made whilst visiting my mother in Scotland in August 2007. Investigating some unwelcome signs of woodworm, I retrieved from the back of an old wardrobe (presumably where my father had left it years ago) a cardboard tube with his Institutional certificates of qualification as a Surveyor and Valuer. But rolled up inside them were several certificates of *his* father's, including (mindful of my long-ignored 'to-do' note!) Stuart William's qualification as an Assistant Engineer from the Thomason College of Civil Engineering at Roorkee in March 1895 and associate membership of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) gained in April 1908. The ICE could not have been more helpful and I was soon in receipt of a remarkable copy of my grandfather's original application form setting out in considerable detail his early training and engineering experience. Also a 6-page contribution by him, published in the Minutes of the Proceedings of the ICE in 1911 evidencing his subsequent experience in the Sudan and the West Coast of Africa, which until then had been mere family legend.

He had indeed completed his education at La Martinière (1890-92), trained as an engineer at Roorkee (1892-95) and joined the Indian Midland Railway (1896-99), working on open lines before moving to construction as Assistant Engineer on the Damoh-Katni Division:

The works were extremely heavy, consisting of very high banks and deep rock cuttings, with four large viaducts, the largest - the Bhoja Koh - consisting of five spans of 100 feet, with piers over 110 feet high, flanked at both ends with arched approaches; the girders of this viaduct were lifted into place from the ground level, with wire rope tackle and gantries on the piers.

In 1899 he joined the Ludhiana-Dhuri-Jakhal Railway construction and:

held charge of a sub-division 20 miles in length, in addition to having temporary charge of another sub-division 10 miles in length. He completed all the earthwork, bridging, staff quarters, and the greater portion of the station buildings, ash pits, tank houses, etc., as well as collecting the greater portion of the ballast for the sub-divisions for the year.

His application to the ICE further relates how, in 1900, he joined the Irrigation Branch of the PWD - reinforcing the likelihood that it was there he met his future father-in-law, Walter Burton Rix. In December

---

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Indian Army List*; also *London Gazette* 14 Nov 1919.

<sup>17</sup> IOR: L/PS/11/138, p3526.

1904 he joined the B.N.R and was temporarily in charge of surveying the route of the narrow-gauge Gondia-Chanda line through the Satpura Hills and across the Wainganga River.

I was able to take up the narrative from the website of the South East Railway, the successor to the B.N.R.<sup>18</sup> Construction of the line started in 1905 and it was opened as far as Nagbhir in November 1908. Special mention is made of the Wainganga Bridge: '14 spans of 100ft each and 6 spans of 170ft each'. Girders were removed from another broad-gauge bridge and 'had to be strengthened as the narrow-gauge track concentrates the load more in the centre of the cross-girder'.

Stuart William's application concludes 'I am at present at home on leave for six months - 21.6.07' - he had actually just married Mabel Violet Rix. But the ICE had further snippets to divulge, as did the recently digitised records of passenger departures from the UK.<sup>19</sup> In July 1908, his first appearance in the ICE membership list, his address was recorded as Sudan Government Railways, Port Sudan. Family legend relates that Mabel was one of the first white women to live in Port Sudan. Then, in April 1911 he was on the list of passengers sailing on the S.S. *Aro* from Liverpool to the Gold Coast, and in February 1912 his address was recorded by the ICE as changing from c/o the Government Railway Survey, Accra, to 46 Leinster Square, Bayswater 'for 4 months'. Indeed, in May, he and Mabel returned on the P&O *Multan* from London to Bombay.

### Their Enduring Secrets?

I am now a firm believer in serendipity! That chance find in the back of an old wardrobe has led to numerous pieces of jigsaw puzzle coming together to help build quite a comprehensive life chapter. A year after their return to India, in May 1913, Stuart William and Mabel's only child, my father, Stuart Roy Thomson Howard, was born in Panchgani, a hill station to the south-east of Bombay. From Mabel's passport I know she left India to join her husband in Kenya in 1924 - apparently a number of railway engineers went there from India. My father spoke fondly of school in Nairobi, but by 1926, he and his mother, alas without his father, were in England. Whether my grandfather returned to India, or went directly to Ceylon, from where he wrote on my father's 21st birthday in 1934, I cannot tell. Moreover, old Ceylon records are notoriously inaccessible and I fear the chances of finding any evidence of Stuart William's ultimate fate are slim.

However, my greatest frustration has been my failure - so far - to confirm William Howard's Scottish roots. From his enlistment record I have his *place* of birth - Old Machar, Aberdeen. That at least fits with family legend. It also gives his *alleged age* - 23 years 4 months in June 1857. That would put his date of birth in February 1834. Unfortunately, his age given at his death in Allahabad in 1912 (assuming this is the correct William Howard) states '70' - clearly an approximation since that would otherwise fix his year of birth as 1842 and therefore age on enlistment at 15 and marriage at just 17. From the record of his marriage to Margaret Rossiter in 1859 I have his *father's name*, Henry. I even have his *mother's name* from a later discovered inscription, hidden inside the cover of a family bible: '*Presented with love to Margaret Howard by her mother-in-law Janet - April 1870*'. There is nothing to suggest any particular significance in this date, but if William and Margaret were in India, and Henry and Janet were still in Aberdeen, how did the bible come to be handed over? Was it sent by mail or by hand? Did William perhaps return briefly to Scotland? Or his wife? With three children aged ten down to six months? Or did Henry and Janet visit India? If we are to believe his age on enlistment, then William would have been 36 in 1870. So his parents might have been 55-60 - not an age in those days for such an adventure. On the other hand, the Suez Canal had just opened in November 1869 so did one couple or the other make an early inaugural passage?

---

<sup>18</sup> [www.serailway.gov.in/general/book\\_rrb/satpura\\_lines.htm](http://www.serailway.gov.in/general/book_rrb/satpura_lines.htm)

<sup>19</sup> to be found at [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com)

I can find no William Howard birth in Aberdeen around 1834. *But there is a problem* - family legend (so far proved to be pretty reliable) further has it that he changed his name when he went to India. His name may originally have been Thomson. Indeed, my father was baptised Stuart Roy Thomson Howard. And there was a William Thomson baptised in Aberdeen in December 1830 - parent's names Henry Thomson and Janet née Matthews. Could this be them? If he lied about his name, could he not also have lied about his age? But that would mean he died aged 82, not '70' and enlisted at 26, not '23'. His marriage record unfortunately simply states 'full age'. Then I also have the record of his wife Margaret's death in Allahabad in 1921, allegedly aged 81 - but how plausible is even this, since it would mean she was but thirteen in 1853 when she had her first daughter, Elizabeth Catherine Rossiter, by her first husband?

I found the Thomson family in the 1851 census at 9 Bon Accord Street, Aberdeen. Henry, 50, was a cashier (with the Steam Navigation Company) born in Dunfermline, Fife. Janet, also 50, was born in Aberdeen. With them were 8 children, including William (20, a clerk). That this William described himself as a clerk, as did my William Howard when he enlisted in 1857, was encouraging, but possibly coincidence? In the Aberdeen Central Library's run of Post Office Directories, I was able to follow Henry continuously from 1834 through to 1857. There were no later entries for him. Again, was it coincidence that my William Howard enlisted that same year?

I have yet to study the Scottish 1861 census and BMDs. If nothing else, 'positively' finding this William Thomson would eliminate him from further research. However, if he is missing, it might indicate (though not conclusively) that he is the man who went to India in 1857. One other thought - if my great-grandfather did indeed change his name, then the inscription inside the family bible: '*Presented with love to Margaret Howard by her mother-in-law Janet – April 1870*' would show that his mother knew of it by then.

## Conclusion

Writing this narrative, I am amazed how much I *do* now know about my grandfather and great-grandfather. The conclusion of William Howard's service (with the Royal Artillery?) and his appointment to the Jeypore Political Agency remain to be discovered, as does anything of Stuart William's early military record and his decorations. An initial search of Pension records at the India Office has revealed nothing of either of their later lives. *But the ICE papers have betrayed one final dramatic clue* - the contact address given for Stuart William on his election record in 1908 was 11 Springbank Terrace, ABERDEEN. There surely can have been no other reason for his visiting Aberdeen than family connections! According to street directories for the period<sup>20</sup>, the occupant was a Mrs M'Laren [sic]. Perhaps the address was simply lodgings, but the possibility that Mrs M'Laren herself was a relative - perhaps a married aunt or cousin - has provided a further enticing lead. So I remain hopeful .....

---

<sup>20</sup> With thanks to the Aberdeen and North East Scotland Family History Society.



# Searching for Allen, Alan or Allan Buchanan and his MC

By Jean Mitchell and Lawrie Butler

[This article indicates the difficulties of tracing a soldier who rose from the ranks of the British Army to become a Captain in the Royal Garrison Artillery, based in India; and who left the Army around 1920 – as we shall see, a critical date for location of records. His father was in the British Army, joined the Unattached List in India, and on promotion to Conductor was absorbed into the Indian Army, receiving a pension in England alongside Doctors and Vicars!]

Jean Mitchell (FIBIS member MIT-0925) wrote to me (Lawrie Butler) in Aug 2006 saying she was trying to trace the details

of where and when my grandfather Allen (or Alan) William Buchanan and my great grandfather James Buchanan were born. I know that Allen Buchanan was born on 7 Mar 1876 [see below] but I do not know my great grandfather's date of birth. Both served in the Army in India and both were married there. I believe they were both born in Ireland, probably in Ulster. Allen died in N.W. India in 1924, by which time he had been promoted to Captain.

Jean attached copies of her grandparents' marriage certificate (where he is shown as English) marrying Amy Bevan in Jutogh in 1912, and the birth certificates of their two sons, Alan Dixon and Henry Sydney, the first of which shows the father as Allen and English and the second as Alan and Irish. From these latter certificates we also knew that Allen/Alan Buchanan, No 5637 was a Sergeant and later Battery Sergeant Major in the 5th and 4th Mountain Batteries of the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA), part of the Royal Artillery (RA) based in turn at Jutogh and Quetta. The marriage certificate also showed that his father was James Buchanan, an Army Pensioner in 1911, but of which Army (Indian or British) was not known. Initial enquiries at the British Library showed the burial details of Capt A W Buchanan who died on 30 July 1924, at Mhow, Central India.<sup>1</sup> His records were not shown in the L/MIL/14 series<sup>2</sup>, so often used for the service details of British officers and men who served in India post 1895, neither was he shown in the restricted files of the same reference.

Campaign: "1914-18 Star"		(A) Where decoration was earned.		
		*(B) Present situation.		
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)
(A) BUCHANAN	RA	2/Lt		
(B) ALLAN	R.G.A.			
Action taken		30 N/5.14/1: Capt		
Theatrical Mar		Oct 1915		
Marrying Date		5.04/9/2282		

(S 34 48) W231-HP6090 500,000 4/18 HWY(P240) K005 NW/5/32515 (OVER)

At the National Archives (TNA), I received confirmation that it was possible that an officer could be shown in the WW1 Medal Index Cards (MICs).<sup>3</sup> Amongst numerous Buchanans, I eventually found 2ndLt/Capt Allan Buchanan, Royal Garrison Artillery, Mountain Battery No 6. This Buchanan obviously was the one we wanted, and to avoid further confusion the Allan spelling is now used in the rest of this article. I looked in WO 25/76 Officers Records, and found nothing. Since Allan was probably the holder of a Temporary Commission, the opinion of the

Senior Researcher at TNA was that nothing further was likely to be found in records relating to regular officers. I therefore checked the record series WO 374 (Territorial Army Officers and those with Temporary Commissions). Two A Buchanans were found but both were Andrews. At this stage, having noted the comments of the Senior Researcher, no search was made of the record series WO338 Regular Army and Emergency Reserve Officers.

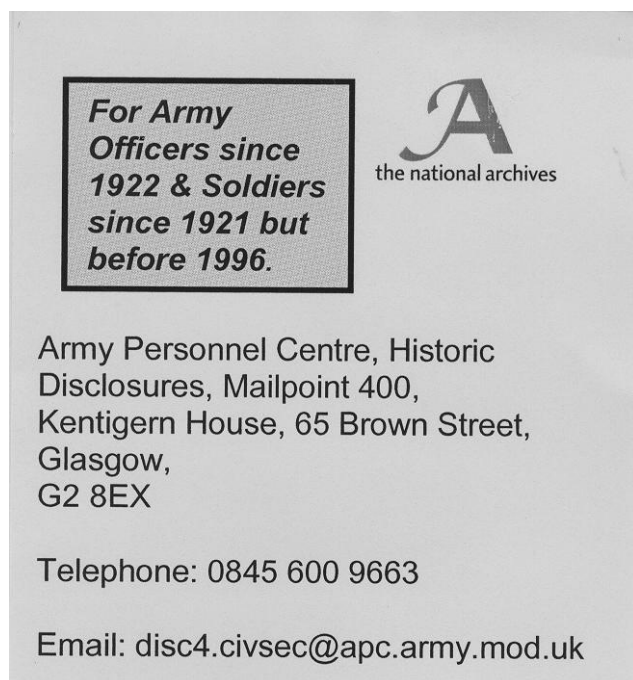
<sup>1</sup> IOR: N/1/479/268.

<sup>2</sup> See 'Biographical Sources within the L/MIL/14 Series', *FIBIS Journal* 14, pp41-48.

<sup>3</sup> These cards show campaign medal records of WW1 and are available as microfiches at TNA or online on the Documents Online section of the TNA website (see illustration).



I then looked at the quarterly (British) Army List.<sup>4</sup>



**For Army  
Officers since  
1922 & Soldiers  
since 1921 but  
before 1996.**

the national archives

Army Personnel Centre, Historic  
Disclosures, Mailpoint 400,  
Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street,  
Glasgow,  
G2 8EX

Telephone: 0845 600 9663

Email: [disc4.civsec@apc.army.mod.uk](mailto:disc4.civsec@apc.army.mod.uk)

Page 1531a of Apr 1916. showed Second Lieutenants (2nd Lts) including details of Allan Buchanan - born 7 Mar 1876; who had served in the ranks for 20 years 127 days. He was appointed 2nd Lt, Royal Artillery 12 Jan 1915. Page 1048 of the July 1918 Army List gave updated details - Allan Buchanan MC (Military Cross); promoted Lt 12 May 1916; acting Capt RA., 12 Aug 1917 and on 2 Nov 1917 promoted to Captain. The Army List of Jan 1922 did not show him at all - this omission coincided with the huge reduction of the Armed Forces after WW1. But this date did indicate that it would be futile to investigate further for Allan's records at the Army Personnel Centre, Glasgow.<sup>5</sup>

And there the research might well have ended. There appeared to be no prospect of success in searching for Allan and this was at a time when my wife was incapacitated and I had to cut down on the time spent on research. However in June

2007, spurred on by Jean, I decided to pursue the award of the MC and the whereabouts of a citation. I went to [www.gazettes-online.co.uk](http://www.gazettes-online.co.uk), selected 'London Gazette' and followed the instructions 'Search Archives' to a box labelled 'FIND'. I entered Allan Buchanan, WW1 1914-1920 and in particular 1 Jan 1914 - 31 Dec 1918 and clicked 'Search'. There was one result in Gazette Edition Issue 29091 5 Mar 1915: -

*Regular Forces- Royal Garrison Artillery- dated 12 Jan 1915*

*The following Warrant and Non-commissioned Officers to be Second Lieutenants*

*Battery Serjeant [sic] Major Allan Buchanan*

Allan of course was a Battery Sergeant Major when his second son was born in Quetta in 1914. But I was mystified at the lack of further information regarding his promotion and specifically the award of the MC. I emailed the London Gazette pointing out my dilemma and asking whether they could explain the lack of information on Allan's promotions and the award of the MC. After a reminder I received an email (3 Jul 2007) saying:

that's because the current online archive is rubbish at doing specific searches and is due to be overhauled shortly with a newer site.<sup>6</sup>

So there was no future in pursuing that line of enquiry. I went back to the TNA. William Spencer in his book on medals<sup>7</sup> suggests that a very useful reference book is Hayward's *Honours and Awards, Indian Army, August 1914-August 1921*<sup>8</sup>. Whilst I found a Temporary Captain A Buchanan with an MC, he was in the Royal Fusiliers and definitely not our man. I then went through all the MC sections of the *London Gazette* 1915-1918 without any luck. Meanwhile Spencer says records concerning the Military Cross can be found in the series WO 389. WO389/1-8 show the awards as they were published in the Gazette

<sup>4</sup> The British Army Lists showing Officers of all Regiments were published both quarterly and monthly over the War years but the amount of information shown does not always agree.

<sup>5</sup> See illustration for note given out by TNA research section indicating cut-off dates for writing to Glasgow.

<sup>6</sup> The site has now been revamped but in the author's opinion it is no more friendly to use.

<sup>7</sup> *Medals: the researcher's guide* (Kew, The National Archives, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Published by J B Hayward [1979] on open shelves in IOR Reading Room at OIR.355.134.

while WO 389/9-24 is a name index providing name, rank, unit and gazette date. WO 389/10 covers the names Bem–Bury but there was no A Buchanan with an MC in the RGA.

What to do now? The TNA have an exceptionally useful series of ‘*How to find....*’ leaflets, and I turned again to leaflet 2b previously used to try to locate TA Officers and those with Temporary Commissions. It goes on to give directions on how to locate **Regular** Army and Emergency Reserve Officers which, it will be recalled, I had ignored first time round on the assumption that Allan had only a Temporary Commission:

-

Find the list marked WO 338

Look for the range of surnames... 1901-1922 Bo-By

And note the number in the left column – 3

Obtain film WO 338/3

Look for the name of the officer on folio 237 which reads

*Buchanan M.C Allan, RGA ref 44446 2nd Lt*

and note the ‘long number’ – 44446

Go to the WO 339 lists and locate the long number after which, note the number in the left column – 23965

Then order up by a terminal WO 339/23965 – this is an original record – a buff file(s).

At last I had struck gold.

### The Service Record of Captain Allan Buchanan

Typically, these service records contain one, two or three, or more - in this case eight - files with much duplication so the following is a précis of events in date order.

His attestation certificate notes:

5637 A Buchanan Royal Artillery.

Born Karkee [*sic*], in Presidency of Bengal.

Age 18 years 6 mths.

Attested 7 Sep 1894.

5’ 9”, fresh complexion, grey eyes, brown hair.

Examined in Belfast 7 Sep 1894.

Enlisted for 7 yrs in Army and 5 yrs in reserve.

Joined Army at Fort Rowner (Portsmouth) 8 Sep 1894.

Promoted B S M 11 Oct 1912.

Home service	7 Sep 1894 – 9 Apr 1897	2 yrs 215 days
Malta	10 Apr 1897- 22 Apr 1897	13
Crete	23 Apr 1897 – 24 Nov 1897	216
Malta	25 Nov 1897 – 29 Dec 1897	35
India	30 Dec 1897- 11 Jan 1915	<u>17 yrs 13 days</u>
Total service prior	to commission	20yrs 127 days

Long service and good conduct medal with gratuity, General Order 117 of 1915.

Appointed 2nd Lt 12 Jan 1915.

A letter from Allan to the Army requests that his proper names should be used - Allan William, not Allen.

All his family details are included: -

Married Amy Bevan St Michael's Church, Jutogh, 14 Jun 1911, W G Thomas, Chaplain. Added to Marriage Roll [i.e. Amy was now officially recognised by the Army].

Children	Alan Dixon	born 8 May 1912, Jutogh; bapt Jutogh 2 Jun 1912
	Henry Sidney [ <i>sic</i> ]	born 12 Jan 1914 Quetta; bapt Quetta 8 Mar 1914
Father	James	154 Hillman Street, Belfast
	and wife Caroline	
Brother	James	
Sister	Henriette	

### The end of Allan Buchanan's army life

A letter in the file, dated 18 Jan 1921 reads: -

Capt A Buchanan MC RGA will attain the age of 45 yrs on 6 Mar 1921 and in accordance with Article 558 of Royal Warrant for Pay will be compulsorily retired.

The wheels towards retirement were set in motion. He embarked for UK from Bombay 25 Jun 1921, arriving Tilbury 19 Jul 1921 via the *Neuralia*. His UK address is shown as 34 Lowther Road, Preston Drive, Brighton. He was retiring on a pension of £165.00 per annum, but he was concerned with finding a home and another job to augment it.

In a letter dated 10 Oct 1921 to the Army, Allan states that he has been offered the post of Secretary to the Club at Mhow, Central India and requests permission to return to India via the *Neuralia* on 21 Oct 1921. This was sanctioned provided he returned as a civilian with his own passport and kept the War Office informed of his address. Later his family returned to England for the sake of the boys' schooling, travelling from Bombay on the *Princess* on the 2 Mar 1922.

Then in a letter to Mrs A W Buchanan, the Mhow Club informs her that her husband had died on the 21 Sep 1924. In due course his personal effects were sent back to England and his wife on checking them noted that the MC medal and ribbon were not included. Amy wrote to the Army querying this and received a reply saying that *the entry (of Capt Buchanan's MC) in the Army List was 'in error' and was very much regretted !* - a surprising admission since Army correspondence to him for some time had been in the name of Capt Buchanan, MC.

Later, Amy applied for her son, Alan Dixon, to be admitted to the Duke of York's Military School at Dover but Army regulations did not permit this since the father's death was not during his Army Service. However on 9 May 1927, Alan Dixon (at the age of 15) was accepted for enlistment in the Royal Artillery at Woolwich, so beginning at least a third generation's service in the Royal Artillery (see below for the first). Jean adds that Alan Dixon, her uncle (known as Dick) and her own father Henry Sydney (known as Buck) both returned to India with the Army in 1935, staying there until 1939 when they returned to fight in Europe in WW2. Dick died following service in Sicily in April 1944 and Henry died in action at Arnhem in Sept 1944 while serving as a Captain with the Airborne Forces. Truly an Army family (like so many) that had given much in defence of crown and country.

### And what about his father, James Buchanan, Army Pensioner ?

We know from Allan's attestation particulars that he was born in 'Karkee' [sic], Bengal and that his parents were James and Caroline. There is no known Army depot Karkee in Bengal but there is a Kirkee in Bombay presidency. The Bombay baptism entry<sup>9</sup> reads: -

Bapt 9 Feb 1877, born 28 Dec 1876  
Allan William Andrew, son of James and Caroline Buchanan  
Abode Kirkee  
Father's occupation Magazine Sergeant  
R Easum, Chaplain

The post of Magazine Sergeant would commonly be occupied by someone on the Unattached List (i.e. unattached from his Regiment). The Muster List of 1876<sup>10</sup> taken at Poona on 1 Apr 1876 shows James Buchanan as Sergeant in the Ordnance Dept and previously from the 6th Brigade of Artillery. The first mention of Sergt Buchanan on the Unattached List is on 31 Dec 1874<sup>11</sup> so he must have arrived in India pre 1874. With a birth in Kirkee, I then checked for James's marriage – which took place<sup>12</sup> on 19 Nov 1873 at Colaba when he married a widow Caroline Andrews, née Fitzgerald. James's father is shown as Andrew. Their first child was a girl named Henrietta Jane, born 10 Sep 1874<sup>13</sup> and the third was a boy named James Alexander born 26 Aug 1880<sup>14</sup>.

Checking the red *India List* volumes under Ordnance Dept, J Buchanan is shown as having been promoted to Sub-Conductor on 29 Dec 1879 and to Conductor on 11 Aug 1881 - 'specially promoted for service in Afghan War', and then pensioned on 11 Aug 1887.<sup>15</sup> But once soldiers on the Unattached List were promoted to the Sub-Conductor and Conductor levels they were absorbed into the Indian Army and in due course received their pensions from India. Curiously, these Warrant Officers are shown in the same register as Medical and Ecclesiastical Staff.<sup>16</sup> As Establishment No 176, Conductor James Buchanan (Ordnance) is shown as receiving £90 per annum from 3 Sep 1887. His first money draft was sent to 66 Chapel St., Cookstown, Tyrone, Ireland, later changed to Rock Lodge, Tullyhogue, Tyrone. Tyrone was in fact the county of his birth - on 17 June 1841 at Gortalowry, a fact unearthed from the Griffiths Valuation Records<sup>17</sup> by a friend of Jean's. There is an interesting note on the Pensions register mentioned above - 'deduct 1/- per day from 3 Sep – 9 Oct 1887 on account of messing on S/S *Huzara*' - presumably the ship on which he returned from India, with his wife and children.

Looking for his later pension records proved tedious – after 1893 there is no mention. In fact there are Medical and Ecclesiastical staff only, yet the *Indian Army List* still shows him as a pensioner up to 1912. There is however another series of Warrant Officers' Pension Records<sup>18</sup> and the records 1920-1925 show James's death in Brighton on 21 Jan 1922 – he had indeed had a long retirement.

---

<sup>9</sup> IOR: N/3/51/20.

<sup>10</sup> IOR: L/MIL/12/234.

<sup>11</sup> IOR: L/MIL/12/232.

<sup>12</sup> IOR: N/3/47/402.

<sup>13</sup> IOR: N/3/48/251.

<sup>14</sup> IOR: N/3/54/303.

<sup>15</sup> IOR: *India List* Jan 1881, Jul 1882, and Jan 1888 (in the last shown under 'Casualties' (i.e. change of status).

<sup>16</sup> IOR: L/AG/21/15/26. Bombay, Medical, Ecclesiastical and Warrant Officers.

<sup>17</sup> Griffiths Valuation Records: initially a survey to assess liability for poor rates carried out from 1847-1865. See [www.myirishancestry.com](http://www.myirishancestry.com) and Mark D Herber, *Ancestral Trails: the complete guide to British genealogy and family history*, 2nd edn (Stroud, Sutton, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> IOR: L/AG/21/13/49. Warrant Officers' Pensions.

### **James Buchanan's early life**

More than one attempt has been made to locate James via TNA records but without success. It is likely that his attestation records followed him to India and when he was promoted to the Conductor rank his records were transferred to the Indian Army. But at least we have located full details of Allan and everything possible about James except the exact date of his arrival in India.

# **The Police Officer and the Dacoit: Freddy Young and Sultana the 'Robin Hood of British India'**

*By N C Shah<sup>1</sup>*

## **Introduction**

Frederick Young, CIE, CBE, ('Freddy') of the Indian Police was one of those larger than life characters who sometimes flit across the pages of our Indian Police history. He was born on 16 May 1890 in England possibly in Edinburgh. His father's name was John Young. He completed his education at George Watson College and then at Edinburgh University. He passed his Indian Police Examination in England, and reached India on 16 December 1909 to join the service as Assistant Superintendent on probation at Moradabad in the United Provinces (the 'U.P.' now Uttar Pradesh) and served among other places in Allahabad, Meerut, Gorakhpur, Bahraich, Jaunpur, Hardoi, Saharanpur and Roorkee. When in Gorakhpur from 1913 to 1916 he played an important role in exterminating the dacoits<sup>2</sup> of the Nepal Terai region, for which he was awarded the King's Police Medal in 1914. Later he was to capture a number of notorious dacoit gangs including the famous Sultana often called 'the Robin Hood of British India' from the Terai region of Kumaon, for which he was awarded the CIE in 1924.

This article summarizes the life and exploits of Freddy Young who did so much to eliminate the dacoits in the U.P., an important province of British India.

## **Service conditions in India**

During British rule in India, officers of the civil or police services were recruited in England and sent out to India. Here they had to work in very different conditions. They had to work in the field with Indian subordinates and among the Indian public where language was the main constraint. At Mussoorie a school was opened for British administrators to learn Hindi before joining their post.

Working conditions in those days in India were often hazardous as there were few proper roads and much of the country was covered with vast and dense forests harbouring dangerous animals such as tigers, snakes, etc, and one often had either to travel on foot or by horse to move from one place to another.

## **The problem of Dacoits**

Dacoity was quite prevalent in India in those days and to get rid of the dacoits was a major problem to be handled by the British administrators apart from their more routine duties. No doubt there were ordinary criminals who used to commit minor thefts and crimes. But in the U.P. at that time there was a particular class or tribe who were wholly criminals and whose main profession was dacoity which often led to murder. They were known as 'Bhantus', and to deal with them and other criminal tribes the British had had to open a number of 'reformatory centres' under the Criminal Tribes Act III of 1911. Another measure was to establish Salvation Army Settlement Camps at Najibabad and Fazalpur for 'lesser dacoits' to keep them away from the life of crime and to enable them to make an honest living. They were given large tracts of good cultivatable land on the bank of river Yamuna (or Jumna) in Meerut district. This fertile land even today produces bumper crops of sugar-cane, wheat, barley, rape seed and other cereals, but crime persisted because crime was the traditional way of life of the Bhantus. They specialized in the art of robbery and the old men in the settlement used to train the younger generation on a profit sharing business, subject to certain mutual commitments and understandings within the tribe, for example that the scene of the crime should be far away from the settlement, and that there should be no violence while

---

<sup>1</sup> The author is a retired scientist. He would welcome any feedback readers may have. Contact address: MS-78; Sector-"D", Aliganj, Lucknow-24, India. Email: drnshah@sancharnet.in.

<sup>2</sup> 'dacoity': gang robbery; 'dacoit': member of such a gang.

committing the crime. The Bhantus still exist but they are now engaged like other people in earning an honest livelihood.

### **Sultana Bhanu, the most notorious and intelligent Dacoit**

The Fort in Najibabad was one of the main centres established for settlement of the hard core Bhanu families. Here lived Sultana, a dashing, courageous and intelligent Bhanu who one night with two companions scaled the high walls of the fort and escaped, leaving his wife and infant son inside. In due course he assembled a gang of about a hundred high spirited young men armed with guns, swords and spears, and started robbing and looting rich landlords and businessmen. His area of operations extended from Gonda in the east to Saharanpur in the west (about 350 miles apart) in the U.P. including the Punjab border. He was nicknamed 'Sultana' from the word 'sultan' meaning 'the ruler'. He was short, stout and well built, with a dark complexion and wore a semi-military khaki uniform and he had certain moral characteristics and discipline seldom seen in a dacoit. For example, when one of his lieutenants abducted a newly wed bride, Sultana was upset as he had never approved of women being molested or raped. So he sent the bride back with a suitable present to compensate the inconvenience and agony which she and her relatives had suffered. Not only this, he never harassed Government servants, nor did he touch the Government till even though he could easily have looted all the treasuries in Terai and Bhabar which were very poorly guarded.

His activities steadily increased and the government was unable to cope with the situation. After committing a crime he used to hide with his whole gang in the dense forests of Terai and Bhabar, where dangerous wild beasts were common and where it was very difficult to trace him. He never troubled poor people; on the contrary, he helped them with money. Furthermore, he had a superb and widespread intelligence network, and among his faithful informers were the forest guards and other forest workers to whom he used to offer gifts of woollen blankets during the winter, food stuffs not available to them in the forest, and also money.

On the other hand, the police force in the district was sufficient only for routine maintenance of law and order, its intelligence network was very poor, and no proper funds were available to remunerate informers.

### **The Special Dacoity Police Force**

At that time, Percy Wyndham, a wise and tactful administrator, was the Commissioner of Kumaon.<sup>3</sup> In view of the insufficiency of the police in the district he asked the Government of the U.P. to create a Special Dacoity Police Force (SDPF) and requested the services of the young, energetic police officer, Freddy Young, who was at that time working as an Assistant Superintendent in Agra and had had experience of dealing with the dacoits in the Terai region of Nepal. The Government fully acceded to his request and Young assumed full charge of the SDPF in the year 1922. The force comprised 209 Constables, 35 Naiks, 39 Havaldar constables, eleven Inspectors, one Prosecuting Subedar, four Prosecuting Inspectors, two Deputy Superintendents, one Superintendent (Rai Bahadur Teerath Singh) and one Superintendent In-charge (Young): a total force of 303 persons.<sup>4</sup> The men were picked from all the districts of the U.P. by Freddy himself and by 1923 the force was fully established, trained, and ready for action.

### **First serious blow against Sultana**

After taking charge, Young conducted about fourteen raids and encounters up to Gorakhpur, Haridwar and in the Terai and Bhabar region to capture Sultana who had a reward on his head. A surprise attack on Sultana in daylight was not possible as he posted men in tree tops as lookouts and snipers, with a remarkable method of communication through relay signs - however far away he was he would get

---

<sup>3</sup> See *FIBIS Journal* 16 (Autumn 2006), pp46-48.

<sup>4</sup> U.P. Archives. Special Dacoity Force.

information within a short time and would change his hiding place. So Young decided to attempt raids at night. He had captured two of Sultana's Bhandu men who knew his permanent camp, a cattle station in the heart of the Najibabad forest, and on the basis of their information Young planned a major raid which he invited Jim Corbett to join.<sup>5</sup> The entire SDPF of about 300 men took part moving by night to avoid being spotted by Sultana's lookouts. After a hard march through swamped fields and thick jungle, a cordon was drawn round that section of the jungle in which the gang was said to have taken refuge. Before the cordon could be completed Young's party sighted two dacoit pickets and endeavoured to get between them and the gang. Unfortunately, this design was frustrated by an impetuous constable who opened fire on the pickets on his own. The main gang was thus alarmed and took to flight before the attacking party reached the camp. Though the raid had miscarried, Sultana's camp had been captured including eleven guns, a large quantity of ammunition, and stores of food for the gang. Corbett narrates that Sultana was much upset and annoyed since obtaining arms and ammunition was difficult, and three days after this incident Young received a satiric letter from him complaining that, since it appeared that shortages in the police force had necessitated a raid on his camp to loot arms and ammunition, in future if Young had any requirements, he should let Sultana know and he would be happy to supply him. This letter was no doubt intended to taunt Freddy but may also have been a sign of Sultana's growing anxiety.

### **The meeting of Young with Sultana in the forest**

According to Corbett,<sup>6</sup> following this raid, and with the gang now reduced to 40 out of 110, Young thought that in that condition Sultana might like to surrender and he therefore sent a proposal to him for a meeting to discuss the possibility. He had sought permission for such a meeting with Sultana, which the Government approved but at his own risk. The proposal was sent to Sultana to set his own terms and conditions for the time, date and venue. Sultana readily accepted the invitation but on condition that both of them would attend the meeting alone and unarmed.

It was therefore arranged that Freddy and Sultana would meet in a remote part of the jungle and discuss the situation. At the appointed time Young reached the meeting place as given by Sultana, which was under a big tree in an open space and the two men, the hunter and the hunted, sat down together. Young was there unarmed and alone at the mercy of Sultana but apparently he had complete faith in Sultana and the meeting was friendly:

one a mountain of energy and good humour with authority of the Government behind him, the other a dapper little man with a price on his head.

Sultana offered a watermelon, which he had brought with him and both relished, but unfortunately the meeting ended in a deadlock, for Sultana would not agree to surrender unconditionally. He wished that no case of murder be registered against him arguing that he had not killed anyone. Young refused the condition but said that he would try to secure that only the minimum punishment would be given to him. Both separated peacefully but before departing Sultana advised Young not to take undue risk with his life and he also told him that he had already spared his and Corbett's lives. However, this incident is not recorded in the official report submitted by Young to the Government.

### **Participation of Commissioner Wyndham in final raid to arrest Sultana<sup>7</sup>**

On this occasion Young invited Commissioner Wyndham, Jim Corbett, and others (including his nephew) to participate as volunteers who left Kankhal (near Hardwar) in the morning as a 'hunting party' in two boats. By this time the Sultana gang had been much reduced to only nine men. Two night marches were needed to reach Sultana's camp involving a hazardous passage by boat down a dangerous side channel of the Ganges, followed by a most arduous trek (graphically described by Corbett) through country which included

---

<sup>5</sup> The account which follows is largely based on Corbett's *My India*, pp108-118.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p119.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, pp120-130.



'the heaviest elephant grass I have ever tried to penetrate on foot'. At one point Wyndham displayed great courage by being the first to ford a fast flowing tributary, demonstrating to the rest that it could be crossed. Eventually the party approached the area of Sultana's camp only to find that the gang had left the previous evening on a raid but were expected to return soon. Wyndham now had to leave on official business, and Corbett also left intending to return with food for the party. This meant that Corbett was not present at the actual capture of Sultana on 14 December 1923, but according to his account, the night after his departure the force moved to cordon off the camp. Young crept up to the hut used by the cattle men and there saw someone asleep on a *charpoy* covered up by a bed-sheet. He slowly sat down on the cot, grabbed the sleeping person, and overpowered him in his arms so forcibly that he could not release himself. It was none other than Sultana himself. There were six dacoits altogether of whom only four were captured. However, the two who escaped into the jungle were fired at and one of them was wounded in the face by a gun shot. In the cattle-shed Young had also found Sultana's pet dog, which he kept himself.

The two escaped dacoits were some months later arrested at the railway station in Moradabad thanks to the suspicions of an alert policeman aided in part by signs of the face wound on one of the men. Young was in Moradabad at the time and was brought the news in the middle of the annual police force dinner. He left immediately to follow up the information. According to Corbett, Sultana's dog (now in Freddy's possession) was shown the two detainees which it immediately recognized, thus proving beyond all doubt that they really were the members of Sultana's gang.

Young's own account of the final raid, as given in his official report, differs somewhat from Corbett's and is as follows:

We made a detour into the jungle and as unfortunately the moon had sunk when we emerged from the trees, we disturbed the cattle of the cowherd, which fled in disorder. This looked like a catastrophe but we could then hear a conversation amongst the dacoits seated by the fire and as I now know, Sultana was apprehensive of the cattle stampeding and suggested there might be police about, which Pitamber [*Sultana's chief lieutenant*] ridiculed. I seized the opportunity of approaching them without alarming them by following up behind the cattle and when we drew level with the fire, we sprang upon them and were able to secure four out of six. Pitamber was seized at once and had no chance of firing his gun; Nar Singh was also seized at the spot, but Sultana managed to run a few paces before he fell under the weight of numbers. Baldewa got further away before he was caught. Bhurey, Sultana's nephew, was, at the time of our arrival, ensuring that the head rope of the dacoited horse, which was with them, was securely tied in view of the stampeding cattle.<sup>8</sup>

Commenting on the success Young mentions in his report that 'not a shot was fired and the capture was effected with praiseworthy rapidity and despatch'. He further emphasized that

it is a well-established fact that neither the Bhamtu community nor the public nor, for that matter, my own men, ever expected that Sultana would be captured alive and without an expenditure of some lives on either side. [*Not only this*] Sultana could not carry out his expressed intention of shooting several policemen and then himself, if sure to be captured. The effectiveness of the capture in this fashion has enhanced the severity of the blow to the prestige of the Bhamtu gang.

### Public enthusiasm and jubilation

In the days following Sultana's arrest, Young found himself obliged to participate in vociferous outbursts of public enthusiasm and jubilation on the arrival of his team with the arrested man at the station stops on their way through Hardwar, Najibabad and Kashipur *en route* to Haldwani jail. The intense enthusiasm which the capture produced amongst the public was one of the most embarrassing ordeals that he ever had to face. It was also a revelation to him of the extraordinary dread which must have been felt by them towards Sultana and the Bhamtu gang. At Najibabad the crowd was so dense and so demonstrative that

---

<sup>8</sup> Young, 'Notes on the operation of the Special Duty Police', p20.

after half an hour of fruitless efforts of persuasion to get them off the line, and to allow the train to proceed, Young was forced to have the carriage containing the prisoners uncoupled and eventually attached to a later train. And at Haldwani the party also received a tumultuous welcome: their procession from the station to the jail, a matter of half a mile, took over two hours, the station and the bazaar were lavishly decorated, and the addresses of welcome and garlands which were forced upon them were so numerous that they could hardly be counted. Young commented in his report that the enthusiasm was spontaneous and genuine and included all classes and castes, and added that 'in these days to find such genuine appreciation of the efforts of servants of a much criticized Government is most refreshing'.

### **Young's appreciation towards his team members**

Apologizing to his superiors for becoming involved in these public demonstrations of appreciation of the success of the Special Duty Force, Young pointed out that 'I have to consider my subordinates, and not only the 25 of us who were responsible for the arrests'. He went on to pay his own tribute to his men:

I feel I must draw your kind attention to the intense pride I feel in having been permitted to command such loyal and keen officers and men as now go to constitute the Special Duty Force. Several European officers have accompanied me on my different expeditions [*i.e. Wyndham, Corbett, etc*] and we have come in close contact with the military at Roorkee. The comments passed by all who have seen my men working, on the readiness and cheerfulness with which they undergo discomfort, privations and lack of food and sleep without having ever once grumbled or even hesitated to carry out my orders have been most flattering, and I am glad to say, thoroughly well deserved. I have had nothing but the most sterling service from every member of the Special Duty Force, no matter of what rank or whether he was in daily contact with me or posted at such a place as prevented my seeing him for months at a time.<sup>9</sup>

### **Mopping-up operations**

After capturing Sultana, Young also arrested and eliminated other dacoits, who were either Sultana's chief right hand men, or were active independently, and among them was one Zabar Khan a notorious dacoit leader responsible for many dacoities. His capture took place on the evening of 13 February 1924. In the words of Young's report written the following day:

I need hardly emphasize how fortunate we were, for had we been one minute later he would have seen us approaching the house and fled into the thick grass jungle which lies on all sides of the hamlet, where it would have been impossible to catch him, and had we been a minute earlier he would have been able to greet us with the discharge of his gun, for he was awake, and could not have failed to see us and the room he occupied had only one door, across which his *Charpoy* [bed] was situated, so we could not have taken him in the rear.

Two days later Young mounted a major raid on another group of *pasiyas* [robbers] for which he had secured the consent of the Nawab of Rampur in whose state they were domiciled. Twenty-one leading members of the gang were captured by Young's team and those who escaped were in due course pursued and jailed. Thus Young was able to eliminate the major dacoity problem in the United Provinces of British India for at least the last two decades of the British régime.

### **Young's meeting with Sultana in jail, and adoption of his family**

Sultana was arrested in 1923. The prosecution case took a long time before he was finally sentenced to death on a charge of murder of a headman. The capture and arrest of Sultana and his gang members was very big news at the time. In 1956 I met an old person at Ranikhet, who had served with a Sessions Judge and who had actually seen Sultana, and according to him, up to the last Sultana pleaded that he was not guilty and had not murdered anyone on his own. He told me that he was a short man with a good physique and a dark complexion. While in jail he had gained the respect of the jail authorities for his

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

courage, discipline and pleasing behaviour. It is said that when Sultana was in the condemned cell he asked to see Young and requested him to look after his wife, his son and the dog (which was already with him) after his death. John Wikefield, a European conservationist in the 1930s who knew both Young and Corbett, states that Young did indeed promise Sultana that he would look after his family after his death. Young settled them in Belwadi, near Odeidullahganj in old Bhopal State, and adopted the seven year old boy whom he later sent to England to be educated and who was said to have returned to India to join the Indian Civil Service under the surname 'Young'.<sup>10</sup>

### Sultana's arms

Sultana's arms, swords, spears, etc, were seized in large quantities during the raids and encounters and were kept as trophies on display in the Raj Bhavan, (Government House) at Naini Tal, and at Lucknow. However, the Raj Bhawan, Lucknow, has informed the author that at present there are no arms on display there; but in Raj Bhawan at Naini Tal the arms are still on display and visitors can see them.

### Young's later Career

In 1929 Young was transferred to Agra to his original post and in 1931 the SDPF was completely abolished. In May 1931 Young's services were placed under the Maharaja of Jaipur, at that time an independent state in Rajputana (Rajasthan), as Inspector General of Police but remained there only till 6 Nov 1932. He did not find himself comfortable, feeling much neglected by the State officials, so he returned to his parent Police Department in the U.P. He was confirmed as Superintendent of Police in 1936, and was appointed Deputy Inspector General of Police in September 1939 and placed on Special Duty in the office of IG Police at Lucknow. He was awarded the CBE in January 1944 and retired from the service in May 1945.

After his retirement he joined the service of the Nawab of Bhopal who appointed him Inspector General of the Bhopal State Police, a role in which he appears to have been held in considerable esteem. He died on 21 December 1948 and was buried at Bairagarh in Bhopal. The grave is marked by a slab of red trap-rock, bearing his name. Young was the only Briton sharing the graveyard which had been built for Italian prisoners of war.<sup>11</sup>

### Young a unique character



In the words of Raymond Vernede, ICS:

'Freddy Young was that rare bird, a real eccentric serving after his proper time - the 18th or early 19th century - and a joy to know. I was a witness to his method of work and how he achieved his fabled reputation. He never answered or paid any attention to formal orders or instructions from the Government or his own chief - the Inspector General of Police - they all went straight into the waste paper basket. His movements were unpredictable and never advertised. ... [*He would arrive without warning*]. Sometimes the first we knew was when we heard the bearer call to the cook, "*Young Sahib agaya - bara anda ka rumble-tumble banao*" (Young Sahib has arrived - prepare a scrambled egg dish with twelve eggs).'

<sup>10</sup> *The Hindu* (Online edition, 17 Jul 2006).

<sup>11</sup> *Chowkidar*, Spring 2005, pp103-104.

Another writer recalls:

a big, burly man, quite good-looking in a dark, rather foreign way. He was notorious as a 'character' about whom there were many stories.

And a third remembers a man:

wearing starched khaki shorts, bush shirt, bush hat and eyeglass, all covering a very portly frame of at least twenty stone.<sup>12</sup>

### Films, stories, ballads, and plays on Young and Sultana

In the year 1953 or 1954, a British film party came to Naini Tal to collect information on the life of Sultana but could not find enough material and so their project for a film on him was shelved. However, an American film *The Long Duel* was made in 1967 in which Trevor Howard played Young and Yul Brynner Sultana (called 'Prince Sultana' in the film). In the film, as in actual fact, Sultana and Young develop a strong respect for each other, though the hunter and hunted game continues. But the portrayal of Sultana as a nationalist rebel and Young as ambivalent toward British imperialism in India is inaccurate. Generally the film is very far from the real life story. Since then action films in Hindi have been made in India, and there have also been films in Pakistan. The Indian films were based on ballads and 'Nautanki' plays - night time dramas performed in rural areas. After his arrest Sultana became a hero in the plains of the U.P. Small story books, ballads, and *Nautanki* plays loosely based on his life became quite common.<sup>13</sup> I can remember during the 1940s or earlier the recitation of rhythmic ballads which were a feature of North Indian culture and a source of entertainment for the poor. By the 1950s a famous ballad *Young and Sultana Daku*, was being recited.

Though these stories were mostly fictional, their emphasis on Sultana's generosity to the poor perpetuated his memory as the 'Robin Hood of India'.

### Acknowledgements

*The author would like to thank the British Library for supplying bio-data on Young, and David Blake for sending him both a copy of Young's report to his superiors which have been used here for the first time to provide a factual account of his operations, and copies of the articles on Freddy Young in Chowkidar. He would also like to express his gratitude to Dr Uma Jagannath, Deputy Librarian, J R D Tata Memorial Library, Indian Institute of Sciences, for sending him a photocopy of Kathryn Hansen's article, and to the U.P. Archives, Lucknow, for permission to go through old records.*

### Sources

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Jim Corbett     | <i>My India</i> (OUP, India, 1952)  |
| Kathryn Hansen  | 'Sultan Dacoit and Harishchandra: Two Popular Dramas of the Nautanki Tradition of North India' in <i>Modern Asian Studies</i> , vol 17, no.2 (1983), pp313-331.                           |
| N C Shah        | 'Sultana, Robin Hood of India' in <i>The Hindustan Times</i> (Lucknow) <i>Live Weekend</i> , 6 Oct 2006, p3   |
| Frederick Young | 'Note on the operations of the Special Duty Police for the Suppression of the Sub-Montane Gang of Dacoits' 1922-24 (official report to the Government of the U.P.). BL ref: Mss Eur F415. |

*Chowkidar*, vol 10, nos. 4 and 5 (Autumn 2004 and Spring 2005)

*The Hindu* (Online edition, 17 Jul 2006): 'Of tigers and tigers among men'

---

<sup>12</sup> The three quotations are from *Chowkidar*, Autumn 2004, pp77-78, and Spring 2005. pp103-104.

<sup>13</sup> Hansen, 'Sultan Dacoit and Harishchandra, etc.'

*Patrika Sah Samaj*, 1 (1) (1999), p9 [Hindi language]

U.P. Archives. Police Dept List no.10 file No.525 and Box no.22. Special Dacoity Force.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Search/Sultana\\_%28bandit%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Search/Sultana_%28bandit%29)

## Reviews

***Storm and Conquest – The Battle for the Indian Ocean, 1809*, by Stephen Taylor (Faber & Faber, 2007), pp xx, 380. ISBN 978-0-571-22465-4 or 0-571-22465-2. UK RRP £20.00**

Many readers will know Stephen Taylor's previous book, *Caliban's Shore: the Wreck of the Grosvenor and the Strange Fate of Her Survivors*. Written in 2004, it was an entertaining and well-researched book of the voyage in 1792 of the HEIC vessel *Grosvenor* from Calcutta across the Indian Ocean as far as its shipwreck on the southern coast of South Africa, followed by the trek of the survivors overland to the Cape.

This second book on the Indian Ocean is on a grander scale. In fact it is two books linked by the Indian Ocean and landward events. In his preface, Taylor points out that in order to support the Peninsular campaign in Europe, Wellesley required 6,000 tons of Bengali saltpetre for the production of gunpowder. The first fleet of Indiamen ships left England in March 1808 and was followed by three further fleets, a total of 28 ships to collect saltpetre from Bengal. By the summer of 1809, the first ships were arriving back in England and it was quickly apparent to the Company that all had not gone well in the Indian Ocean. 'India House had suffered the worst calamity in its shipping history'. Fifteen ships did not return, either due to bad weather or to action by French frigates operating out of the Ile de France, previously called Mauritius by the Dutch. Not only were the ships with their saltpetre lost but both experienced seamen and notable passengers were drowned. The Company was reminded of William Pitt's recent prophesy:

as long as the French hold the Ile de France, the British will never be masters of India.

Part 1 of the book, titled 'Storm', recounts the return passages of the first fleet from Madras in October 1808; the second fleet from Bengal in January 1809 and the third fleet also from Bengal in April 1809. For all fleets there were the same hazards, the likelihood of hurricanes and the possibility of encounters with French warships. The first fleet was battered by hurricanes from the 21 November and reached Capetown in an appalling condition as well as losing three ships with all hands and passengers. A similar misfortune befell the second fleet, losing four ships. The third fleet was battered not only by hurricanes but by French frigates resulting in a further loss of eight ships.

Part 2 of the book, 'Conquest', describes the preparations for the attack on the Ile de France, the numerous encounters at sea between the two sides and the final meeting of the two opposing Commodores on 18 Sep 1810 when a British victory eventually enabled the islands of Bourbon and the Ile de France to be taken, the latter name now reverting to Mauritius.

The seaward narrative is enlivened by accounts of blockade running, the ever present antagonism between HMS ships and the EIC ships over 'impressment' where ships were often left undermanned, the varying standards of discipline leading to mutiny, the difficulties of making a rendezvous when dependent on sail and of course the impossibility of rapid long distance communication. Throughout, both in hurricane and in becalmed waters, life on board for both seamen and passengers is graphically described.

Landward, Taylor comments on the naval and revictualling station of Capetown, briefly on Bengal but in full measure on Madras. Sir Henry Gwillim of the Supreme Court, at loggerheads with the Company, orders the release of a defendant and the militia refuses. This culminates in the Judge's dismissal. We have a conflict between General Macdowall, a crown officer in charge of the Company Army in Madras and the Governor-General Sir George Barlow. Unable to get a seat on Barlow's Council, he tours the country fomenting discontent in the Army. As MacDowall leaves Madras and is yet to resign, Barlow dismisses him. Gwillim is censored in London but MacDowall dies in the second fleet hurricanes. Meanwhile, Madras is preoccupied with the scandal of Barlow's wife and her lover, the Governor-General's

aide de camp. Her fifteenth child is openly regarded as a love child, leading eventually to a divorce in England.

This is a non-fiction book produced by Stephen Taylor after a prodigious amount of research. Extremely well written and fast-moving, it is a delight to read and should be on the book list of everyone who has an interest particularly in Madras around 1800 and in the vicissitudes of all East Indian travel before the steam age. The book has sixteen pages of notes with numerous references as well as four pages of bibliography. An indispensable book for FIBIS researchers too!

Lawrie Butler

***The Great Uprising in India 1857-58*, by Rosie Llewellyn-Jones (Boydell Press, 2007), 264pp. ISBN 978-1-84383-304-8 £30.00**

In the immediate aftermath of the 'Mutiny' Charles Ball rushed out his *History of the Indian Mutiny*. The bylines on his title page promise *A Detailed Account of the Sepoy Insurrection in India and a Concise History of the Great Military Events which have tended to consolidate British Empire in Hindostan*. As a piece of journalism there is nothing wrong with Ball's book, but the tendency to see the 'Mutiny' purely in military terms and concentrate on the stirring deeds of heroism has infected studies of the events of 1857-58 ever since, and even many modern histories largely ignore all other aspects. Dr Llewellyn-Jones' new book is a helpful corrective. Heroism is there in abundance – but also bureaucracy, misunderstanding, crass stupidity and worse. The events of those terrible two years contain an uneasy mixture of deeds both great and monstrous.

The first chapter entitled 'Rebels and Renegades' makes clear how varied were the motives of those who took part. The great uprising may have started as a Mutiny, but the Rani of Jhansi and the Nana Sahib were hardly 'mutineers' since neither was ever in the Company's army. The role of *zamindars* (local landowners) is brought out, and also the very real fear of forcible conversion to Christianity. (William Wilberforce was justly honoured last year for the abolition of the slave trade, but his influence on India in fomenting missionary work there is more questionable.) Forcible conversion seems an implausible objective today, but to Indians of that period with the memory of Aurangzeb's ruthless persecution of Hindus and Sikhs, the activities of some evangelical Christians did nothing to dispel it.

A chapter on the murders of Major Burton and his sons at Kotah gives an example of how events unfolded. The murders are shown to be connected quite as much with Company treaties stretching back 40 years as with greasy cartridges.

In the third chapter Dr Llewellyn-Jones turns to the area of Indian history she has made her own – Lucknow and Awadh. She deals particularly with the period after the evacuation of Lucknow by Sir Colin Campbell in November 1857 before its final capture in March 1858, and we get a flavour of the civil administration of the city by the Begam Hazrat Mahal, wife of the last King Wajid Ali Shah. Substantial defences were erected at this time – a considerable undertaking and one that suggests a much higher level of organisational skill than the 'rebels' have previously been given credit for.

The chapter on Prize Agents deals with a topic that for too long has been neglected. This was in effect organised looting. The rationale was according to Dr Llewellyn-Jones threefold: to punish the rebels, to recoup the Company's huge expenditure in putting down the rebellion, and to reward officers and men. My feeling is that there was also a fourth objective, not always realised, but there nevertheless: to try to restrain *unlicensed* looting. Unlicensed looting rewards those there at the time, but other troops on different but no less important parts of the mission have no chance of any equivalent reward. The idea of Prize Agents is rather like the *tronc* system for handling tips in the catering industry: to reward proportionately not only the front-of-house staff such as waiters, but also the back-of-house staff such as washers up. Colin Campbell delayed restraining looters at Lucknow for several days, despite strong remonstrances by Outram. Campbell had served in the Peninsular War and knew how difficult it was to

hold back troops in the moment of victory and indeed for some time afterwards. But Outram represented a more modern and enlightened view that victorious troops should not be given a free hand to loot, and furthermore it was hardly in the Company's interest to destroy the wealth of the city and thereby punish the innocent with the guilty and jeopardise future revenue. In other words, organised looting was preferable to disorganised looting. How disorganised even the Prize Agents were is clear from this important chapter. Looting, whether done by soldiers fighting their way into a Palace or by Prize Agents coming later to seek out the wealth of the business class, is not an edifying story and it is perhaps the less surprising if the derring-do historians have neglected it.

The chapter on the punishment meted out to the rebels is equally disturbing reading. The truth was that the British had been given no end of a fright. Cyril Connolly remarked that 'perfect fear casteth out love'. It also casteth out every other benevolent virtue, including mercy and justice. Disraeli said that 'he regretted that persons in authority had spoken of vengeance on the Indian mutineers, and he trusted as a Christian nation, we should think of nothing of the kind'. But then he was not on the spot, and others were. The tale of indiscriminate judicial murder is sickening. The atrocities committed by the rebels at Cawnpore do not justify the shooting up and firing of whole villages. Canning did his best to restrain things, but the generals such as Neill were virtually out of control. Gradually things returned to normal, but only after a dreadful amount of blood-letting.

The book ends with a discussion of Indian mutiny memorials. Marochetti's Angel of the Resurrection at Cawnpore gets pride of place, but there are many other curious tales. The way in which Indian artists have now taken over from British artists in constructing good statues is interestingly told. When a statue of the Hindu reformer Rajah Rammohun Roy was recently required in Bristol, the statue was made in India and then exported to Bristol.

This book is the second volume in a series from the Boydell Press under the title of 'Worlds of the East India Company'. Dr Llewellyn-Jones's book is always full of interest and perception. Almost every page uncovers a new piece of research, and suggests further worlds of the East India Company to explore. Many FIBIS Members have ancestors caught up in those terrible events. This book sheds a shaft of strong light on them.

*Richard Morgan*