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The Editor is happy to consider unsolicited material, articles, letters and information for inclusion in the Journal. Receipt of such material does not necessarily indicate that the material will be published.

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Seeking Giles Stibbert

By Richard J Hayter

All good stories, my English teacher taught me, have a beginning, a middle and an end. Well he clearly was no family history researcher. We start at the end and work to a beginning only to find that we are usually stuck in the middle. This is a story of adventure and opportunity that is as improbable as it is fascinating. It is the story of Giles Stibbert who we first find working in a hop field for 4d a day, rising through the ranks from common soldier to Acting Commander-in-Chief of John Company's forces in India and retiring with a substantial fortune to England.

Like many others this research is not all my own work. I was spared the endless hours of trawling through registry records at the British Library because that essential start to my search was done by my Aunt and fellow FIBIS member, Janet Hayter, and cousin Clive Bourne from Australia. Other essential clues came from Brenda Cook's article on Rebecca Dorin¹, inscriptions from Hessing's² tomb in Agra and the India Rootsweb subscribers. Thanks to these efforts I was able to make my contribution from the comfort of my own study using the internet and in particular Google Books.

The name Stibbert first appeared in my research on the Derridon family. Edward Tetley Dudman, the rescuer of Rebecca Dorin, had married Eliza Rennick, daughter of Dr Alexander Rennick and Theresa Derridon. I was looking for a connection to Louis Derridon a major in the Maratha armies of Maharaja Scindia and my Aunt refused to accept the many coincidences that joined Theresa to the family. One of these was the fact that Georgiana Maria Tetley and Charles Stibbert Tetley had married Francis Derridon and Isabella Derridon in a double ceremony on 27 October 1832. Dudman's mother was Louisa Elizabeth Tetley, sister of Georgiana and Charles and daughter of Charles Tetley and Elizabeth Stibbert (see family tree). So Edward's aunt and uncle had married Eliza's aunt and uncle. Following a Google Books search I found Theresa's marriage to the doctor where she is referred to as the third daughter of Major Louis Derridon, late of the Mahratta Service.

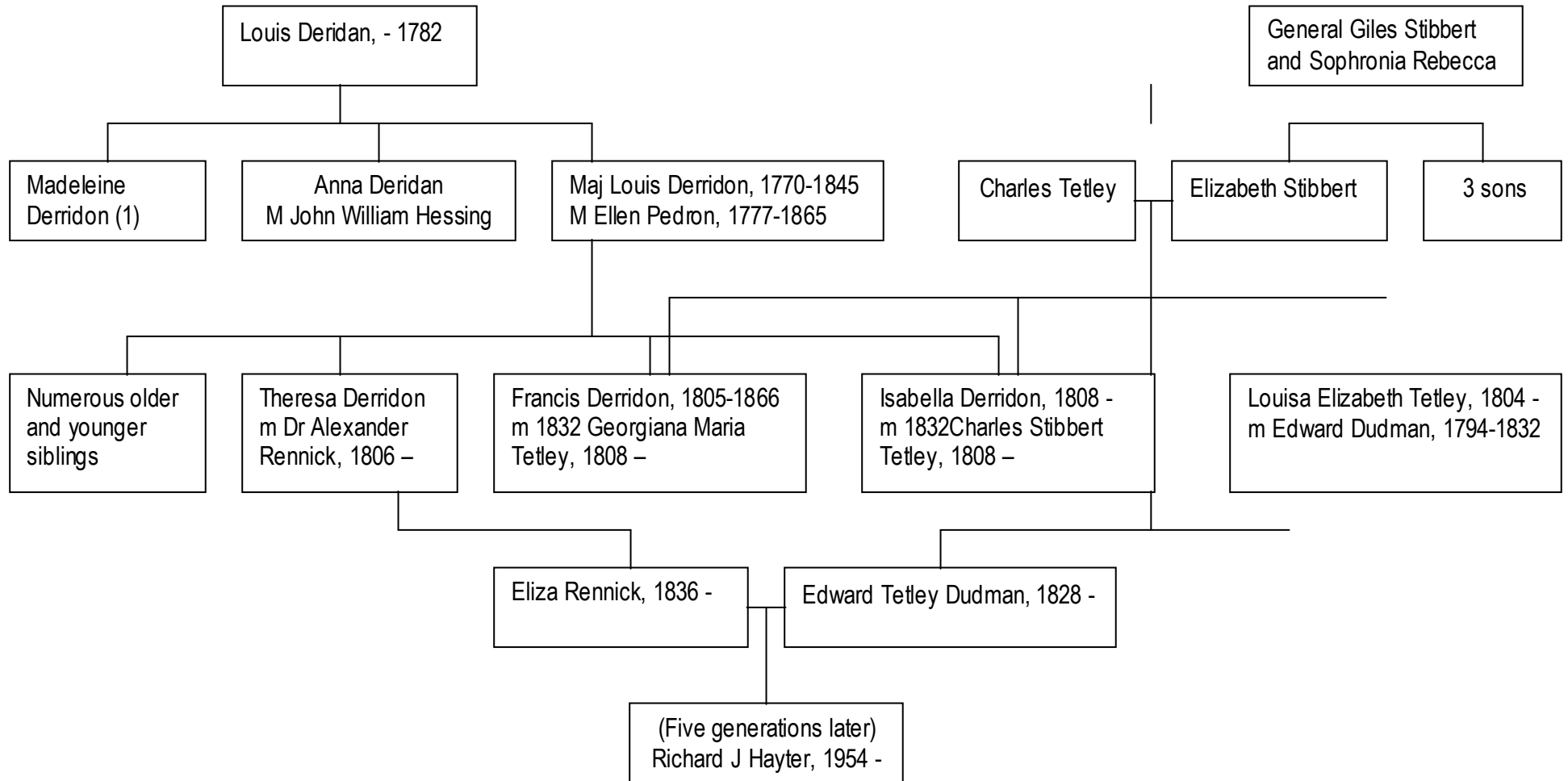
Flushed with my triumph over doubting Thomasina, I google booked every surname I had in India. The Stibbert surname quickly identified General Giles Stibbert and his grandson Frederick, founder of the Stibbert Museum in Florence. The connection to the General was found in the *Asiatic Annual Register* for 1806:

January 1804 – At the New Church, Mr C Tetley, to Miss E Stibbert, daughter of General Stibbert.

¹ *FIBIS Journal*, Autumn 2007, pp13-23.

² John William Hessing, a soldier of fortune from the Netherlands who served in the army of the Maharaja Scindia. His tomb in the Catholic cemetery at Agra has a long epitaph describing his life and adventures.

Family tree showing connections of the Derridon, Tetley, Dudman, and Stibbert Families



(1) She married General Perron, the French soldier of fortune who entered the the Maharaja Scindia's army in 1790 and rose to its overall command 1796-1803. Their descendants include the children of Valery Giscard d'Estaing, former President of France.

The General's early life is recorded in an anecdote I found in the *Oriental Herald and Journal of General Literature* dated May 1825, nearly fifteen years after the General's death. The correspondent writes:

A gentleman, who has been deceased nearly half a century, but with whom, in my boyish days, I was intimately acquainted, was once travelling in Kent, when he called at the house of a Baronet of his acquaintance. He was from home, but his chaplain, who was also the minister of the parish, invited my friend to dinner. As they proceeded to the parsonage, the clergyman requested a lad, in a labourer's frock, to jump into a pond, by which they were passing, to procure some fish. This service he performed with marked agility, while the clergyman was expressing to Mr Whatley, for that was my friend's name, his opinion of the boy's fitness for something better than his present employment of working in a hop-ground at four-pence per day. On this suggestion Mr Whatley hired him, and subsequently recommended him as servant to his brother, Mr George Whatley, a friend and correspondent of Dr Franklin, and for many years treasurer of the Foundling Hospital. This gentleman had been a consul in the Mediterranean, and a merchant in that trade. Thus he had occasionally *Streights* [i.e. *Straits of Gibraltar*] Captains among his visitors. To one of these our young adventurer, who had, no doubt, already felt the ambition of an aspirant, prevailed on his master to recommend him, and he made two or three voyages to the Mediterranean as Captain's servant.

He then applied to his late master, requesting his assistance to go out to India, having learned that he was a friend of Colonel Clive, to whom Mr George Whatley kindly wrote a letter of recommendation. Colonel Clive told the applicant that he could only give him a musket, but that he should keep his eye on him. Such appears to be the introduction of Giles Stibbert to Bengal, of whose army he was, in 1784, if not earlier, Commander in Chief.³

Giles's advancement in India was certainly rapid. On 11 May 1757, only a few weeks before the battle of Plassey, he was promoted lieutenant. He would undoubtedly have met another ambitious young man with whom his career would become later entwined: a young Warren Hastings, appointed Resident at Murshidabad after Plassey and later to become Governor-General of India. In 1761, at Bankipore, Giles raised and commanded a troop of native infantry. Arthur Broome in his book *History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army* (London and Calcutta, 1850) states:

The raising and command of the former was entrusted to Captain Stibbert and it was numbered the 6th Battalion (now the 9th Regiment of N.I.). Under this able officer its organisation and discipline progressed rapidly, and it was reported fit for service, longbefore the arms and accoutrements were received for use.

³ On Wikipedia, George Whatley is described as a friend and correspondent of Dr Benjamin Franklin, and Vice-President (1772-1779) and Treasurer (1779–1791) of the Foundling Hospital in London. The Hospital was founded by a philanthropic sea captain, Thomas Coram, in 1739 as a children's home. Perhaps the good captain was one of Whatley's 'Streights' Captains which may account for Whatley's charitable action in mentoring the young Giles Stibbert.

He commanded this battalion in 1763 at the siege of Patna where he was wounded. At the battle of Buxar (1764) he commanded the left wing of the army's front line. He became a Major in 1765 when he besieged and captured Chunar, then considered the strongest fortress in India, and thus he gradually rose to command the Bengal Army. He became a Major-General in 1783 and in 1796 Lieutenant-General. In 1777, General Clavering died and on 16 October Giles Stibbert became acting Commander-in-Chief until Sir Eyre Coote's arrival on 25 March 1778. Coote died in April 1783 and Giles Stibbert once again found himself acting Commander-in-Chief until Cornwallis arrived in July 1785. He departed for Europe in January 1786.⁴

In 1787 Warren Hastings was impeached and stood trial for corruption. The charges were largely promoted by Edmund Burke and included many allegations of corruption and fraud, among them excessive allowances paid to General Stibbert, alleged to have received allowances to cover expenses in the field amounting to some £13,500. This was in addition to his General's pay of £7,500. The opportunities available to men of ambition to make their fortunes in India was a principal reason for families to try to secure a position for their young men in the East India Service. Giles Stibbert was singularly successful in this regard. By 1770, on a colonel's pay, he had secured a fortune substantial enough to acquire the ruined priory of St Dionysius near Southampton and built a magnificent mansion at Portwood House. The house is mentioned briefly in the *Beauties of England and Wales* (London, 1805) where it is described as

a handsome building, situated on an eminence, commanding a fine view over the river Itchen and the Southampton Water, which, when the tide is up, forms a wide lake in front of the mansion [and was said to include] an art collection comprising some fine works by Teniers, Hobbema, Van Dyck, Cornelius Jansen, Carlo Dolci, Rubens, Vernet, Guido, West, Claude de Lorraine, Gainsborough and Poussin.

The house was erected from the designs of John Crunden, the same architect who undertook work for Lord Grosvenor. Indeed the General and his wife Sophronia Rebecca, appear to have lived at a number of addresses in London including Connaught Square, Hereford Street and Red Lion Square. Portwood House and the General's other estates in the area were sold in 1803.

While living at Red Lion Square the General was robbed by his French servant and the proceedings at the Old Bailey tell a sad little story of summary justice:

LEWIS JAFFERY was indicted for stealing a surtout woolen [*sic*] coat, value 42s. a man's hat, value 21s. three calico handkerchiefs, value 10s. 6d. four pair of silk stockings, value 42s. one pair of gold shoe buckles, value £8. 8s. a pair of gold knee buckles, value £4.4s. a pair of silver shoe buckles, value 10s. and a pair of silver knee buckles, value 5s. the property of Giles Stibbert, Esq; and a green silk purse, value 1d. two canvas purses, value 1d. a wooden box, value 6d. and thirteen guineas, a half guinea, a quarter guinea,

⁴ Details of Stibbert's career can be found in Broome and V C P Hodson, *List of Officers of the Bengal Army*, vol 4 (London, 1947).

two dollars value 9s, a quarter dollar value 1s, three roupies and £8. 1s. 6d. in money, numbered, the property of Alexander M'Farder, Nov. 19.

Giles Stibbert. I live in Red-Lion-Square; the prisoner had been my servant about four months. On Friday the 9th of November the prisoner was missing after dinner, and the next morning I missed the several things mentioned in the indictment; I went over them accurately, and can swear to the loss of the several particular things; they were taken out of the dressing room, which was open, and to which the prisoner, with the rest of the servants, had access. I went to Sir John Fielding's, and described the person of the prisoner, and the things; I got some intelligence of him; in consequence of which, he was apprehended at Gravesend, on Monday the 22nd. (The clothes, knee buckles and shoe buckles produced) they are the same things I lost. At his examination before Sir John Fielding, he acknowledged he took the things, and that they were his master's and his fellow servant's property. He is a Frenchman born, but can speak English very well; he said he did not receive his wages from his master; he made that a sort of an excuse for committing the robbery. I had given him either one or two guineas, I do not know which; his wages are but eight guineas a year; he had not lived with me more than a quarter of a year or four months at farthest.

Alexander M'Farder. I am servant to Mr. Stibbert. I lost when the prisoner went away £23 6s. 9d. in cash, in two or three purses, the same as described in the indictment, and also a little box about fourteen inches long and nine over, in which they were kept; I can swear to this purse which is produced, and the dollar; I know them to be my own; the rest I cannot swear to, but I know I lost such a quantity. I am one of the persons that went down to Gravesend on this intelligence, in order to apprehend him, and took Taylor, the constable, with me; on Monday the 22d of November I found him on board a French trader; he confessed the robbery with the whole circumstances of it, and there was found upon him, by the constable, in my presence, the purses and part of the money, and the coat and hat were found in the other part of the ship.

William Taylor. I am a constable: I went to Gravesend to take the prisoner; I found him on deck; I searched him there, and found one of the purses and five guineas; I found ten guineas more upon him below, and the gold and silver, and some dollars. He acknowledged the money belonged to his fellow servant; that he had changed the silver into gold for the sake of more light carriage; he had one of his master's handkerchiefs about his neck at that time, and one pair of silk stockings; the other three were rolled up together; I found them among his baggage, and the coat and hat were below.

The prisoner said nothing in his defence.⁴

Poor Lewis Jaffrey was found guilty and sentenced to transportation. All within thirty days of committing the offence. Compare this with the trial of Warren Hastings which dragged on for seven years from 1788 to 1795. The whig politician Edmund Burke had made a series of allegations against Warren Hastings including the misappropriation of enormous

⁴ Source for trial proceedings is www.oldbaileyonline.org

sums of money. He was exonerated on all charges, but left very nearly bankrupt. He appears to have kept his reputation intact.⁵

The General died in 1809 and was followed in 1815 by his wife. Sophronia Rebecca is buried at St John's Wood Chapel and there is a memorial to her on the west side of the chapel. In his will⁶, the General made full provision for his wife and three sons, Thomas, Giles and Robert, but appears not to mention his daughter married and living in India with an indigo planter.

Thomas, a colonel in the Grenadier Guards, married Maria Cafaggi from Florence while he was in Malta. They retired to Florence having a son Frederick, who inherited his father's and mother's estates and indulged his passion for art. He built up a fabulous collection over many years which can be found in the *Museo Stibbert* in Florence today.

Of course this is not a beginning, simply another middle in my own particular story. The hunt continues.

⁵ For the trial see P J Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings* (Oxford, 1965)

⁶ TNA: PROB 11/1493.

Recruitment for the Company's European Corps, 1781-1812

By Ian A Baxter¹

The Regiments or battalions of European infantry and artillery which the East India Company maintained at each of their three Presidencies in India enjoyed during the latter half of the eighteenth century a rather unenviable reputation. Two paragraphs of a letter from the Governor-General Lord Cornwallis to the Court of Directors dated 16 November 1787 encapsulate the widely held opinion respecting them:- 'your European regiments on this establishment are in general in the most wretched condition and I doubt whether I could in the most pressing emergency form from the whole of them one complete battalion of serviceable soldiers' ... 'I saw with real concern that by far the greatest proportion of those that compose them consist of men worn out by long service, intemperance and infirmities, and of others so diminutive in size as to be totally unequal to the duties of the field, or of foreigners upon whose services in war no dependence could be placed'.

Obtaining a sufficient number of qualified recruits for their European Corps was to prove a continuous problem for the Company. The first intervention of the British Parliament in the matter was the Act of 1781, 21 George III, c.65, which permitted the Company to recruit occasionally in England under royal licence but restricted the numbers recruited at any one time to 2,000 in time of war and 1,000 in time of peace. Recruiting was mainly in the hands of civilian contractors (occasionally supplemented by army officers) and the methods they employed were nothing if not eclectic. There are instances from the 1780s of persons of superior social standing being enticed into enlisting as private soldiers in the expectation of being granted a commission in India - on their arrival in the East they were speedily disabused. After the veto on the recruitment of Catholics was removed in 1778 Irish Catholics were recruited in large numbers. Africans resident in Britain were occasionally enlisted - the most distinguished black recruit was undoubtedly John Butler who joined the Madras Army in 1771, attained commissioned rank and became Acting Resident of Tanjore. Where cajolery failed the recruiting agents often had recourse to strong-arm methods, or 'crimping', and although there was provision for medical inspection many persons who were mentally or physically unfit were allowed to slip through the net. The military authorities in India complained of being obliged to accept lunatics and discharged invalids. They also frequently lamented that many recruits were too undersized to function effectively as soldiers in the tropics - for most of this period the regulation minimum height was 5 feet 3 inches for youths under 20 and 5 feet 6 inches for men between 20 and 30 but these rules were often disregarded. In the years 1790-92 when the shortage of recruits was particularly severe the Company resorted to the expedient of enlisting sailors, a decision which aroused the ire of Lord Cornwallis who was convinced that most sailors simply deserted on arrival in India. The wastage rate of European soldiers in India owing to death and disease was high: in the 1790s it was reckoned to be around 8% per annum.

¹ Reprinted from the *India Office Library and Records Newsletter*, no. 30, Nov 1983, pp7-8, by kind permission of The British Library.

Lacking suitable recruits from Britain the Company was tempted to recruit locally in India, especially from foreign nationals, in spite of occasional qualms about their political reliability. Many renegade prisoners came over to the Company's service during the war with France in 1778-83. In the 1790s there were two further accretions of foreign recruits. When the 14th and 15th Hanoverian Regiments returned to Europe in 1791 after service in the Camatic many of the rank and file stayed behind and enlisted in the Madras Army - Hanoverians were of course not foreigners in the strictest sense. A second and much larger influx of recruits occurred in 1795/96 with the capture of the Dutch settlements in the Cape of Good Hope, India, Ceylon, Malacca and Amboina. Soldiers from the Dutch service now volunteered for the Company's armies. The Bombay Army absorbed those from the settlements on the Malabar Coast, the Madras Army those from the Coromandel Coast, Ceylon and the East Indies. In South Africa in 1795, owing to the exertions of Lieutenant John Owen, 225 recruits were obtained from the Dutch service, 100 of whom were sent to Bengal and 125 to Bombay. In the following year he collected a further 120 'very fine recruits mostly Austrians and Poles' who were embarked for Madras and Bengal. It should be noted that these 'Dutch' soldiers were more often than not of German rather than Dutch extraction. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) had traditionally recruited for its armed forces not only in the Netherlands but much farther afield especially from the German States – they even took entire foreign regiments into their service, e.g. the Wurttemberg Regiment and the Swiss Regiment De Meuron.

An analysis of the Muster Rolls of the three Presidency Armies for 1801 reveals just how polyglot the English Company's Europeans were at this period:

Bengal Europeans Total 2702				Madras Europeans Total 2712			
British	2038	Non-British	664	British	2051	Non-British	661
English	1186	Germans	251	English	1332	Germans	348
Irish	624	Dutch	245	Irish	477	Dutch	111
Scots	186	Eurasians	51	Scots	191	Eurasians	96
Welsh	42	French	35	Welsh	49	Americans	22
		Flemings	22	Manxman	1	Flemings	18
		Americans	16	Channel Islander	1	Swiss	16
		Poles	7			French	9
		Swiss	6			Danes	8
		Hungarians	6			Norwegians	7
		Italians	4			Italians	6
		Danes	4			Swedes	4
		Russians	3			West Indians	4
		Portuguese	3			Russians	3
		Czechs	2			Spaniards	2
		Norwegians	2			Pole	1
		Spaniards	2			Czech	1
		Lett	1			Hungarian	1
		Swede	1			Gibraltarian	1
		African	1			Turk	1
		West Indian	1			St Helenan	1
		St Helenan	1			African Portuguese	1

Bombay Europeans Total 1189

British	994	Non-British	195
English	563		
Irish	368		
Scots	48		
Welsh	15		

(Unlike the Bengal and Madras Muster Rolls, Bombay Muster Rolls do not always specify a foreigner's nationality)

It will be seen from the above that in the Bengal and Madras Armies the proportion of foreigners was just under 25% or approximately 1 in 4, and in the Bombay Army approximately 1 in 6.

Continual complaints about the quality of recruits received from England and anxiety about the disproportionate number of foreigners led to agitation for a more regular system of recruitment and for the establishment of a training depot in England. The most active proponent of the scheme for a depot was a retired Madras Army officer, Henry Augustus Montagu Cosby, many of whose proposals were ultimately adopted, but decisive support came from the President of the Board of Control, Henry Dundas. The subject was discussed at length in 1796. After ineffectual protests the Court of Directors acquiesced in Dundas's proposals and although their first recruiting bill was thrown out of Parliament in 1797 a second bill successfully reached the statute book in 1799. The Act of 12 July 1799 (39 George III, c.109) laid down that a certain number of men were to be recruited to the King's Army each year for service in India and that a proportion were to be subsequently allocated permanently to the Company who were to be responsible for their upkeep and training in England. They were to be subject to martial law from the date of enlistment. The Act made provision for the establishment of a training depot and this duly came into being at Newport on the Isle of Wight in 1801 in accordance with Cosby's original proposal. Every year beginning in September some 2000 men were drafted from the Royal Army and passed through the depot where they received basic training from a small cadre of instructors before proceeding to India in March or April of the following year.

One immediate consequence of the Act of 1799 was that the period of enlistment was now ten years, in line with the King's Army, and not five years as hitherto. Within a short space of time the Company also began accepting recruits for 'unlimited service', mainly deserters from the Royal Army who were given this option in lieu of imprisonment. In 1806 the regulations were changed and recruits were now offered a variety of options, ranging from seven years to unlimited service. These variations in the term of service caused friction and jealousy in India since men on unlimited service were not eligible for the bounty payable to their colleagues on re-enlistment. There were instances of such men deliberately maiming themselves in order to secure an early discharge.

The year 1810 saw a further important piece of legislation. The Act of 15 June of that year (50 George III, c.87) extended in 1812 to cover Ireland (52 George III, c.122) permitted the Company to recruit on its own account instead of having to accept drafts of soldiers from the British Army. A recruiting establishment was set up under the overall control of a Superintendent, with centres in the main cities of the British Isles, and the initial term of

service was now fixed at either '12 years' or 'unlimited' - in later years 'unlimited service' would become the norm.

Undoubtedly the legislative measures enacted between 1799 and 1812 ensured that the Company's European recruits were chosen with a greater degree of discrimination and received some form of training before being sent to the East, but the endemic problem of deficiency of numbers though ameliorated was by no means solved. The lion's share of recruits continued to go to the British Army and until the end of the Company's rule in India their European regiments were rarely at optimum strength.

Gahan, Eaton & Co

By Nigel Penny

I first started researching my mother's family in India four years ago using some material from an aunt who had visited the old India Office Library and Records in Blackfriars Road in the 1960s. With valuable input from other FIBIS members I now have a picture of five generations for whom India was home, and along the way have explored some of the less well travelled corners of records' archives. Part of the fascination is never knowing quite what you will find when you order up a book of old records – maybe nothing, or a one line entry, or maybe pages of text that gives you a window on times past. Here, by way of illustration of what can be found from the records is the story of my ancestor George Gahan and the Madras merchant firm of Gahan, Eaton & Co.

George Gahan was born in the Scilly Isles on 5 December 1802, the son of Thomas Gahan, a prominent local resident and hotel owner. In 1822 he petitioned the East India Company Court of Directors to be granted Free Mariner's indentures and these were duly granted. At that time no-one could travel to India or reside in India without the permission of the Company, and they gave licences to 'Free Mariners' to enable them to be employed on board any private ship in the 'Country Trade of India and Asia' – i.e. local port to port trade anywhere east of Africa.¹ Free Mariners had to abide by the 'rules order and directions of the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies', to give the East India Company its full title, and comply with any request to leave. There was a general guideline that any person who had been at sea three years might have indentures if nominated by a member of the Court, as would anyone serving as a midshipman for two voyages on E.I. Company ships. A performance bond was required, presumably more as an assurance of good behaviour than to cover any costs, as I guess the greatest crime of any ship's captain was to compete against the Company in its trade.

Obtaining Free Mariner's indentures was thus no mean feat and I do not know how George Gahan, at the age of nineteen, achieved it. He first needed the nomination of a member of the Court of Directors and in the list of Free Mariners Season 1820² appears George Graham (sic), Director Robert Campbell, Esq, reported 13 Sept 1822. This referred to a meeting of the Court of Directors in London. Minutes of the Court are kept in one of the largest bound leather volumes I have seen, covering about a year at a time. There is a rather confusing bound index to the Court Minutes on the open shelves at the British Library, confusing because it refers to page references in a set of minute books that are no longer extant. From the index you can, though, find the date of the minute you want, if you don't already have it. Anyway, George Gahan's petition was duly considered at the Court of Directors in London on 13 Sept 1822³ and referred to the Committee of Shipping. Some

¹ I found Anne Bulley's excellent book *The Bombay Country Ships: 1790-1833* (Richmond, Curzon, 2000) useful background on Free Mariners and their vessels.

² IOR: L/MAR/C/678.

³ IOR: B/175.

petitions are still on file, but his is not among them. The standard form of petition appears to give little other than the mariner's name and that he had served at sea, so the nomination by a Director was all important.

The Committee of Shipping met that same day and they in turn recommended granting the indentures on 'the usual conditions'⁴ and the matter was back in the Court of Directors on 9 October 1822 to approve the security offered. This was a bond for £500 signed and sealed by Thomas Ullock, a wine merchant of Cannon Street, and James Scovell of Clerkenwell Close, gold thread spinner. These wealthy tradesmen were probably professional bondsmen, issuing bonds for a fee, who had no personal connection to George Gahan. The bond register, in the IOR O/1 series, has now been indexed by FIBIS and can be searched on the web site. The final London stage of the process was a meeting on 1 November 1822 following which an entry was included in the Commercial despatches to Fort St George dated 6 November 1822.⁵ This noted that George Gahan was granted indentures subject to his satisfying the Government of Madras that he had actually followed the profession of a seaman for the full term of three years and that it was his intention to follow that profession during his time in India.

The despatches were duly sent by the *Eliza* and a copy by the *Ogle Castle* which left London the following week. The *Ogle Castle* reached Madras first, on 2 May 1823, and the despatches were considered by the Governor in Council on 9 May where it was ordered that a copy of the letter be furnished to the Superintendent of Police (recorded in Madras Commercial Consultations, IOR P/335/43). Quite a process to make one individual a lawful resident of Madras. There is reference in both the September minutes and the November despatch to George being 'now in India'. How he arrived there, and how he organised his petition from that far away I do not know. As all communication with London was by ship it must have been more than a year before he heard his petition had been successful.

The next record of George Gahan was his marriage in St Mary's Church Madras in August 1827 to Georgiana Eaton, daughter of the late Charles Eaton. George gave his occupation as Commander of the brig *Lady Munro*. Charles Eaton had died three months earlier and a detailed inventory of his estate had been drawn up by Gottlieb van Someren (see Liz Wilde's article in *FIBIS Journal* 19, Spring 2008) and is recorded in the L/AG/34/27 series. This revealed that the brig *Lady Munro* was owned by Charles Eaton, and owing to the estate was Captain George Gahan's account with the *Lady Munro* for a voyage to Singapore and Penang – Rs 1286-15-3. I was fascinated to find my ancestor had visited Singapore as I lived there myself for a few years. George must have been one of the first captains to seek this new trading opportunity, as Stamford Raffles only arrived there to set up a trading colony in 1819 and the city became part of the Straits Settlements in 1826.

Charles Eaton was employed by the East India Company as Master Attendant at the port of Coringa, 300 miles north of Madras near the mouth of the Godavari river just south of modern day Cocanada and close to the French settlement of Yanam. The Master Attendant

⁴ IOR: L/MAR/1/11.

⁵ IOR: E/4/927.

was an uncovenanted civil servant, responsible for the safe passage of ships within the port area. Charles took on the role in 1818 and appears to have combined it with building ships using local timber. The *Lady Munro* had been constructed a couple of years before his death and named after the wife of the incoming Governor of Madras. George Gahan was probably her first captain. Charles's death was recorded in the Madras almanac of 1828 as occurring on 20 May 1827 aged 74. This conflicts with the family tree I was sent which showed his birth in 1762, making him 64 when he died. I'm sure most family historians have similar cases of confusion: was there a misprint, or did his widow and children think him 10 years older than he was? I prefer to go with the later birth date which in turn means he became Master Attendant at the age of 56.

Charles had previously been a ship owner and master in the 'Country Trade' but the only reference I could find to Madras Presidency ships, as opposed to the larger fleets of Bombay and Calcutta, was in the East India Register for 1806/7. Charles was captain and later owner of the *Commerce*, 440 tons. By the time of his death he was a wealthy man, with property at Coringa and Madras and Rs200,000 of East India Company bonds, as well as fourteen cases of gin and six dozen of brandy. He paid a relative in Scotland for the board and education of two sons, and a Mrs Traveller in Madras for the board and education of two daughters (all this was from the estate inventory).

Charles was born in Ayr, Scotland and married Elizabeth Harrop in Tranquebar, on the Coromandel coast in March 1801 when it was still a Danish settlement. There is a bound volume of Tranquebar marriage records in the British Library but I looked at the microfilm copy of the church records held by the LDS Church. This was, of course, in Danish but not too difficult to decipher. Charles's surname was written as Edding, which is perhaps how Eaton spoken in a Scots accent sounded to a Dane, and he was described as a ship's captain. No ages were given, but Charles would have been in his late 30's and Elizabeth fifteen. The records also included the baptism of a son, John Gowan, two years later. Elizabeth was probably born in Tranquebar, the daughter of a Danish merchant, and if so that would make five generations of my family line born in India. I know little about the Harrops but I did find a reference in the Madras volume of tomb inscriptions against the tomb of an infant, John Harrop:

Harrop is a Danish name and this little child was probably the son of a partner in the firm of Stevenson and Harrop of Tranquebar. A Mr G. Harrop died at Tranquebar Sept 1799.

As the Master Attendant was an official position, you can find references in the Madras Public Proceedings, which at that time included Marine Proceedings, reported separately from 1838. The records for the period are a set of bound volumes covering only a couple of months each. There is an annual index which seems to be a lengthy summary of the Proceedings themselves, and a bi-annual printed index which I found more useful. From the index you obtain the date and item number of an entry and so find it in the original volumes. Thus in 1823 Charles Eaton submitted his bills for Rs 6,600 for the new anchor boat for Madras that he had built at Coringa⁶, explained why it had exceeded estimate, and

⁶ IOR P/245/39.

requested leave from his post to deliver the boat in person to the Master Attendant at Madras as there was no other person in Coringa capable of delivering it. He later requested two months leave in Madras in order to despatch two children to England for their education, get three other children christened as their mother was very ill (she lived another 30 years!) and arrange the repair of three houses in Madras.

Charles was succeeded as Master Attendant at Coringa by his son Charles William but by 1834 Charles W was offering to resign the post in favour of his brother-in-law Captain George Gahan as 'his private affairs required more of his presence in Madras' and 'soliciting this indulgence as the property I possess in Coringa can thus be made available'. This request got short shrift as the Governor in Council wrote that he was prepared to accept the resignation, but would not nominate the successor proposed by Charles. Charles backed down and wrote asking to retain his appointment. Soon afterwards the Council considered a letter about additional allowances claimed by the Master Attendant at Coringa and directed the Marine Board to consider if they were still necessary.⁷ This referred to Rs 840 per annum drawn 'in lieu of commission' on the cost of repairing any HEIC or HM ship damaged in gales homeward bound from Bengal and brought into Coringa, the repair being conducted by the Master Attendant. As no ship had required repair since 1814 the allowance was being questioned. In January 1837 Charles W Eaton requested three months leave of absence to visit Madras on private business, recommending Captain George Gahan act in his stead.⁸ This time the request was accepted. Not long afterwards Charles resigned, citing the reduction in salary and emoluments to Rs 105 per month as being insufficient to support himself and family.

George Gahan also appeared in the Public Proceedings himself in 1837, applying for a pass to sail the American ship *Star* under English colours.⁹ The *Star* had been condemned after the Madras hurricane of 29 October 1836, bought by George at auction and taken to Coringa. His application caused a flurry of correspondence between Fort St George and Fort William as the Advocate General at Madras was unclear who had the authority to grant such a request. Eventually it was resolved that the Collector of Rajamundry (the district in which Coringa was situated) was authorised to grant a pass for the *Star* to trade from port to port in India provided repairs greater than twice the value of the vessel had been undergone and that she was owned and commanded by British or native subjects of the Company. I suspect that after all this the pass was never issued and the ship was broken up and parts reused. George Gahan had continued to captain the *Lady Munro* until the ship was sold in 1829. Her new owner, Captain John Aiken, unfortunately lost his life along with 75 others when the vessel was shipwrecked on Amsterdam Island in 1833 while on a voyage from Madras to Hobart and Sydney via Mauritius. I found the story on an Australian web site simply by searching for 'ship Lady Munro' in Google.

⁷ IOR P/246/81.

⁸ IOR P/247/13.

⁹ IOR P/247/14 and 16.

George and Georgiana had meanwhile started a family and she was to bear him nineteen children over 25 years, most of whom reached adulthood. She must have had a prodigious constitution, and a lot of household help, and she lived into her 70th year. In the early baptisms George is described as a 'Mariner' or 'Country Sea Service' but by 1837 he was a Merchant of Coringa. After Charles William Eaton resigned as Master Attendant he and George teamed up and the merchant firm of Gahan, Eaton & Co first appears in the Madras Almanac for 1840 with an address of Rutter's Building, North Beach. This was the seaward edge of Blacktown, the main commercial district. Madras had no harbour for most of the 19th century, and ships anchored two miles offshore for goods and people to be ferried to and from shore by '*masulah*' boats, or *kattumaram*, through the surf and landed on the sandy beach known as First Line Beach. The road alongside, North Beach Road, became lined with merchants' offices and godowns.

In 1842 George returned to England for three years having brought a new partner, Peter Carstairs, into Gahan Eaton & Co. He chose to return by the new Egyptian route – ship to Suez, overland to Alexandria and then by steamer to England. He found the crossing of the Egyptian desert 'a trip fraught with discomfort, fatigue and difficulty' and was a signatory to a letter to *The Times* written from Alexandria. The letter complained of 'the utter inefficiency of the measures adopted for the transit of passengers' – essentially a shortage of horses – and gross exaggeration by the Agents. I think his wife must have gone back to England earlier as the Madras ship departures records: 4 May 1842 *Sesostris* Madame Gahan and child. This would be month old baby James. The family lived in Plymouth from 1843 to 1845, two more children were born, and then they all returned to Madras. The Madras Almanac records the *Tory* arriving 7 December 1845 having left London on 9 July, the *Lizard* on 20 July and the *Cape* in October. Passengers: Madame Gahan and four Miss Gahans, George Gahan, Esq and six Master Gahans. So, the Gahans spent four months on a sailing ship with ten of their eleven surviving children ranging in age from seventeen to two months. Life was different then! There was no mention of any servants travelling with them. It is also interesting that none of their boys was left behind in England for schooling although I have a record twelve years later of three sons, then aged sixteen, fourteen and eleven returning unaccompanied from England.

After George's return Peter Carstairs appears to have left the partnership and Robert William Evatt was brought in for a couple of years. Robert was a ship's captain and had married one of Georgiana's younger sisters, but he only appears in the Madras Almanac listing of Gahan, Eaton & Co for 1848 and 1849. He then returned to England and settled in Liverpool.

Gahan, Eaton & Co had interests in various ships which they had built at Coringa, so I looked for the Certificates of Registry. These are held in the National Archives at Kew in the BT/107 series. The Indian records are held in bound annual volumes filed together with Ceylon and Australia by port of registry. There is a microfilm index by ship name to the year and port of registry. In theory, a ship was registered once and there was space on the reverse of the form to record changes in ownership or master. In practice, a lot of the records for Madras and Coringa (a separate port of registry) were handwritten and reissued

after a change in ownership, or port of registry, or rebuilding following storm damage, and so you find multiple entries for a ship. The records include a description of the ship with dimensions and weight, when and where built and information on owners and masters.

Once you have your ship, and preferably also its captain at the time, you can search for voyages undertaken. The daily publication 'Lloyds List' contained reports from various ports round the world of shipping arrivals and departures. The Guildhall Library has microfilm copies, accompanied by an index on microfilm by ship and captain to the date of the entry, the column in 'Lloyds List', and the reporting port (abbreviated). Sometimes the port reports were well in arrears, depending on the method of communication with London. I looked at 1847:

The *Defiance*, owned 1/3rd¹⁰ each by George Gahan, Charles William Eaton and Robert Evatt was a 111ft 3-masted barque built at Coringa in 1839. Its master, John Balthazar Sargeant sailed her between Madras and Calcutta, then to Mauritius and back to Calcutta twice before sailing for Ceylon.

The *Lord Elphinstone* was also owned by George Gahan and Charles William Eaton, with Robert Evatt buying a share in June 1847. It too was a 3-masted barque, 113ft long, built at Coringa in 1837. The ship sailed from Madras to Calcutta, then Mauritius, then back to Madras under C .L. Oakley. Then, in June under a new captain, Andree, it sailed for China and was in Whampoa from August to October before returning to Madras in December via Hong Kong, Singapore and Penang.

The *Monarch* was a smaller 3-masted barque, 81ft long, built at Coringa in 1841. By 1847 it was owned or mortgaged to Gahan, Eaton & Co and commanded by Robert W Meppen who held a 1/3rd share, mortgaged to Robert Evatt for Rs 3500. The ship sailed from Madras to various ports up the coast as far as Bimlipatnam and across the Bay of Bengal to Rangoon.

The *Teazer*, another 3-masted barque built at Coringa in 1842, was owned by James Peter Eaton, Charles's younger brother, and its master William Budd. The vessel was sold in September 1847 but before then had visited Penang, Singapore, Aden (with troops from Madras), Calcutta and Mauritius.

George Gahan brought two sons into the business which continued after Charles William Eaton's death in 1857. Charles died in Coringa aged 55 and left his estate to his two daughters, who had both married on the same day in St George's Cathedral, Madras a few years earlier (one to George Gahan's eldest son). Once again I was lucky to find a detailed inventory of the estate,¹¹ prepared by George Gahan as executor on various visits to Coringa. Apart from a newly built dwelling house and shares in four ships, the inventory lists household effects sold at Coringa which throw some light on the life, or at least the clothing, of an up-country widower. Included was a hand organ with four barrels, rosewood pier tables with variegated marble tops, a chittagongwood double cot, 72 white shirts,

¹⁰ By law, shares in ships were registered in 1/64ths which made one-third shares difficult. I have seen them written as 21 and 1/3 64ths.

¹¹ IOR L/AG/34/27/347.

eleven brown Holland coats, twelve white drill trousers, six vests of velvet and satins and fourteen bengal silk handkerchiefs.

The connection with Coringa probably ended soon afterwards. The Madras Gazetteer of 1907, Godavari District, refers to Coringa as:

once one of the greatest ports and shipbuilding centres on this coast, but owing to the silting up of the channel which leads to it, it is now of no commercial importance....it was for long the residence of British merchants...and portions of a few bungalows survive. One, which must have been a fine building, belonged to a certain Mr Graham whose name is still well known. The latest date in the churchyard is 1857 and apparently English merchants did not live in the place long after that.

For Graham read Gahan, and the 1857 grave was Charles William Eaton's.

Gahan, Eaton & Co continued into the 1870s despite the untimely death of George Frederick Gahan, George's son and business partner. The last entry in the Asylum Press Almanac is for 1872 as Gahan & Co, when George was 70. George died in Madras in 1878 and his widow the following year. He left his property to his wife 'to will as she thinks best amongst our children'. Georgiana died intestate and administration of the estate (by then a few hundred rupees) was not granted until 1912, to 2 spinster daughters living together in Bangalore. I have found out little about Mary Ann Prior Gahan and Alice Bird Gahan – both lived into their 70s and died in Bangalore, but no occupation was given and they do not appear in the list of residents. This shows how spinsters (and also widows) can disappear from the official records.

I was sent a photo of George Gahan's tombstone in St Mary's Churchyard, Madras, taken some fifteen years ago. On it were plaques recording the deaths of two sons at sea, and one sparked a fresh line of enquiry. It read:

In memory of Alexander William, drowned at sea on the 31st December 1861 while serving on board the Indian Government steamer *Nemesis*, aged 23 years.

This took me to the records of the Bengal Marine; this branch of government service was distinct from the Bombay Marine which later became the Indian Navy and also separate from the Bengal Pilot Service on the Hooghly River. I established that Alexander William Gahan served on the *Nemesis*, a 400 ton seagoing steamship from 1858, when it was first commissioned, as Third Officer later promoted to Second Officer¹². Unfortunately, due to a post-mutiny reorganisation, no casualty returns were prepared for the Bengal Marine between 1861 and 1865. There was, though, an annual report of its activities, filed as IOR V/24/3037. The ship's predecessor of the same name played a key role in the Opium War of 1841 and reached Guangzhou through 'gunboat diplomacy' but the 1861 duties of the *Nemesis* were more prosaic. It was stationed at Moulmein in Burma and was used for transport down the coast, taking at various times the Commissioner, troops, and stonecutters building a lighthouse. It also took convicts to Port Blair on the Andaman Islands, returning with sick men. On the fateful day of Alexander's drowning it was at

¹² IOR: L/MAR/8/15.

Moulmein and towed the *Mutlah* to sea. The death of the Second Officer was not worthy of mention.

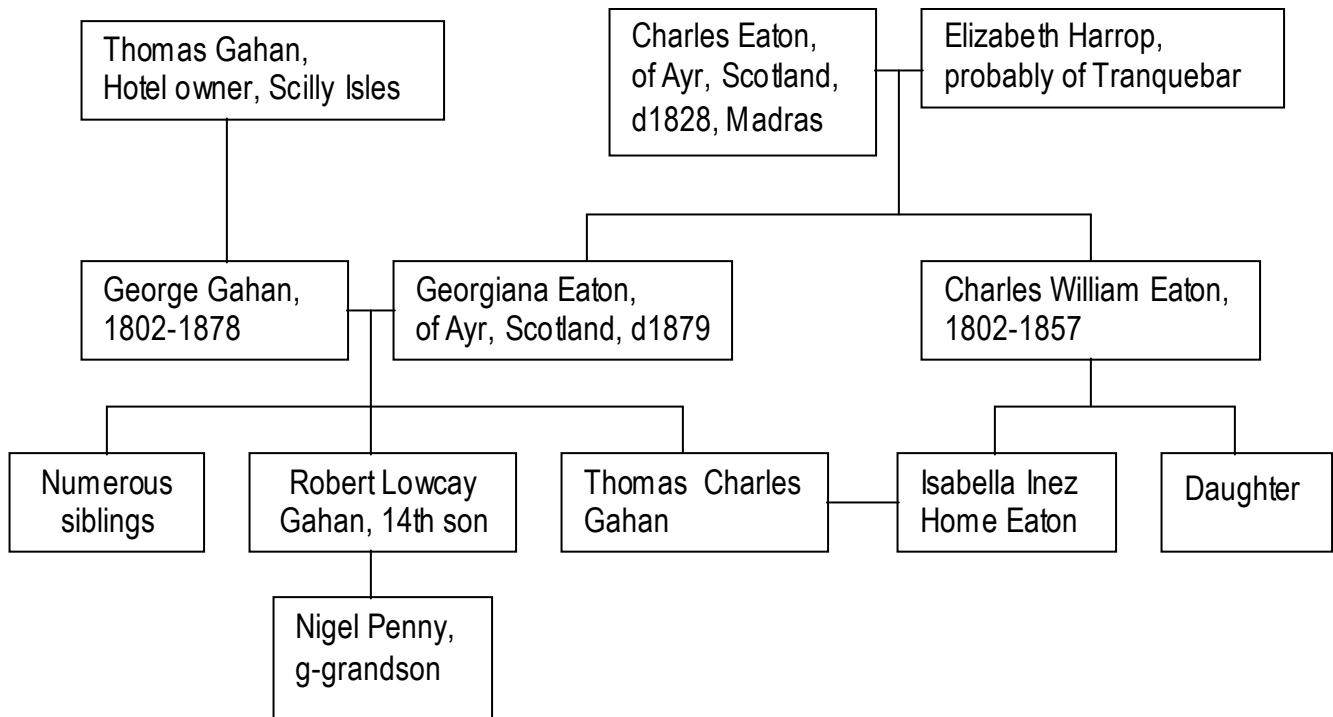
Finally, by way of postscript, my own great grandfather Robert Lowcay Gahan was the fourteenth of George and Georgiana's children. I knew he had gone to sea as a master mariner, captained sailing ships and then transferred to the Inland Steamer Company, but I could not find him on the Mercantile Navy list or in the register of Certificates for Masters and Mates held at Kew. Eventually I discovered he had obtained Certificates of Competency at Calcutta for Local (Foreign) Trade, i.e. the continuation of the country trade carried on under the East India Company. He later obtained an Inland Master's Certificate. He is listed along with hundreds of others in a printed volume listing certificates granted to masters, mates and engineers in the mercantile marine by the Government of Bengal between 1868 and 1895 published in Calcutta in 1896 and filed as IOR V/27/750/16. This lists the date and number of the certificate and the year and place of birth of the holder. A number of names appear more than once as, like my ancestor, they progressed from Mate to Master. Included are Colonial Certificates of Competency for Masters, First and Second Mates and First and Second Class Engineers – a total of nearly 800 certificates, then Local (Foreign Trade) Certificates¹³, some Certificates of Service, and the Local (Inland) Certificates of Competency¹⁴ for the river steamers of Bengal and Assam newly introduced in 1879. Unusually, this is one reference which is not in Baxter's Guide.

I am conscious in writing this story that there are still a lot of gaps in my knowledge of this family of sea captains and merchants. If anyone has additional information, or can suggest further sources to search, I would be delighted to hear from them.

¹³ 120 Masters, 180 First Mates, 130 Second Mates and 160 First and Second Class Engineers.

¹⁴ 150 Masters/First Class Masters and then a largely native list of Second Class Masters, *Serangs* [*serang*: 'skipper of a small native vessel' (Hobson-Jobson)], and Engine Drivers.

Family tree of Gahan-Eaton Family



Lonely Hearts

From The Statesman, Calcutta 1885

(Advertisement)

MATRIMONY

Two European Gentlemen, in good circumstances, agreeable exterior, and pleasant and refined manners, having no opportunity of being introduced to the society of "ladies"; and being in the prime of manhood, and very desirous to find for themselves helpmates to accompany them on life's journey, have decided, for want of any other available means, to appeal to any single ladies or widows for sympathy and permission to correspond, with a view to matrimony. Particulars and references, in strictest confidence (which must be mutually guaranteed), will be given and desired.

Ladies inclined to respond to this most sincere and strictly honourable offer should not be above 30 years of age, and also possess a cheerful temperament, fair education, and pleasant appearance. Address, please "SOLITAIRE", care of Park street Post Office.

The Lure of Indigo, and three V.C.s

By Miles Macnair

The text of a talk given to the FIBIS AGM on 15 November 2008

One branch of my family arrived in India in dramatic fashion. It was 4am on the morning of 9 August 1821 and the ship on which my great great-grandfather, the twenty year old James Hills was travelling, had struck a reef off Setiavarum. The ship was the *Lushington*, a 472 ton barque that had been laid down at Blackwall in 1807. They had been battling a fierce storm up the Bay of Bengal and the exhausted Captain, Andrew Scott (who was also James Hills's uncle) had handed over the helm to his first mate and gone below to catch a brief rest – unaware that the first mate was completely drunk. As the ship sank, Captain Scott lashed his nephew to a hen-coop, threw him over the side and said 'Take your chance with God me lad!' This is all fact, as attested by Capt Scott, who also survived, in his report to the subsequent court of enquiry.

Now the family myth, on which I was brought up, went on to say that young James, near the point of death and with no possessions apart from his water-logged clothes, was rescued from the surf by an Italian doctor named John Angelo Savi. He was then nursed back to health by Dr Savi's wife and three young daughters, and, when he recovered, he made his way to Calcutta, got a job as a clerk in a firm of indigo brokers, and made a quick fortune. A few years later, he returned to the Savi family and wooed and wed the youngest and most beautiful of the Savi daughters, the seventeen year old Charlotte Antoinette Savi.



Charlotte Savi at the time of her engagement

Again the last sentence is absolutely true: – James Hills and the ravishing Charlotte Savi were indeed married in Calcutta on 6 June 1831. But the reality of what had actually happened to James Hills in the ten years between his very wet and traumatic arrival in India and his wedding is probably rather less romantic. The Savi family were well established indigo planters in East Bengal and somehow James Hills had indeed got a job with an indigo broker, quickly learnt the trade and made sufficient money to be accepted as a son-in-law by John Angelo Savi. And, helped no doubt by the family connection, James Hills, with his young bride, set off to establish himself as an indigo planter at Neechindapore in what is now Bangladesh, about 65 miles north-east of Calcutta.

My story so far raises two questions: how was it possible to make a quick fortune from lumps of blue dye and why had James Hills gone out to India in the first place? To answer the second question we need to go back a few years to the Border country, that wild and lawless area of moorland that lies between England and Scotland. This was 'reever' country, with several large families, the Buccleuchs, the Scotts, the Kers and the Inneses, murdering each other and stealing one another's cattle. Blood feuds raged, but like the Montagues and the Capulets in 'Romeo and Juliet', just occasionally the younger generations met and fell in love.

In 1769, Margaret Ker, the sister of Walter Ker, who later ruined himself in a twelve year legal battle to establish his claim to the Dukedom of Roxburgh, had a secret affair with and possibly even a clandestine marriage to the young heir to the Buccleuchs. He then went off to the wars and was killed leaving a devastated, and pregnant, Margaret Ker. Now the Hillses, although not in the same social league, were prosperous, well respected tenant farmers, and James Hill's grandfather, also called James Hills was persuaded (bribed?) to marry the beautiful Miss Ker. A few months later, the first of their six children was born and christened Archibald Hills, who in turn grew up and married Elizabeth Scott of Ancrum. And our James Hills was their eldest son, born on 15 June 1801. By 1821, two things had happened. Firstly, Archibald Hills had taken to the bottle and was in danger of losing his tenancy and secondly, the locals could not avoid noticing that young James Hills looked exactly like a Buccleuch! So it was decided that he must leave the country and seek his fortune, and the chosen method was for him to head for India as a passenger on his uncle's ship, the unlucky *Lady Lushington*.

So now we can turn our attention to the first question and look into the story of that mysterious substance called indigo, the potent blue dye which over the centuries had acquired a mystical, almost magical, mythology. Indigo is a plant extract and various species are found across the world. The northern European version, *Isatis Tintoria*, is commonly known as Woad, and this is the material that ancient tribes used to paint on their skin to frighten their enemies. It is, however, a poor, pale thing compared to the version that grows in warmer climates, *Indigofera Tintoria*, which was first discovered growing wild in India. Traders took it to North Africa and the Americas, while the Dutch took it to South East Asia. But it was in the wet plains of East Bengal that it really thrived. The plant is a perennial shrub which looks rather like very large spinach, yielding its best quality leaves in its second and third years. Indigo, with its rich, intense blue colour, is unique among natural dyes for being totally 'fast', resistant to fading and clinging tenaciously to any fibre base into which it is soaked. It is impossible to wash out, and it works equally well on wool, flax or cotton. (If one looks at old tapestries, it is very noticeable that it is the blue that has survived much better than any other colour.)

Growing indigo was one thing; extracting the dye was quite another, and a weird, complicated process it was, combining delicate technical skills with great manual effort. First the leaves were bruised in a mill and then loaded into tanks of water where they were

allowed to ferment until a greenish foam was produced. The timing of the next stage, transferring the liquor into the oxidising tanks was critical. Next, the surface had to be 'thrashed' for hours with wooden poles by men standing waist deep in the vats, before reaching the final stage of extracting the sediment and filtering it into cakes of dye. But the effort was well worth it, by the 1840s, the finished product, when sold to the dye merchants of London and Amsterdam, was, on a weight for weight basis, valued higher than gold, and indigo represented more than 50% of the value of all cargoes shipped out of Calcutta. And the kings of the industry were the Savis and James Hills, who owned a total of eleven indigo 'factories', employing at one stage no less than 60,000 peasants or 'ryots' growing the crop and processing it. A total of 28,000 acres was involved.

James and Charlotte Hills had eleven children, ten of whom survived into adulthood (they must have had remarkably tough genes!), the boys being sent back to England to be educated at mainly military schools like Addiscombe. Meanwhile, James Hills built an



The mansion at Neechindapore.

imposing palladian style mansion at Neechindapore on the banks of the river, and there he and his wife lead an idyllic life of hunting and pig-sticking and entertaining their neighbouring indigo planters.

But in 1850, disaster struck: James's beloved wife Charlotte died of rheumatic fever aged only 37. My great-grandmother, Veronica Harriet Hills, was the second youngest child then aged four and a half, and she has left us a very

poignant description of how she remembers the harrowing event, when she wrote a manuscript – so far unpublished - of recollections of her family history in 1917.

My father had gone to Krishnagur on business. He dreamt he sat on the verandah at home with my mother, when a big black bird came between them and hid her from him. He got up and called for his *palkee*.¹ Nearing Neechindapore, he met his assistant, Mr Sibbald, and asked "All well at home?". "All well" he replied "but Mrs Hills was not down yesterday." So he arrived to find her on her deathbed. Doctor Archer was sent for from Krishnagur and I remember leeches were applied; also the smell of laudanum, that I recognised years later. I was of course banished from her room most of the time, but I used to hang around watching for a chance to steal in and kiss her. Then on the last day I was made to go down all by myself to the long

¹ A carriage shaped somewhat like a palanquin on wheels.

dining-room and I was given my favourite dish – minced scallops and rice. Then all at once there was a cry throughout the house and I heard my mother was dead! Oh I fancy I was dazed and stupefied, but when I knelt at my aunt's knee to say my evening prayers and it came to 'God bless Mamma', the floods came and my Aunt, who loved my mother as everyone did, soothed me and put me to bed. But not to sleep; I knew too well what those hammering strokes meant and in the morning they took her away.

Soon afterwards, James Hills commissioned this portrait of his children on the steps of Neechindapore – all dressed in mourning, though my great-grandmother, who was always the naughty one, seems to be trying to lighten the sombre mood. In this short talk, I cannot go into many details of their very varied and interesting lives. Archibald, the eldest son, also became a famous indigo planter, and wrote a book about pig-sticking, which is still the bible of the sport. Two other brothers, John and George, went into the army and achieved high rank in the Engineers. Of the daughters, Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Hills and Charlotte 'Totty' Hills both married army officers, and we will return to 'Totty' Hills's husband, Lieutenant George Cubitt shortly. The youngest son, Charlie Hills, was a bit of a card, a very good dancer and a favourite with the ladies, though he never married. He had a career in 'business' and lived in lodgings in Calcutta, where his housekeeper was an anglo-indian widow by the name Mrs O'Brien – who subsequently had a daughter called Maureen. Some years later, Mrs O'Brien took her daughter to London, where she changed her name to Merle Oberon and the rest is history. But that is another story.

My great-grandmother, Veronica Harriet Hills, grew up and married a rising young Welsh Barrister by the name of Lewis Pugh Evans. The wedding took place in Calcutta cathedral on 28 March 1864, when she was nineteen and her husband 27. In her manuscript, she describes how the wedding was not the grand affair that might be expected – her wedding-dress was a simple affair of cotton muslin, run up by her '*dirzie*' [tailor]. The truth was that her father, James Hills, had suffered a succession of financial disasters. In 1854, at the height of the indigo boom, he had not been happy with the price offered by the indigo brokers in Calcutta, so he decided to hire his own 'argosy' and entrust his entire year's production to a single ship bound for London. Nor did he like the insurance rates offered, so when the ship was wrecked in a hurricane he lost everything – again. But he bounced back, restored his fortune, only to be caught up in the indigo riots of 1861. And this time the cause was the German chemists who in 1859 had synthesised the chemical process and had found a way to make 'aniline' dyes in the laboratory. (The word is derived from the Arabic word for indigo, '*anil*'). The price of natural indigo plunged and the farmers who



James Hills in later life

grew the crop as sub-contractors to the 'factories' went on the rampage. Many indigo planters were killed, and James Hills was quite lucky to escape with his life. He returned to England, heavily indebted to a man called Elliot McNaughton, who was also the money lender to the young Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. He died in 1872, and is buried in the family vault at Kensal Green.

But now back to his children. His youngest daughter, Emilia 'Emmy' Hills, married Lewis Evans's brother, Griffith Evans, another barrister. Both the brothers had distinguished careers at the Calcutta bar and were both on the Viceroy's advisory panel. My great-grandfather, Lewis Pugh Evans, did spend a considerable time back home in Wales, and was elected as the Liberal MP for

Cardiganshire in 1880, having rather confusingly changed his name to Lewis Pugh Evans Pugh, after inheriting a lead-mining fortune from a Miss Pugh – on condition he adopted her name. (And that is another story).

Now we go back to James Hills's second son, 'Jimmy' Hills, who was born in 1833. He was commissioned into the Bengal Horse Artillery, and found himself as part of the army corps camped outside Delhi at the time of the Mutiny in 1857. On 9 July the position was guarded by a picquet from the 9th Irregular Cavalry, and the guns themselves were supposedly protected by a troop of about 32 cavalry from the Carabiniers. The action is best described by Jimmy Hills himself, in a letter to one of his brothers.

The alarm went, and off I started with my two guns to a position laid down for them, when, to my astonishment, through an opening on my right, only fifty yards off, dashed a body of cavalry. Now I tried to get my guns into action, but only got one unlimbered when they were upon me. I thought that by charging them I might make a commotion, and give the gun time to load: so I went at the front rank, cut down the first fellow, slashed the next across the face as hard as I could, when two sowars charged me. Both their horses crashed into mine at the same moment, and of course both horse and myself were sent flying. We went down at such a pace that I escaped the cuts made at me, one of them giving my jacket an awful slice just below the left arm - it only, however, cut the jacket. Well, I lay quite snug until all had passed over me, and then

got up and looked about for my sword. I found it a full ten yards off. I had hardly got hold of it when three fellows returned - two on horseback. The first I wounded, and dropped him from his horse; the second charged me with his lance - I put it aside, and caught him an awful gash on the head and face. I thought I had killed him, but apparently he must have clung to his horse for he disappeared. The wounded man then came up, but got his skull split.



James Hills 'Jimmy' (standing) with the future Field Marshal Lord Roberts (seated left)

Then came on the third man, a young active fellow. I found myself getting very weak from want of breath, the fall from my horse having pumped me considerably, and my cloak had somehow or other got tightly fixed round my throat, and was kindly choking me! I went, however, at the fellow and cut him on the shoulder; but some cloth on it apparently turned the blow. He managed to seize the hilt of my sword and twisted it out of my hand. Then we had a hand-to-hand fight, I punching his head with my fists and he trying to cut me, but I was too close to him. Somehow or other I fell, and then was the time, fortunately for me, that Tombs came up and shot the fellow.

my sword and followed him. After being there some time, we came down to look after the unlimbered gun which was left behind. When we got down, I saw the very man that Tombs had saved me from going off with my pistol. I told Tombs, and we went at him. After a little slashing and guarding at both sides, I rushed at him and thrust; he cleverly jumped aside and cut me on the head, knocking me down - not, however, stunning me, for I warded his next cut when down. Tombs, following him up, made him a pass, and up I jumped and had a slash at him, cutting him on the left wrist and nearly severing it. This made him turn round, and Tombs ran him through. He very nearly knocked Tombs over, for he cut through his cap and pagrie, but, fortunately, did not even cut the skin.

I fancy I am indebted to Tombs for saving my life.

For this action, Jimmy Hills was awarded the Victoria Cross. Major (later Sir Henry) Tombs was also awarded the VC for his part in what a brother officer described as this 'noble action', later referred to by Sir Henry Cotton as 'one of the most striking exploits at the siege of Delhi'.

In fact this was not the first VC awarded to a member of the family, since Lt George Cubitt, of the 13th Native Bengal Infantry, 'Totty' Hills's husband, had won the medal in January that year. I quote from *Valour and Sacrifice: Famous Regiments of the Indian Army* by Lt-Col Gautam Sharma (New Delhi, 1990):

After their victory at Kanpur, the sepoys, who had raised the standard of revolt, were advancing on Lucknow under Peshwa Nana Saheb. Sir Henry Lawrence was informed that the number of the advancing column was insignificant. He, therefore, ventured forth and met the Indian column at Chinhut. Here he found that the force was about 20,000 strong, supported by at least six or seven field batteries. As it was not advisable to confront such a large force, he decided to withdraw. It was during the retreat of the English force on Jan 30, 1857, that Lt. William George Cubitt was awarded the VC for saving the lives of three men of the 32nd Regiment at the risk of his own.

Jimmy Hills rose to become a General, commanding a Division in the 2nd Afghan War and was knighted for his services. When his lifelong friend General 'Bobs' Roberts was sent out to South Africa to rescue the Army's reputation in the Boer War, Jimmy Hills came out of retirement to be at his side as an unofficial adviser. Late in life, he had married the daughter of Judge Johnes of Dolacothy, in Cardiganshire, who had been murdered by his Irish butler (that is yet another cracking yarn) and changed his name to Hills-Johnes, which is the name recorded in the annals of the Victoria Cross. 'Bobs' Roberts was a frequent visitor at Dolacothy.

The reputation for outstanding valour extended to the next generation as well. My great-great aunt 'Emmy' Hills, who married the second Evans brother, Griffith Evans, had a son called Lewis Pugh Evans who was a Colonel in the Black Watch in 1917. During the battle of Paschendale in 1917, the officer corps of the Lincolnshire Regiment had been decimated and Col. Evans was appointed to command their 1st Battalion. A great believer in leading from the front, he was the first over the parapet when the whistles blew for an advance towards enemy lines. His first company achieved their objective, so he rested them and called up the next company, only to find themselves held up by a German machine-gun post. He ordered his sergeant to make a flanking attack while he said that he would 'cause a diversion and draw their fire'. This consisted of standing up and charging single-handed towards them. Although he caught a bullet in the left shoulder, he reached their position and forced the gunners to surrender at the point of his revolver. Then, refusing to have his wound treated, he made his way to HQ to give his report, where he got a terrible bollocking from the General for behaving like a young second lieutenant. It was even suggested that he might be court-martialled, but on sober reflection they gave him the Victoria Cross instead (and the Belgians awarded him their Order of Leopold and Croix de Guerre).¹

I come now to the last truly valiant military action by a member of the family, which took place during WWII, and it brings us back to India in 1942. Lewis Owain Pugh, great

¹ Brig-Gen Lewis Pugh Evans (1881-1962) had an extraordinary record for gallantry during WWI. Besides the VC mentioned above he had already won a DSO in 1915 to which he added a Bar in 1918, and he was mentioned in despatches no less than seven times (ed).



Lewis Pugh Evans and Lewis Owain Pugh

Wolves' starring David Niven, Trevor Howard and Roger Moore, with the role of Lewis Pugh played by Gregory Peck! The film is frequently repeated on Saturday afternoon television and I can highly recommend it.²

grandson of James Hills and my first cousin once-removed, was a young Colonel working for SOE, the Special Operations Executive. He recruited a team of elderly volunteers from the Calcutta Light Horse Regiment, then a drinking club for retired reservists. They stole a dredging barge from the Hoogly, sailed it all the way round via Ceylon to Goa, where they proceeded to blow up and sink three German ships that had sought refuge there. And every single member of the party survived and returned, rather knocked about, to their bemused families who thought they had gone off on a week's gentle camp. Since Portuguese Goa was neutral territory, there could be no medals and the whole extraordinary escapade was kept secret until the 1970s, when Rank Brothers made a swashbuckling film about it called 'The Sea

Indian Fortitude

After a sharp action during the mutiny, the body of Capt Mackenzie's orderly lay in a *doolie* outside his tent when his father 'a fine old Sikh' and a *sowar* in the regiment came up to me with a smile on his handsome old face to ask after his son. My heart was too full to speak. I could only point to the *doolie*, the curtains of which were closed. Lifting one of them up, he looked in and knew his bereavement. The proud old soldier set his face hard, drew himself up, saluted me and said: "My son's *nokri* (service) is over. Let me take his place. I will be your orderly now Sahib." I am not ashamed to say that this touching act of simple, unaffected Spartan fortitude unmanned me.

Quoted in Richard Holmes, *Sahib*, (London, 2005), p296

² Though undecorated for this exploit, Lewis Owain Pugh (1907-1981) won a DSO in 1945, adding a bar the same year and another in 1946, and was twice mentioned in despatches. He eventually became a Major-General (ed).

Escape from Fyzabad, 1857

Transcribed for the Journal by Bill Hall from an original booklet in his possession

[The booklet, though printed, may never have been published. Lt Charles Stephen Fowle had arrived in India in 1842, and served with the 22nd Bengal Native Infantry during the 2nd Sikh War 1848-49. He retired in 1874 as a Colonel commanding a Wing of the 36th N.I. The only blot on his escutcheon was a reprimand for intoxication in April 1858 (IOR: L/Mil/10/84, ff136-37).

Fyzabad (or Faizabad) is on the river Gogra in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh). Identification of some of the place names mentioned is difficult since several were evidently only small villages]

The following interesting account of his escape from Fyzabad, after the mutiny, is by Lieutenant C. S. Fowle, of the late 22nd N.I.

"Friday, June 5th, 1857.—After having been kept in a horrid state of suspense and nervous anxiety for about ten days after hearing of the capture of Delhi by the Insurgents from Meerut, during which interval intelligence of the mutinies and horrid atrocities committed at Lucknow, Seetapore and Sultanpore reached us, we suddenly received orders just as we were sitting down to dinner at the mess, to send our beds down to the lines and to sleep with our men. No person at the time knew what was the cause of this unexpected order, but we supposed it to be that the mutineers from Seetapore or one of the stations near were on their way to Fyzabad. Before retiring to our beds, we learned from Colonel Coldney, the Deputy Commissioner, that intelligence had been received, that people in the city intended to rise either that night or the next, and that they were to be joined by the troops, or a portion of them in cantonments. This was by no means pleasant news with the recollection of what had occurred at other stations still fresh in our memories, and I do not think that sleep much visited the eyes of any of us during that night, more especially as the Deputy Commissioner when shaking hands with us as much as intimated that he did not think we should live to meet again.

Saturday, 6th.—Thank God the night passed off quite quietly, although we have another of the same anxiety to look forward to. This morning a sepoy of my Company came to me and said that he wished to speak to me in private. Thinks I to myself, here is the beginning of our troubles. I took him into my sitting room and asked him what he had to communicate, when he told me that he wished me to write and warn Colonel Goldney that it was not safe for him to leave his house as there were a trooper and a sepoy on the look out for him, being determined to shoot him the first opportunity. I immediately went over to the Colonel and communicated to him what I had heard, for which he thanked me and authorized me to tell the sepoy that he should be well rewarded either by being promoted or in some other way. Nothing particular occurred during the day, reports of all kinds flying about.

Sunday, 7th.—We again slept with our men and the night passed off very quietly, so much so that I began to think that nothing would happen, but I was soon undeceived. Being officer of the day, I had to march off the guards and picquets to their respective posts, and having done so, as I was returning from the parade ground to my house, it was reported to me that some person or persons had attempted to set fire to the lines. This had a very bad appearance, as it had always been the forerunner of the mutinies at almost all the other stations. I went home and dressed for the purpose of going over to the mess house where we were to have Divine Service; on my way there I met Major Mill of the Artillery, he appeared to be in a very melancholy mood and said to me, 'Well, I think our time is short now, for this will most likely be our last night, our troops have plainly shewed what they intend to do.' I asked him what he meant, and he replied that he was not at liberty to mention just then. I walked with him to the house in which Colonel Goldney was living, and there I saw nearly all the officers of the station assembled looking in a most awfully gloomy state as if something very serious had happened. We had Divine Service, prayers being read as usual by Major Mills. After the Service was over, I asked Colonel Goldney what fresh news he had heard. He told me that intelligence had been received of the fall of Benares, and that in consequence mutineers were on their road from different stations to attack Fyzabad. We had up to this time placed confidence in our men, but now that they were to be assailed by hundreds and perhaps thousands of their brethren-in-arms, it was absurd any longer 'laying the flattering unction to our souls' that they would remain firm for ever, if they had the will they would not have the power to do so. Arrangements had been made for a retreat upon Lucknow in case of necessity, but now that was considered impracticable on account of the mutineers being in such numbers on the road. A council of war was held at which it was determined to remain and await the event, trusting that our men would spare our lives or at least the lives of some of us, and that immediate arrangements should be made for the removal of all the ladies and children to a place of safety. This was accordingly done. Nothing particular occurred during the day. In the evening and again about 12 at night, I visited all the guards, picquets and sentries, and found all on the alert and everything just as usual. I forgot to mention that yesterday the men of the Regiment sent their native officers to the commanding officer, and requested that the treasure might be brought up from the city and placed in cantonments, because they would be better able to guard it, promising, at the same time, that they would take the greatest care of it. Consequently that afternoon, the commanding officer not doubting the men's fidelity, issued a station order to the effect, that 'trusting implicitly in the loyalty and fidelity of the troops, he was pleased to direct that the Government treasure should be moved from the city and placed in an empty bungalow in cantonments, appointing at the same time a guard over it for its protection.' Oh! the treachery of the villains! This was just what they wanted, in order that when the mutiny took place, they might have it all to themselves, instead of being obliged to share it with the people in the city!!

Monday, 8th.—We again slept with our men last night and the night passed off quietly as usual. This morning the same sepoy came to me and said that a sepoy of the Regiment had just returned from leave and that he had met the mutineers on the road, that they were perfectly orderly, and that they had not touched one of their officers, nor did they intend creating a disturbance on their way through Fyzabad, but would march quietly through cantonments on their way to Delhi. I knew this sepoy to be a good man, and did not think he would tell me an untruth, so I believed his report and sat down and communicated what he had told me to my own Colonel and also to Colonel Goldney. The latter wrote me back, thanking me for the intelligence, but saying that at the same time my note was put into his hands, the officers of police had reported to him that the mutineers would be in the next morning or the morning afterwards, and that they were marching with the heads of five of their officers in their hands, moreover, that an emissary from their camp had reached our lines, and that I was to make the same known, which I immediately did. At 4 P.M. the native officers were ordered up to the commanding officer's quarters, and questioned as to the intention of the men, to which they replied that the men were perfectly staunch, and would remain so, and stand by their officers to the last. They were asked if any emissary had arrived from the camp of the mutineers, to which they replied in the negative, but after taking their leave, the head man returned saying that a letter which he produced had just been put into his hands. The contents of this letter were to the effect that the mutineers would be in the next morning, and that they should expect the men of the 22nd Regiment to join them and urging upon the latter the necessity of getting rid of their officers, directing them in case of their not going away quietly to put them all to death. The native officers were then asked what they intended to do in regard to this letter, to which they replied, at the same time pretending to feel great indignation at its contents, that they would immediately send an answer that they did not wish to have anything to do with the mutineers, and that, if they liked to go through the station quietly, they should not be molested, but that if they attempted to interfere with them, they would fight them. Oh! the lying treacherous brutes! knowing as they did that they had fixed upon the hour that night for the mutiny to take place. Their fidelity was so far from being suspected that in this day's orders two companies, the 4th and 5th, were told off for the purpose of flanking the guns to prevent the Artillerymen, who were suspected of disaffection, from playing tricks with them. Thinking that there would be a fight the next day according as the men said, I had employed a part of the day in making a few preparations in case of being killed, and about 7 P.M. I placed my writing desk and things that I most valued in the Bells of Arms¹ in charge of my company, so fully did I believe that the men were staunch. This evening just after we had retired from mess, a bugle was sounded in the lines of the 6th Irregular Infantry which was immediately caught up by the men of our Regiment, and which proved to be the signal for the outbreak. We at once repaired to the parade ground with swords and pistols, where we found the men in a great state of confusion, and all with their muskets in

¹ 'Bell of Arms': a structure (maybe portable) to store rifles.

their hands, under the impression that a Regiment of Europeans had landed at the Ghaut for the purpose of destroying them. The first thing we saw was that the two *faithful* companies which had been told off to flank and guard the guns had seized them themselves, and no persuasion on our part would induce them to give them up. We succeeded in getting the other companies in something like order and remained up with them till 1 o'clock in the morning, when finding that no good could be done, I went in search of the commanding officer to ask him what he intended doing. For this purpose I was going up to the guns, when I was quietly told that if I went up there I should be shot. After awhile I found the Colonel, and after telling him what I thought of the state of the Regiment, asked him what *he* thought of our making a retreat, to which he replied that I had better go and ask my commanding officer, mentioning one of the native officers (and I suppose a bigger scoundrel never trod the earth), for that he had lost all command of the Regiment. I replied, if things, Colonel, have come to that pass, it is high time we should look out for ourselves, you know what atrocities the men of other Regiments have committed upon their officers and officers' wives, and I have no idea of remaining here till the mutineers come in the morning to be either shot or have my throat cut. So with your permission I shall leave. Have I your permission to leave the parade ground? He said, 'you have my leave to go where you like and do what you like.' I wished him good morning. I then went to the 2nd in command and told him that I was off, and asked him and the Doctor if they would accompany me, to which they agreed. Another officer joined us immediately afterwards which made up our numbers to four. We now found to our horror that the men had cut off all communication between the parade and our houses. This for a few minutes gave me the feelings of utter despair and hope-lessness which I shall not easily forget. However, it was within two hours of daybreak and there was no time to be lost. We got hold of one faithful man who walked with us through the lines and got us safely to our houses, where we got just such things as we were able to carry in our hands, and then under escort of five faithful men whose services we had engaged, we made all haste to the river (Ghogra) afraid that the slightest delay would cause us to be followed. On our arrival at the river side, we found, to our dismay, that the rascally Cavalry had seized all the boats and the boatmen. After an hour's search, however, we succeeded in procuring a boat and one boatman, by which means we managed to get in safety across the river.

Tuesday 9th—After walking about seven miles, we reached a village where one of the ladies had been concealed the day before. At this village we remained, some of us under a tree, the whole day, getting what we could, but very little to eat. As we had not been to bed all night, we managed to get a tolerably good sleep under the trees, notwithstanding that the heat and dust were almost suffocating. We had intended remaining here till the next evening when we had been promised a covered boat to convey us to Dinapore², but just as it got dark that evening, we were informed that the villagers from two or three different villages were down upon us for what plunder they could get, and most likely also for murder, so we had to take up our few traps and

² Dinapore is about 190 miles from Fyzabad as the crow flies.

be off. We made for the Ghaut opposite to Fyzabad where we arrived about 10 o'clock and had the good fortune to find a small open canoe with one dandy [boatman], with whom we made a bargain (a most exorbitant one, of course) to take us to Dinapore; we all got into the small boat and alternately rowed ourselves down the stream till we got well clear of Fyzabad, when we took to sleep, leaving the boat-man to row with one of the party keeping watch.

Wednesday, 10th.—This morning we were very nearly getting into a great scrape. Having had very little to eat for the last 24 hours, we got our boat to shore for the purpose of getting some breakfast, which we had no sooner done, than we were warned to be off, as there were a lot of the 17th sepoy about the place, and we were told that if they knew we were there they would molest us, and in all probability, murder us — so we were obliged to be off again without any breakfast. Having gone a short way down the stream, we saw a very nice covered boat on the banks of the river with a sepoy in charge, this we knew belonged to our Colonel. The sepoy called to us to go to him as he had something of importance to tell us. After a little demur we went over to him when he told us (the lying scoundrel) that the Colonel, with his lady and daughter, had just left the boat and gone to the village about a mile and a half off, intending to travel by land, and had left word that should we pass down, we were to be allowed to take his boat down to Dinapore. Believing the man and thinking that a covered boat would be much better than an open one, we agreed to take it, and consequently put all our traps on board. Here we found breakfast all ready and some small bottles of beer, but all these luxuries we had only time to look at, when we were informed that the sepoy were upon us. To catch up what few things we could carry in our hands, and put them again on to our canoe and shove off was but the work of a minute. What few clothes and other things (with the exception of my Bible and small box) which I had managed to bring with me I was compelled to leave behind, so that I was just now left with the clothes on my back. We had just time to get into the middle of the stream, when we were again called upon by a fresh arrival to go back, but we were not quite such fools; and because we refused to do so, he quietly fired upon us, but fortunately did no harm. Nothing occurred during the day excepting that we were hunted like mad dogs until it became dark when we got on better. In the evening as we were passing one of the Ghauts at a place by the name of Tanda, we were challenged, and our boatman telling them that there were no Feringhees on board, we were allowed to move quietly on with the assurance that if there were any Feringhees on board, we should not escape, even if we went 160 miles down, as guards were placed at all the landing places to prevent any European from escaping.

Thursday, 11th.— Not having broken our fast for 48 hours, excepting with a few raisins and a tea-spoonful of dry soojee, and seeing everything perfectly quiet on the shore we were again thinking of landing for the purpose of procuring something to eat. Just at this moment, a small boat passed us with three or four natives in it to whom our boatman addressed himself and asked if there were any Bunneeahs on shore from whom we could procure provisions, to which they replied, after seeing us,

'you have got four Bunneeahs on board, you cannot want any more.' They then rowed as fast as they were able to a large village close by, which they had no sooner reached than to our dismay we saw two boats loading as fast as they could with men armed to the teeth with match-locks, swords and sticks. As soon as the boats were full, as may be supposed, they made the best of their way towards us. Just at this moment, our boat stuck on a sand bank, we saw it was impossible to get out of their way, and gave ourselves up for lost. We all agreed that the only chance we had of escape was to lay down our arms and place ourselves at their mercy which we did, and no doubt that this measure, under Providence was the means of saving our lives, for no sooner did the ruffians see that we wished to make no resistance, than they told us to sit down, and nothing should happen to us. To have made the slightest resistance or to have fired a shot at the blood-thirsty ruffians would have been to ensure the destruction of our small party consisting of four gentlemen and a lady and child. Their party, I suppose, consisted of 60 or more persons armed to the teeth, and a more horrid set of ruffians I never saw, and trust I never shall again. The head man told me that they had come for the express purpose of murdering us all, but that they found we did not wish to harm them. They forced us to go to their village, and on our arrival there we saw the shore crowded with armed men, I suppose there were no less than three hundred of them, all thirsting for our blood, which no doubt, but for some secret reason of their own, they would without hesitation have shed; they gave us some chupatties and dhall to eat, but under such circumstances not knowing but that any moment might be our last, we had not much appetite, although we had hardly broken our fast for 48 or more hours. They offered to let us go and even to escort us in safety as far as Benares if we would guarantee them 1000 rupees, 500 to be paid at once and 500 on our arrival at Benares. There was only one of our party who had a farthing of money and he had only a few rupees. In the dusk of the evening, under pretence of escorting us to a place of the name of Gopalpore, where they said lived a Rajah, they took us to a sand bank on the opposite side of the river, and there having quietly robbed us of everything that was valuable, such as our watches, rings, forks and pistols, they quietly told us to go about our business, and though they assured us we should not escape with our lives as we went further on, no entreaties on our part could prevail upon them in return for all our property which they had taken from us, to go with us a single mile.

Friday 12th.—Got on pretty well all night, having come about twenty miles, our boatman was so done up that we were obliged to let him sleep and manage the boat ourselves alternately. About seven o'clock we were again taken prisoners to a village by the name of Nyneejore, here we were kept in a sort of house during the day, every brute of the village, men, women, and children being allowed to come and look at us as they would go to look at a lot of wild beasts. Some of the men belonging to the head man of the village sat at the door of the hut and laughed and made all sorts of low blackguardly jokes upon us ; knowing as they did, the cowardly ruffians, that being surrounded with armed men, we did not dare retaliate. In the evening we were all marched off to the

Bazaar where a bedstead each was put for us in a row outside for us to sleep upon in the best way we could, with a promise that the next day we should be allowed to go to the Rajah of Gopalpore, which they knew to be a diabolical lie the whole time they were uttering it.

Saturday, 13th.—The night passed off quietly. As might have been expected, there was no chance of our being allowed to go over to the Rajah to-day, here we were kept in the Bazaar with nothing to shelter us from the burning sun and the dust which were almost suffocating, except a little grass thatch, nothing to eat but dhal and chupatties which were most kindly provided for us by a poor old Bunneeah woman who had taken compassion upon us and supplied us once or twice a day, refusing all remuneration. As for the head blackguard of the place, although he promised faithfully to come to us, he never came near us, nor did he care whether we had anything to eat or not.

Sunday 14th.—The whole of this day we were kept in the same state as yesterday. The heat and the dust from which we had hardly any protection, was almost unbearable. In the evening as our friend, the head man, kept on promising to come and set us at liberty, but never came, I determined to go to him, so taking one of the men who was sentry over us and accompanied by one of my companions, I started off for his house which was about a mile and a half off, he received us in the most insolent manner possible, treating us more like dogs than like human beings; he and his vile associates laughing and making fun of us. However, he promised us that we should be allowed to depart the next day, and for a wonder he kept his promise. We returned home to our comfortless dinner and told our companions that we were to get our liberty the next day, but as we had been told so many lies they did not believe it. Having eaten our meal of native food and drank some tea we retired to rest.

Monday, 15th.—Got up very early to see about getting our boat ready. About 8 o'clock the Baboo arrived to give orders for our release. He had promised to give us some money for the road which we thought was very liberal on his part; but we soon found that he was not so generous after all, for he had made up his mind that whatever he gave us he would have an equivalent for, so having previously searched us and knowing what we possessed, he determined upon possessing himself of our swords and a pistol which were the only articles that had been spared to us by the scoundrels of the last village we were at. We did not like to part with these things and told him so, but as we had no money wherewith to purchase food for the rest of our journey, and it was very evident that without securing them, the hardhearted villain would not give us a farthing, we were obliged to submit and take what he chose to give us, which was about a 20th part of the value of the things. About 10 a.m. we got off and went over to the other side of the river where was a Rajah (the Rajah of Gopalpore). Here we were treated like gentlemen and were supplied with money and most other things that we required. We were put into the house of an Indigo Planter who had gone to Dinapore with his family; here we were able to get good provisions and had some meat for dinner which was an immense luxury as we had had nothing but native food for seven days, and sometimes not even that; we also got some good water to drink which was a great change for the better after the

dirty, muddy water of the Ghogra which for some days was the only thing we had to drink; we remained very comfortably till Saturday, waiting for a boat to be got ready for us, when we left again for Dinapore leaving our open boat behind and taking in its place a large covered one. We got on very well till the evening, when we were obliged to fasten our boat to the shore on account of a storm which came on, and here we remained during the night.

Sunday 21st.—Started again about daybreak and went a few miles further on till we came to a place by the name of Burhul where was a Rajah who behaved very civilly to us and supplied us readily with what things we required, stayed here till 4 p.m. when we again started on our way.

Tuesday 23rd.—Got on pretty well all night and anchored for a short time at a place by the name of Burhuj where we changed the men of our escort which had been furnished us by the Rajah of Burhul. Started again, and in the evening arrived at a place by the name of Bhagulpore³; here we remained till 10 p.m., changing our escort and dandies and getting other things. Started again, but the wind was so rough against us that we only got blown to the other side of the river and stuck on a sand bank, where we were obliged to remain during the night. Here the new men of our escort managed to practise upon our fears by telling us that some people had come from the Azimghur side to look at the boat, and finding that there were Europeans on board had gone away to collect some men to come and attack us. They said moreover, that if we would give them some money they would remain and protect us, but if not they would take their departure; as it was in the middle of the night, and we had no weapons of defence with us whatever, we thought we had better comply with their request, so we gave them some money and they remained, promising most faithfully to remain and escort us to the next place which was about 20 miles off. The next day we feared that what they had told us the night before was only a lying hoax to get money out of us, and that no person had been near the boat all night.

Wednesday, 24th.—Notwithstanding their promises to escort us to the next place, no sooner had day appeared than all the men of our guard left us in the lurch, quite satisfied with the money they had falsely extorted from us. We started again after having succeeded in getting our boat off the sand-bank, but the wind was so strong against us that we were only able to get about three or four miles in as many hours, and therefore we anchored for the day near two villages, one on the Azimghur side and one on the Goruckpore side of the river. The wind not abating and not liking to be between these two villages at night we determined to retrace our steps and place ourselves under the protection of the people at Bhagulpore, from whom we had received civility the day before. On our arrival the head man of the village sent us some five or six chowkedars for our protection during the night, and told us if we liked to remain there for ten days nothing should happen to us. In course of conversation with the head man he told us

³ In the *Imperial Gazetteer Atlas* Burhul may be Barhalganj, and Burhuj is probably Barhaj. Bhagulpore has not been identified, but is not the city of Bhagalpur far away to the east.

about ten miles off lived an Opium Agent with his family, and that if we liked he would convey us there and give us an escort for the road. We immediately sent off a note to this gentleman whose name was Nicolson⁴, Opium Agent of Selimpore [Salempur?], telling him of our difficulties and how we were situated, and early next morning he very kindly sent us a buggy and a shigram [a type of palanquin carriage] with a most kind note requesting us to go to his house, sending us at the same time tea and sugar wherewith to refresh ourselves before starting. We went to his house, and I am sure that no one of us will ever forget the kindness and hospitality that we received from him and his family during the five or six days that we remained there. Through his kindness and that of his friends we were enabled to travel the remainder of our journey comfortably by land to Dinapore, where we arrived in safety after being nearly a month on the road, a great part of which we spent in an open boat and in the Bazaar of a village exposed to the burning rays of the sun by day and the open air at night with little to eat (nothing but native food) and little but muddy water to drink. However, we have every reason to be thankful that our lives have been so providentially saved, and that with all our exposure and bad food we have been so mercifully preserved from sickness of any kind. Having arrived at Dinapore three of our party were appointed to do duty with the 8th Regiment Native Infantry. After remaining at Dinapore for six or seven days I obtained leave for 30 days for the purpose of visiting a relation at Hazareebaugh. At this station there were two companies of the 8th Regiment on command duty, and knowing that if the three Regiments at Dinapore mutinied these two companies would be sure to follow. We were of course kept in a constant state of suspense, anxiously looking out for daily news from Dinapore to see that all was right, until the night of the 28th July when, in the middle of the night we were aroused from our beds by a sowar who had brought a note from Mr. Wilson, the Magistrate at Burhee, with the intelligence that the three Regiments at Dinapore had mutinied and gone off with their arms. As soon as we could get ready I accompanied my sister, Mrs. Simpson, to a place about eight miles off by the name of Echawk [Ichak] where was a Rajah, friendly to the government. Here we remained the whole of that day and the following night, being joined by Major Simpson, Principal Assistant to the Commissioner in the evening, who reported that everything remained quiet at Hazareebaugh, but it was deemed advisable that the ladies should, with all speed, be sent to Calcutta; so the next morning I started off with Mrs. Simpson for Burhee, where we were fortunate enough to find a carriage belonging to the North West Dauk Company which we engaged, here we were joined by the wife of the Doctor of Hazareebaugh who agreed to accompany us. In the evening we received a letter from Major Simpson saying that everything remained perfectly quiet at Hazareebaugh. Strange to say the two companies there were still in ignorance of the state of affairs at Dinapore, though four days had elapsed since the mutiny of the three Regiments at that station. This may be attributed to the foresight displayed by the officer commanding them in keeping all letters from the men until they had been read and found to contain no news likely to create excitement amongst them, and also by his strictly

⁴ Listed as R Nicholson in *New Calcutta Directory*.

forbidding any strangers whatever to be admitted into the lines. In the evening after having partaken of the hospitality of the most hospitable and kind-hearted of men, Mr. Wilson, the Magistrate of Burhee, we started in our carriage for Raneegunge, the two ladies in the inside, and myself on the roof. After two days and two nights of travelling with coolies to draw the carriage, we arrived safely at Raneegunge. Here we received a letter from Major Simpson, dated from Burhee the 30th of July, telling us of the mutiny that day at 3 P.M. of the two companies at Hazareebaugh and of the most Providential escape of himself and the rest of the Europeans there. As soon as the mutiny took place, the men divided themselves into two or three different parties, one party made for the house of the commanding officer, and another for the house of my brother-in-law, Major Simpson, who was at the time performing *cutcherry*⁵ in his house and was only warned of their approach just in time to take up his cap and depart when the men were actually in his compound. He made for the stables in order to get his horse, but before he could reach them, he saw the fiends let fly a volley through his bungalow in order, no doubt, to catch all three of us whom they knew to have been living in it; they were greatly enraged at finding no Feringhee inside, and immediately looted the bungalow of whatever they wanted, and then setting fire to it, burned it to the ground, thereby causing a loss to the Major including stores, furniture, and the bungalow (which was his own property) of about 6,000 rupees. His pony and a carriage mare which he had just bought, they took with them, at the same time tearing the lining out of a carriage which had just arrived from Calcutta. They also burnt down the bungalow of their commanding officer and that of the Doctor. They then looted the treasury and let loose all the prisoners from two jails amounting to nearly 1,000 in number. They then made off for Chota Nagpore, compelling the prisoners to carry their ill-gotten gains, having first distributed 10,000 rupees worth of pice amongst the people in the Bazaar. Most fortunately no European lives were lost, which under Providence is entirely attributable to the timely notice forwarded to us by Mr. Wilson of the outbreak at Dinapore. Had we been there with the ladies at the time of the mutiny of the two companies, nothing could have saved us from being brutally murdered. At no station where there has been a mutiny have I heard of the men being more determined to kill every European than they were at Hazareebaugh. My firm belief, and that of others, more competent to judge than myself, is that had the two companies of the 8th Regiment been sent away to rejoin their Regiment, no disturbance whatever would have occurred at Hazareebaugh, and very probably not at Chota Nagpore."

CAREER OF COLONEL GOLDNEY

To the Editor of the Bengal Hurkaru

DEAR SIR, —Several grave inaccuracies appearing in my letter published in your issue of to-day, I shall feel greatly obliged if you can kindly find room in your next for this corrected copy. *[He corrects his regiment's casualty list and then continues:]*

I am unwilling to allow this opportunity to pass without fulfilling a promise which, in conjunction with others, I made to poor Col. Goldney the last time I saw him, and

⁵ i.e. holding a session of his magistrate's court (*cutcherry*).

only a few days before his death. He was an honorary member of the mess of my Regiment, and upon our breaking up the last evening of our assembling there, and just after his health had been proposed and responded to most heartily by all present, he shook hands with us and said, "Gentlemen, all I ask is, that should any of you survive me, and should have an opportunity, you will kindly let my friends know that I remained at my post to the last, and strictly did my duty." We all promised him that we would do so.

I thank God that I have survived to perform this promise; and as no other opportunity has offered I gladly avail myself of the present, to bear my humble testimony to the effect that if ever a man lost his life through zeal for his Government, it was Col. Goldney! His life, for several days had been eagerly sought after . by all the disaffected Mussulmen of the station and city; and had he taken the advice of his friends and left a few hours before, he might have been alive at this moment, an influential native having offered his services to convey him to a place of safety. But thinking that his presence might be required, he determined upon remaining and lost his life in consequence.

My acquaintance with Col. Goldney was unfortunately of short duration, but during that acquaintance I saw a great deal of him, and was much with him on duty; and I am sure that a man more zealous and active in his duties as a public officer; more honourable, straight-forward, and kind-hearted in private life; nor one more deservedly respected and beloved by all who knew him, did not exist.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

C. S. FOWLE, Lieut

Late 22nd Regiment N. I.

Calcutta, August 21

The young bride of a Madras Police Inspector describes her new life in 1894

Transcribed for the Journal by David Gore

[The letter below was written from India by Mary Mayne [née Caldwell], the youngest daughter of the late Bishop Robert Caldwell (1814-91), to her brother Dr Addington Caldwell in Australia. It was written soon after Mary's marriage to Bobby Mayne of the Madras Police which had taken place at her mother's home at Kodaikanal in the Palani Hills, South India, in 1894.]

Baliguda, Maliah Hills, via RussellKonda¹, Ganjam District,
Madras Presidency,
South India.
Feb 5th 1894

"My dearest Addington,

No doubt you have heard all about our wedding from Mother, but I enclose a little pamphlet Mother got printed from the Mail which, in case she has not, will give you a better description of all that happened than I could, as it was all so like a dream! We are very happy in spite of the extremely lonely life in these wilds. After we left Kodai [*the Caldwell home where she and Bobby Mayne were married*], we went to Vellore to stay a week with Bob's dear old father, and then we came here by steamer from Madras. We had a very rough time landing at Gopalpore, and the boat in which my horse was got upset, and he had to swim ashore. We were nearly upset too and were drenched to the skin!

For five months of the year Bob's [*Indian Police*] headquarters are in Russel Konda, a pretty little station in the plains. But from Nov. to June we are on these hills – they are very wild, little known and inhabited by 'Khonds', a brave fearless set of men who were once addicted to Human Sacrifices, but now offer Buffaloes instead. I shall soon be writing articles to the Mail about them. I will send you copies to read as I feel sure they will interest you.

Bob has to look after a large Police Reserve up here, to keep the surrounding tribes in check. These hills are very feverish [*malaria*], but so far I have entirely escaped and Bob has had only a few slight attacks. If we can hold on against it, we want to remain here for a little as the life suits us - and the pay is good, which is a consideration to us just now!

Wild animals abound here. Hardly a night passes without some cow or pig being killed by a panther. About 30 miles from here, there is a man-eating tiger that has killed over 200 men and women! A government reward of 500 Rupees is out for him, but he seems too wily to be caught. No other Europeans live up here except ourselves and Mr Elphinstone, the Special Asst-Collector, and I am the only lady that has come up here to live – except one

¹ 'Russell's hill': named after George Russell appointed Special Commissioner in 1835 to put down disturbances in the surrounding country.

that did so nearly 20 years ago! However I am very happy as I have so much to do in looking after the house and seeing to our numerous animals as we had to bring up our own cow, goats and fowls etc. as provisions are scarce. Beside these, there are our three dogs (the famous Kodai amongst them), our two horses and elephants provided by the government for transport. Altogether such a menagerie!



Mary Mayne (1864-1930), May 1896, with her two elder children, Maunsell (left) and Elizabeth (right)

Just lately, a disturbance broke out amongst the Khonds of a neighbouring native state called Nyaglung [Nayagarh], and Bob was ordered off to it with the whole Police Reserve up here. I elected to go down with him, but we had to separate at the foot of the hills, and I stayed in Russel Konda till he came to fetch me. We have only just returned to the hills. I am glad to say the disturbance all ended in smoke, but you can imagine how anxious I was as one never knows how these rebellions may end. *[She would have heard terrible stories of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58.]* We had to leave Baliguda in such a hurry and left everything just as it was and travelled almost without stopping. One night our bedding never arrived, so I had to sleep on top of a camp table while Bob tried to do so in a chair. Another night, after a very long march, we never had any

dinner till past midnight. All through another day I was carried by relays of Khonds in a chair for 30 miles while Bob rode the two horses turn about. However all this roughing has done neither of us any harm, and we are both very fit and well.

What a different life this is from my old life of ease and comfort! *[As the youngest daughter, Mary had remained at home in Kodaikanal looking after her elderly mother.]* But all the same I would not change it for worlds as this is a far happier one. Bob is very good and kind to me and it is so nice having a home of ones own. I often hear from dear Mother who is well and happy. We are greatly looking forward to seeing her again, and to her staying with us as soon as the Rail is opened to this District, which will probably be this year. There is no chance of our being able to get away to Kodai this year I fear....

I suppose you have heard that Pauline [Mary's niece, Pauline Wyatt] is engaged to a Capt Jacob, whom she met while staying with the Bartons at Dalhousie – I don't know when the

wedding is to be. *[Claud Jacob was promoted to Field Marshal after his service in France in the First World War, and their son, Ian, was on Prime Minister Churchill's military staff in the Second.]* I think now I have given you all the news – Bob joins me in [sending] much love to you both.

Ever dearest Addington and Amy, always your very loving sister

Mary Mayne"

Note. The story of Robert Caldwell and his missionary dynasty was published in *FIBIS Journal* No.19 (Spring 2008), pp8-20, under the title: 'Faith and Family in South India'. It can also be seen at www.britishempire.co.uk/article/faithandfamily.htm

Credit Crunch

William Prinsep, partner in Palmer & Co, describes his remorse at the firm's collapse, an event which triggered the Great Calcutta Bank Crash of 1830-33.

From his memoirs, vol 2. BL ref: Mss Eur D1160/4, pp58-61

1830 Oh what a year of sadness this! ... of terrible trial. But we had perhaps been too happy, too many blessings had been showered upon all our heads and alas what response had we made? What but levity and forgetfulness of our great duties had ensued upon our once prosperous career. Still when I consider the agonies of the past year ... I cannot avoid declaring that the crash, when it came, was a positive relief, although at times the terrible distress our failure must cause to thousands was almost overwhelming, to say nothing of the shame we had brought upon our heads by the unwarrantable use we had made of other peoples' deposits with us. I was haunted day and night with the thought of the terrible retribution with which we might be visited ...

1830 [On 1 January] the Committee of Merchants ... sat all day ... to consider whether it was possible by their joint action to stave off the much dreaded calamity. Every member of the other great houses felt that the crisis must reflect most seriously upon themselves, but one only of them all had the boldness to speak out the firm conviction of a well trained judgment. John Smith the head of the firm of Ferguson & Co of equal extent in business with our own, but with a large command of means, stood up and declared that if John Palmer's house was permitted to fall, they would all topple down like a pack of cards. Such an opinion was actually hooted down by some of the others who doubtless hoped to benefit by our fall, but this prophecy was speedily fulfilled.

[In the event at least five other firms went through the insolvent court during the next five years, involving a total of about 12 million sterling. Though less culpable than the senior partner, John Palmer, almost all Prinsep's personal possessions and his wife's 'trinkets' were sold to help pay the firm's creditors. No bonus or pension for him, but he was able to resume his business career with the help of friends including Dwarkanath Tagore, grandfather of Rabindranath Tagore, becoming a partner in the managing agency Carr Tagore & Co which had wide ranging business interests including a stake in the opium trade. By 1842 he had made enough to retire to England comfortably off.]

Some 'Anglo-Indian' and other Memorials at St Helena

By the late Trevor Hearl¹

Visitors to St Helena have always found a particular poignancy about the memorials in this isolated island's churches and churchyards. Perhaps it is the isolation, or because it is only there that they find themselves introduced, if only fleetingly, to the names of generations of British settlers, soldiers, civil servants, tradesmen and artisans on whose life and labour the maintenance of this vital East India Company outpost and later Crown Colony once depended. Even more affecting are the memorials to those voyagers and visitors who died on their hazardous three month voyage from the East, finding their last resting place at this lonely mid-ocean haven, the only port of call between the Orient and home, perhaps victims of their service in the tropics, or invalids attracted by its reputation as a health resort. Today, as tourists ponder over the epitaphs on the 64 stones neatly arranged in St James's Church Garden of Remembrance, inscribed to knights, judges, generals, commanders and other dignitaries, it gives them pause for thought that these men were once famous in their day, but are unknown here where there is no one to tell more of their life's labours for Crown or Company than the stones themselves reveal. But most tourists have only a few days, or a few hours from cruise ships, to explore the island, and must hasten away to see the only tomb that history records at St Helena. Yet musing a little longer over even a small sample of these epitaphs can reward the reader with fresh insights into imperial and island history.

St James's Church Garden, though the first place of remembrance that visitors will see on entering Jamestown through the archway piercing its historic walls, is not the only site where voyagers' memorials are to be found. Inside the church, reputedly the oldest in the Anglican communion south of the equator, replacing the Company's 17th century church in 1774, the walls are adorned with mural tablets, including a few fine marble memorials with intriguing epitaphs. But most of the island's memorials are in the churchyard of St Paul's Cathedral, seat of the Bishop of St Helena, designed by the young Benjamin Ferrey in 1851 to replace the old Country Church from which it inherited about half of its mural tablets. Another important site to attract visitors is the Baptists' peaceful scenic hillside cemetery at Knollcombes where the twin obelisks of the Boer Memorial stand guard over the graves of 172 prisoners of war who died between 1900 and 1902 out of almost six thousand sent to the island from the battlefields of South Africa. Nearby is the imposing public memorial to the island-born Governor, Hudson Janisch, whose father came from Hamburg as Sir Hudson Lowe's private secretary, which was erected in 1884 'by the inhabitants to commemorate the high respect and esteem in which the late Governor was universally held', and saved by his descendants in South Africa when alerted in 1938 to its imminent collapse. Surprisingly there is no memorial to mark the site of the Liberated African Cemetery in Rupert's Valley where unknown thousands were interred – some 4760 during

¹ Trevor Hearl died in 2007. This article was first published in *Wirebird: the Journal of the Friends of St Helena*, Autumn 2003.

the 1840s alone – from among those freed from slave ships captured by the Royal Navy and brought for rehabilitation to the Depot there between 1840 and 1864.

For all those who do have a memorial somewhere within the island's 47 square miles, researchers can readily find its location by referring to a 500 page indexed register of over 1,900 memorials, with their inscriptions, painstakingly prepared as a community project by a team of Secondary Selective School pupils in 1975, led by their headmaster Mr Basil George, an invaluable and impressive achievement.

The number of voyagers' memorials surviving in St Helena could be judged approximately from this register, most dating between 1770 and 1870, though the numbers would not be so large as recorded visitors' deaths would seem to warrant. When Jamestown was a busy port of call they accounted for about one third of all reported deaths: for example 13 out of 32 during 1833/34, and 48 out of 124 in 1843/44, but only a small proportion were honoured with a memorial stone. The rise in the death rate after the island's transfer to the Crown in 1834 was not matched by an increase in memorials, despite a threefold growth in shipping, from 367 vessels in 1830 to 1119 in 1847 when the growing colony of about 7,000 residents was catering for a transient population estimated at 80,000 a year. But these were not the well heeled passengers of the Company's days and only a few of them who died are remembered on gravestone or mural tablet. The dearth of memorials prior to the 1770s is more easily explained as a failure of survival through neglect or destruction. The headstones in St James's Garden of Remembrance are but a sample of 'the best' and most convenient in size and shape to have been saved from Jamestown's two historic burial grounds which, according to all accounts, had been desecrated in colonial times and were eventually cleared in the 1950s. Untold numbers of the island's oldest gravestones were then crushed to make hardcore for the foundations of the playgrounds and a school which were built on the sites. Today only venerable peepul trees, which still provide welcome shade in the day and a roost for chattering fairy terns at dusk, indicate where the mortal remains of these prestigious voyagers, and the island's own early elite, were actually buried.

Among the best known voyagers' memorials on St Helena are probably those to three missionaries, the Rev Adoniram Judson and his second wife Sarah, and the Rev James Henry Beck from South Africa. The Judsons, the noted American baptist pioneers to Burma, were on their way home with their three children to recoup their health in 1845 when Mrs Judson died 'in this port in the 21st year of her missionary life'. Her husband later returned to the mission field and when he died in 1850, on passage from Burma to Martinique, 'Baptist friends in Philadelphia' decided to erect a memorial to both at St Helena on the site of her grave in the lower burial ground. Their epitaphs were saved from the crusher by a Baptist minister and are now set into an old plinth in front of Jamestown Baptist Church. The memorial at St Paul's to the Reverend Beck who died in March 1851 'on a voyage for the benefit of his health' sailing from the Cape to St Helena, is known, not for his thirty years' service with the South African Missionary Society, but because it recalls that 'his remains unexpectedly drifted and were washed on shore at St Helena', miraculously allowing his dying wish to be fulfilled, to be buried beside the graves of his

Broadway in-laws in the Country Churchyard which, it has been observed, also proves that 'waters reaching St Helena seem generally to come almost directly from the Cape of Good Hope'.² Other memorials to visiting pastors include that to a 36 year old Bengal chaplain, the Reverend Theophilus Rawson whose prominent stone cross at St Paul's records his death on 7 January 1885, and another to the three year old daughter of the Reverend W W Scudder, born at Arcot in 1855.

Children are the subject of some of the most poignant of voyagers' memorials. The rigours of the long sea voyage from the East seems to have been particularly lethal for toddlers. A mural tablet in St Paul's Cathedral, which must have come from the old Country Church, unusually records the burial of two infants apparently unrelated, which is replicated on a second stone in the churchyard. One was the son of Dr John Lamb, who was returning home in 1828 after almost twenty years as a surgeon in Malda – 'he gave up promotion to remain at that station' – and the other was the daughter of Mordaunt Ricketts who had just retired at sixty from the Bengal Civil Service in 1830 and whose only surviving son, also Mordaunt, was to be murdered at church during the mutiny in 1857. Ricketts' brother, Charles Milner Ricketts, a member of the Supreme Court at Calcutta, had the memorable distinction at St Helena in 1819, of being the last, indeed the only, person to be invited to Longwood by the exiled Napoleon during the last three and a half years of his life. There were at least nine Ricketts across three generations among the 'civilians' in the Company's service, most if not all of whom, would have called at some time at St Helena. Another 60 year old father who mourned the death of an infant daughter was John Goldingham, FRS, on his way home from Madras to retire in 1827 after a long and unusual career. In 1786 he had left the Royal Navy as a midshipman on the China station to become an assistant at William Petrie's private observatory at Fort St George. When this was acquired by the Company he was appointed assistant to Michael Topping, and in 1794 was put in charge of the new observatory there from where he published scientific data for the next thirty years. Other projects for the Madras Government included a coastal survey (1792-93), a scientific expedition to Sumatra (1821-22), managing the Surveying School and the famous Male Orphan Asylum (noted for Andrew Bell's 'Madras system' of instruction adopted in St Helena and Britain), designing Government House (1803), and editing the *Government Gazette* (1814). Among numerous academic honours he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1808, having Nevil Maskelyne and Alexander Dalrymple among his sponsors. The tragic death of his daughter must have blighted a visit which he would otherwise have enjoyed for the chance of seeing the sites of Maskelyne's and Halley's observatories, and the construction of John Company's latest observatory at Ladder Hill, above Jamestown, under the direction of Lt Manuel Johnson, a later President of the Royal Astronomical Society. Goldingham, who died at Worcester in 1848 aged 83, already had two sons in the Company's service – George went to Addiscombe (1821-23) and John to Haileybury (1817-19) – and was to have two grandsons, also George and John, at Addiscombe and Haileybury (1851-53) who were destined to extend the family's service in India to almost a

² Philip and Myrtle Ashmole, *St Helena and Ascension Island: a natural history* (Oswestry, Anthony Nelson, 2000)

hundred years. The child epitaph that visitors find most moving is on a mural tablet in St James's Church 'placed here by the hand of affection' to two year old Ann Elizabeth Hunter:

orphan and only child of
Robert John and Louise Hunter, late of Madras
Who, after a lingering and wasting illness
Which yielded to no human remedy
Was snatched from this sub-lunary scene
On the 24th day of December 1824

In an article in 1999 Dr Teresa Spens noted how it revealed circumstances deeply 'embedded on British, Indian and St Helenian history, and in the history of medicine'. Were her parents victims of the first cholera pandemic in India? How had the ailing orphan been cared for on board an East Indiaman, and whose 'hand of affection' had seen the mortal remains laid to rest that Christmas Eve?

Epitaphs can bring us uncomfortably close to the tragic realities of family life for those on foreign service in which wives were also, all too often, the victim of colonial careers. Though usually much younger than their husbands, many still left large motherless families to mourn their loss. For example, 29 year old Lucy Clarke, wife of Colonel Tredway Clarke – he had been a Captain of Artillery at Madras in 1788 – left six young children when she died on passage to England 1804. Another, Mary Anne Ellis the eldest daughter of the Reverend Henry Shepherd, Company chaplain at Muttra in 1809, was only 22 when she died in August 1821 on the point of leaving St Helena with her husband Capt J H Ellis of the 1st battalion of the 66th regiment which had been stationed there for four years guarding Napoleon, having been posted there from India early in 1817.

Commanders of East Indiamen are prominently represented among St Helena's marine memorials, reflecting not only the hazards of their calling but the island's role as the Company's only homeward bound haven. The long run from China seems to have exacted the greatest toll. Captain Thomas Atkyns had taken HCS *Resolution* on its maiden voyage when he died on 5 May 1771, thirteen weeks out of Whampoa and three weeks off St Helena. An unusual bronze mural tablet in St James's records the death at sea on 20 March 1805 of the Commander of HCS *The Marquis of Ely*, Andrew Hannay from Wigton, Ayrshire, returning from China and Penang, only thirteen days sailing from St Helena. Another victim from China was Capt James Halliburton on his fourth voyage in command of HCS *Glatton* in 1815, looking forward to meeting his brother-in-law Adam Baidon, Head Surgeon at St Helena, when he died at sea on 10 April and, as events tragically transpired, was buried on 16 May beside Dr Baidon who had died two months earlier and with whom he shares a memorial in St Paul's churchyard erected by their widows (sisters). Captain Robert Billamore of the Bombay Marine was a passenger in HCS *Rockingham* going on leave with his family in 1802 when he died on 3 April almost in sight of St Helena, leaving a widow and five children. One of the few commanders to die at the island outward bound was Captain Benjamin Bunn of HCS *Mangles*, one of St Helena's store ships, in 1818 leaving a widow and six young children. Perhaps the most tragic death in the Company's marine service was that of Benjamin Law Harrison 'of Rochester', Master of the island's

own packet schooner *St Helena*. Though his mural tablet in St James's Church 'erected by an only sister & brother' states merely that he 'died at sea', he was in fact murdered by pirates on 6 April 1830 when they captured his vessel on the way to Sierra Leone with despatches, tied him up with the surgeon and threw them overboard.³

Junior officers in the Company's marine rarely had memorials. A youthful exception was seventeen year old John Hunter, 6th officer on HCS *Ocean*, who died on 11 May 1795, a month after reaching St Helena from China on his first voyage. Likewise, few masters and no seamen of merchant ships in colonial times are memorialised at St Helena, though the death toll was not insignificant: for example five officers and twelve seamen are listed in 1856. One intriguing epitaph, hinting at an untold drama at sea, is that of Captain William McKellar Galbreath of the Barque *Allmena* from Greenock, whose memorial outside St James's Church reveals that he died at St Helena on 9 November 1843 'a victim to disease induced by the privations which he suffered' having been shipwrecked on a coral reef in the China Sea in January. It highlights, too, the plight of relatives in cases of death at St Helena who

far separated from his cold remains can but lament his early and his hapless fate, and testify to the affection which they bore him by erecting this tablet to his much cherished memory.

Ordinary seamen are remembered only on naval memorials and then rarely with more than a name. An unusual exception is on that in the 'military section' of St Paul's churchyard to Captain George R Douglas of the Bombay Horse Artillery who 'died here on his homeward voyage' on 28 April 1856 as a passenger on HMS *Sirius*, which also records the death of Ordinary Seaman W W Long 'who fell from aloft and was drowned at sea' on 13 February. The most historic naval monument on St Helena is that in the Castle Gardens erected by the officers and men of HMS *Waterwitch*, the most successful of the anti-slavery patrol ships, 'to the memory of their shipmates who died while serving on the coast of Africa 1830-1843'. It gives eleven names, in some cases with brief circumstances of their death, as for example Marine Samuel Knight 'drowned in an attempt to board a slave vessel 10 February 1842, aged 24 years'. It seems appropriate to add their explanation that 'this Island is selected for the record because three lie buried here and because ... [we] ever met the warmest welcome from its inhabitants'.

Some epitaphs, like that of Captain Galbreath above, show pride in adversity. A later example is that of Captain William Richardes of the 12th Hussars from Bryneithyn, Cardigan, who died on the island in 1865 'on sick leave ... [having] served through the Indian mutinies where his health was much shattered'. Others confirm the care they received on the island, as in the case of the American William Macmurtrie of Philadelphia who died on 24 September 1843. He had been taken ill on the voyage from India – probably on the *John N Gossler* which was 64 days out from Calcutta en route for Philadelphia when it called briefly on the 18th at Jamestown. He was cared for by William Carrol, the US Commercial Agent, his memorial recording the grief and gratitude of his

³ For an account taken from island sources of this episode and how the schooner was eventually saved, see Montgomerie, *The First 'St Helena'*.

parents 'for Christian kindness bestowed on their dying Son'. Given the island's reputation for restoring the sick to health there is almost irony in the epitaph to John Philip Gardiner, 'agent and banker' for nineteen years in Bengal, proceeding to England in the joyful hope of embracing his Family' who landed from HCS *Walthamstow* on 3 March 1803 'in perfect health and died the following Day'.

This small sample of memorials can only hint at the rich historical resource waiting to be tapped at St Helena. Voyagers' epitaphs may be conspicuous to visitors, but most memorials represent the main strands of the old Island community. There are those long established settler families like the Bagleys and Pritchards from the 17th century down to recent memory, and of long departed families like the Dovetons and Wranghams whose talented Emma was the 'Belle of Bengal' in the 1780s; of merchants like the Solomons, and of former servants of the Company and Crown like the Broadways and Bruces. But the great majority are those of the descendants of slaves and 'free blacks', of Chinese and *lascars* (Indian seamen), of soldiers and sailors, of artisans and labourers. Whatever their ancestry, all are united by one common factor: all were immigrants by birth or descent, so that behind every memorial lies a further dimension of family history across the oceans in Asia, Africa, America or Europe where their 'roots' are ultimately to be found.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Basil George, Chief Education Officer, St Helena, for a copy of the 1975 register of memorials; to Mrs Betty Martin of Bridgwater, Virginia, USA, for confirmation of selected memorials in 2000; to Sir Robert Ricketts of Minchinhampton, Glos, for Ricketts family details; and to Miss Gudrun Richardson of the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Archive Resource at the Royal Society for information on John Goldingham, FRS.

Sources

In addition to standard India-related biographical reference works, the following may be noted:

For deaths and memorials

The St. Helena Calendar and Directory [annual, c1825-1845], and *The Saint Helena Almanac and Annual Register* [c1847-1884, 1913]

George, Basil (ed) *Gravestones and Memorials on St Helena 1686-1975* [compiled by pupils of the Secondary School], typescript, 3 vols including index, (Jamestown, 1975)

General

Cannan, Edward *Churches of the South Atlantic Islands, 1502-1991* (Oswestry, Anthony Nelson, c1992)

Evans, Dorothy *Schooling in the South Atlantic Islands, 1661-1992* (Oswestry, Anthony Nelson, 1994)

Gosse, Philip *St Helena 1502-1938*, 2nd edn (Oswestry, Anthony Nelson, 1990)

Montgomerie, Barbara *The First 'St Helena' 1814-1830* (1994)

Spens, Terry 'The Hand of Affection' in *Wirebird: the journal of the Friends of St Helena* (Summer, 1999)

Reviews

***In Pursuit of the Past*, by Christopher Penn (published by and obtainable from the author C F Penn, Pendle, Burdenshot Hill, Worplesdon, Surrey, England GU3 3RL tel/fax +44 (0) 1483 235 609 or e-mail christopherpenn@btinternet.com), pp 293. ISBN 978-0-955945502. £14.50 plus £2.50 UK p&p, or plus £7.50 overseas p&p.**

Christopher Penn spoke to FIBIS about his ancestor A T W Penn the photographer in April 2007, and those of us who had the good fortune to hear him were impressed alike by the skill, enthusiasm and persistence with which Christopher had ferreted out the details, and the quality of A T W Penn's brilliant photographs. The present book is the distillation of all this.

There is no doubt that the quality of Penn's photographs is very high and they provide a unique and valuable record of Ootacamund and the Nilgiri hills from about 1865 to 1911. Everything was grist to Penn's mill: portraits, group photos, landscapes (most evocative), buildings, animals, and ethnographical studies of vanishing cultures. The pictures are always beautifully presented. Penn himself emerges as an interesting figure dedicated to his art, but earning his living with difficulty and reliant on other businesses (his wife's hotel, his auctioneering business) to make ends meet. Ooty also emerges with descriptions from the local press: the entertainments (Penn was an accomplished singer), shopping, social life, the hunt breakfast, the rifle volunteers, the church. Anyone with ancestors at this period in Ooty - or for that matter other hill stations - will be delighted with this vivid material.

The way one writes up an ancestor's life can be either a straight chronological account or what I may call a venatorial account – telling the story not so much of A T W Penn as of Christopher's search for him. 'Good hunting' is the way our Chairman frequently signs off his e-mails. All of us know the immense satisfaction from hunting down and elucidating some detail about an ancestor's life and gradually building up a picture of his or her natural habitat.

A chronological account may be easier to follow, but lacks some of the drama of the chase. The venatorial has an extra excitement over and above any that the ancestor's life may provide, but has the difficulty of presenting information out of sequence so far as the subject is concerned. Christopher has chosen the venatorial, and as a result we do not find out how A T W Penn got to India and where he worked in his earliest years until nearly the last page of the book. By contrast we follow his luckless son Harold's career only one third of the way into the book.

No matter. It is a fascinating tale and well told. There are also genealogical lessons for all of us here. For example, on p164 he mentions finding mention of A T W Penn in the press and calling such moments 'sightings', and then drawing up a 'diary right through his life built on such moments' – a thoroughly sound and useful technique. The catalogue of Penn's known photographs which Christopher has drawn up is another instance and on p256 he

shows how he tackled this – another object lesson in genealogical method. Again all his sources are clearly identified.

Where the system operates less happily is the reproduction of relatively trivial matter. For example the quotations from the *South of India Observer* about A T W Penn's send-off when he left India contain, owing to some editorial glitch two almost identical accounts of the same matter (the last two paras on p251 are doublets of the first full para on p252). A little pruning might have helped.

One other slight criticism: A T W Penn is nothing if he is not a photographer. The book contains 60-odd illustrations, almost all by A T W Penn himself. They are reproduced in colour – that is to say the sepia is true. The quality of reproduction is high, but the page size is small (A5) and most do not even get a full page. The result is that when on p71 we are invited to notice the boy with an incongruous axe seated at the foot of a spectacular waterfall, a good magnifying glass is essential.

But these are small matters. Essentially this is a piece of impeccable research, presented vividly. There is much to delight and instruct all who are hunting for ancestors in late 19th century India.

Richard Morgan

***Scattered seeds: the diaspora of the Anglo-Indians*, by Dorothy S Dady**
(London, Pagoda Press, 2007), pp221, col. ports., 25 x 29 cm. ISBN 9780955612503

Scattered Seeds has been written to commemorate the sixtieth year of India's independence and gives a voice to the Anglo-Indian Community that became fragmented at this time. A preface gives the background to the emergence of the Anglo-Indian community and its varied history up to independence and there is then a short introduction by the author, Dorothy Dady, explaining her objects in presenting the book. She is an Anglo-Indian who, although born in the United Kingdom, retains a strong sense of her ethnic background. Her grandmother was a niece of Sir Henry Gidney, who championed Anglo-Indian causes for twenty years until his death, and it is then no wonder that Ms Dady has felt some disquiet at the 'negative representations' that she has seen in more recent media coverage of the Anglo-Indian community. This book is an attempt to give a voice to a community that is neither Indian nor English – a community that has been 'discarded as a by product of British Colonialism' but that has survived with a distinct identity and proud history of its own.

The main body of the book comprises around one hundred interviews with Anglo-Indians of different ages and backgrounds. Each double page spread contains a full page photo of the person interviewed with autobiographical comment facing. The author is a photographer whose faded family photographs gave her a sense of her own history and it is certainly a tribute to her talents in this field that the reader is arrested by these wonderful portraits as soon as the book is opened and, thus, feels compelled to read the accompanying words – it is as if the people portrayed are actually speaking to you. The text

accompanying each photo is not overlong but as one reads through the book the collective consciousness of the Anglo-Indian community emerges - haunting memories of a way of life that has been lost forever.

People living in English speaking countries around the world are represented – and these include many who have remained in India. The majority were born in India but some are Anglo-Indians, like Ms Dady and myself, who were born in the country where their parents settled. For those born in India this book will evoke waves of nostalgia. For others it will assist in understanding the experiences of previous generations. I particularly liked the Anglo-Indian phrases mentioned which were explained at the bottom of each page and smiled in recognition at the many that formed part of my own childhood.

Many comments described happy experiences of growing up in India, the strong value placed on Christianity and education and the social bonds of a friendly, hardworking community that forged its own identity but had the ability to integrate in a country of diverse cultures and religious beliefs. Moreover, being part of a race that straddles two worlds, the versatility of Anglo-Indians is evidenced in their willingness to now embrace the challenge of new situations. Even those who remained in India have had to adapt to a change in lifestyle. Despite loyalty, and often gratitude, to the countries in which they have now settled there remains an affinity and pride in their original roots. There is mention of various Anglo-Indian Societies, literature and relief funds that have been initiated by some of the persons interviewed and the fact that the internet is now also playing its part in reuniting those who have been divided, enabling memories to be shared. This respect for their origins has been inherited by many second generation Anglo-Indians - born later in the countries in which their parents settled. Scattered seeds, indeed, but seeds that are still blossoming - albeit in a different ground.

There is no index of contributors, or of subjects raised, in this book, nor are the interviews grouped in a particular way – e.g by country. The book is therefore more a coffee table tome that lends itself to browsing rather than an academic representation of its subject. Having said this, there is no doubt that Dorothy Dady has produced a splendid resource which will sustain the interest of all who pick it up – from grandparent to teenager. I would, therefore, recommend it as a perfect gift for anyone with an interest in the Anglo-Indian community.

Beverly Hallam