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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.

Material should be sent to The Editor: [fibis-editor@fibis.org](mailto:fibis-editor@fibis.org)

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*Contributors should be aware that as a rule their articles will in due course be posted on the FIBIS website*

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## Editorial

It has been noticeable how, in recent issues of the *FIBIS Journal*, contributors are making increasing use of online resources to quarry for genealogical information. Thus Beverly Hallam referred to 'the power of the internet', while Richard Hayter luxuriated in the fact that, thanks to the internet and in particular Google Books, he had been able to do some of his research without ever stirring from the 'comfort of my own study'. And now in this issue we have two more authors, Maureen Evers and Sylvia Murphy, who have made good use of Google Books and other online sources. As Australians, who obviously cannot readily visit the India Office Records at the British Library, they have made a virtue of necessity to become expert in exploiting online sources, and for FIBIS members in the UK who do not live within easy travelling distance of London (in fact the majority), their example and advice will be just as valuable. Some online sources are by subscription only, but National, University, or other large Libraries in the UK and worldwide offer varying degrees of free access. Thus the BL has a wide range of them but they can be viewed only in its reading rooms. Elsewhere, for example at the National Libraries of Australia and (I believe) Scotland, Wales and Ireland, a reader card may enable you to access them via your home computer. For more details see [http://wiki.fibis.org/index.php?title=Miscellaneous\\_tips](http://wiki.fibis.org/index.php?title=Miscellaneous_tips).

At our Spring General Meeting Andrea Cordani gave a lively presentation on the East India Company ships that were wrecked or captured. She spoke without notes and I am grateful to Penny Tipper, our Transcriptions Co-ordinator, who has taken the talk down in shorthand from the Podcast available on the FIBIS Website, to enable me to produce an edited version for the Journal. At the same time, by a fortunate coincidence, Simon Martin submitted an eyewitness account of the foundering of the East Indiaman *Ganges* on which his ancestor Samuel Rolleston had the misfortune to be a passenger. Andrea mentions the 'private trade' carried on by East India Company ships' officers, and on page 58 there is a sample page from Captain William Hambly's account book of his own private dealings. He dealt in tea and chinaware, and the attentive reader will notice that, among the items of porcelain, the good Captain did not overlook the nocturnal convenience of his customers.

Contributions to the *FIBIS Journal* do not have to be lengthy. For example, in the present issue, Lawrie Butler and Malcolm Hurley Mills have produced an excellent short article explaining how they pieced together clues to add yet more names to the ever extending branches of the Hurley family tree, and Richard Morgan has written a fascinating description of the memorial at Lichfield Cathedral to that ambiguous 'hero' of the Mutiny, William Raikes Hodson.

Readers, if any of you feel you could contribute a brief article on one of your ancestors in India - or even just an interesting, curious or amusing anecdote - please send it in. Or if you have information to add to an article you have read in the Journal, or there is something you wish to amend or correct, feel free to write a 'letter to the editor'. I do not guarantee to publish everything I may receive, but I shall certainly be willing to consider it.

*David Blake*

# Four Orphan Schools in Calcutta and the Lawrence Military Asylum, Sanawar, Part I: history<sup>1</sup>

*By Maureen Evers*

I first became interested in orphans when I read that Apothecaries often came from the Orphan Schools. An ancestor William Hannah had been appointed an Apothecary in December 1824. However until I saw the initials L.O.S and wondered what they stood for, I had not been aware of the Lower Orphan School in Calcutta for the children of soldiers, or the organisation which managed it, the Bengal Military Orphan Society. It should be noted that the word orphan had a wider meaning than currently applies, and included children who had lost their father, but whose mother was still alive.

The Bengal Military Orphan Society (B.M.O.S.) was established thanks to the efforts of Captain (later Major General) William Kirkpatrick. On 13 March 1783 a resolution was passed by the Governor-General and Council, approving a Plan which had previously been agreed to by the Army Officers. The idea for such a scheme seems to have been suggested to Captain Kirkpatrick some years before by a friend who said 'I drew up a plan ...but, to be useful, it required that it should have the concurrence of the whole army. To effect this, I applied to my friend Lieut. Kirkpatrick, a very intelligent and worthy man, then in General Stibbert's family as Persian interpreter'<sup>2</sup>. Stibbert was Acting Commander In Chief of the Bengal Army so Captain Kirkpatrick would have had contacts at the highest levels in the Army.

## Officers' Children

The scheme provided for the care of children of Officers who had died 'in indigent circumstances', whether legitimate or not, and was funded initially by deductions from Officers' pay, and later from additional sources. In comparison, the Civil Service Fund established twenty years later, after bitter debate completely excluded illegitimate children. Conductors of Ordnance were originally included, but not those appointed from 1822. It was originally intended that all children would be sent to England for education, the girls after attaining the age of 4 years, the boys after the age of 5. They would then be placed as a cadet with the East India Company, or as an apprentice (boys at age 14, girls at age 12) and financially assisted to set up a business at the expiry of the apprenticeship. However the Court of Directors of the East India Company decreed that the only children who could be sent to England were legitimate children, where both parents were European. In practice, children were returned to England only if there were family or friends to care for them there. (40 children, 11 boys and 29 girls returned on the same voyage in 1826.<sup>3</sup>) In Calcutta, at the end of 1783, there were 25 boys and 21 girls. The boys old enough to go

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<sup>1</sup> Unless footnotes indicate otherwise this article is based on the main sources shown in the List of Sources at the end of this article where full bibliographical citations will be found.

<sup>2</sup> Scott, p165

<sup>3</sup> *Quarterly Oriental Magazine*, vol vi, 1826: Departures, pclxxxvi.

to school went to a school run by Mr Cowen, while the girls and infants were placed in a house in Radha Bazaar run by Mr and Mrs Jervis (or Jervais).

### **Soldiers' Children**

In June 1783 Major General Stibbert, on behalf of the Government, wrote to the M.O.S. asking if it would undertake the charge of the orphans of Non-commissioned and Private Europeans in the E.I.C. Bengal Army. He perhaps was influenced by Captain Kirkpatrick, however it may have been his own idea, as he came from a poor labouring background and had worked in a hopfield earning 4d per day in his youth<sup>4</sup>. A suitable allowance was to be made to the Society for each child. After some argument this was later set at 5 rupees per month per child. The M.O.S agreed to take charge, subject to land and money for a building being provided. It also requested, that to meet the existing difficulties of educating children in the up-country stations, and to rescue them from the contaminating influence of barrack life, the children of soldiers still living should also be admitted to the school about to be formed for the orphans. It was argued that there were considerable advantages which would arise from the children being settled in Calcutta. Firstly they would be immediately under the eye of the Management. The girls would have more frequent and more favourable opportunities for marrying well than in any other part of the country, they would be more likely to get a position as a servant and they could do work such as sewing for the advantage of the Fund. The boys would more easily find employment. Early in 1784 the Government agreed. Later, the published aims stated:

The objects of the School are to encourage the European soldier to enter the marriage state; to relieve him from the heavy burden of rearing a large offspring with very scanty means; and by the comfortable maintenance and education of the children, to attach him to the service by ties which did not previously exist; to rescue the children themselves from the vice and intemperance of the barrack, at a tender age in which they have not yet imbibed evil habits; and having saved them from profligacy, distress, and premature decay, to render them useful members of the community by rearing them up in the principles of the Christian religion, and by educating, and respectably settling them in life.<sup>5</sup>

Children were brought from all over Bengal to Calcutta to attend what became known as the Lower Orphan School, 'the school for all India'.<sup>6</sup>

All children, whether Orphans or not, of the European non-commissioned officers, and private Soldiers, belonging to the Honorable Company's Bengal Establishment, are admitted to the benefits of the lower School, and are entitled to the fixed allowance from the time of their birth. No children the offspring of fathers not born in Europe, are admitted to the benefits of the School, with the exception of the children of drummers and fifers serving in the Army, who, if

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Hayter, 'Seeking Giles Stibbert', *FIBIS Journal* 21, p1. At p4 is a group portrait including Kirkpatrick, for whom see also William Dalrymple, *White Mughals* (London, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> *Bengal and Agra Annual Guide*, 1841, part 3, p331. Google Books

<sup>6</sup> However, twelve orphan boys who arrived in Calcutta in 1825 from Bencoolen Orphanage, following transfer of Fort Malborough to the Netherlands, were sent to reside with the missionary Dr Marshman at Serampore. IOR: F/4/900/25534.

they are the offspring of girls brought up in the Orphan School, are entitled to claim for their children the usual subsistence allowance.<sup>7</sup>

A General Order from Fort William, dated 4 February 1825 advised that

the children of non-commissioned officers and soldiers of his Majesty's service, dying in India, will be allowed the same provision that is made for the children of non-commissioned officers and soldiers dying in the H.C.'s service in India, and will consequently be received into the Orphan School.<sup>8</sup>

It appears that this order formalised a practice that had applied since the late 1810s. It was never intended that any of the E.I.C. soldiers' orphans be returned to England, though a few orphans of soldiers in the British Army were sent back (4 boys were returned in 1823) and it can be assumed in these cases the mother was European.

The Company made it virtually compulsory for children of soldiers to be sent to the Lower Orphan School at age 3 or 4, by making the authorised monthly subsistence allowance paid prior to that date conditional on this happening and repayable if the children were not sent. This was set out in General Order by Governor-General (GOGG) of 27 Jan. 1821 titled 'Orphan School allowance for Children, how to be drawn'<sup>9</sup>, but seems to have been formalising or restating a practice that had applied long before that date. General Orders by the Commander in Chief, 22 March, 1799 stated that monthly returns in respect of children (relating to the payment of the monthly allowance) were to be checked by the adjutants of corps:

in order to guard against parents or guardians of children secreting them upon their attaining the prescribed age for being placed in the lower Orphan House, and thereby defeating the humane intentions, for which the school was established. [In 1810 it was said] It is not easy to describe those affecting scenes which present themselves, when the children are taken from their parents, in order to be sent to the foundation! It is true, the latter know full well that every justice will be done to their offspring, and they cannot but express their sense of the kind intention of their benefactors; but, to part from a child, whatever may be it's complexion, is a most painful struggle between duty and nature! I have repeatedly witnessed the distress of mothers, on such occasions, and lamented that the case admitted of neither consolation nor relief!<sup>10</sup>

It became the normal practice to remove children to the Orphan School when they were four, some remained with the Regiment till they were five. Thereafter exceptions were allowed only in rare cases such as dangerous illness.<sup>11</sup>

It was originally intended that the support of the children would end when they turned fifteen. However in cases of mental or bodily impairment the Management was authorised to continue to draw the monthly Government payment while ever necessary. In practice

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<sup>7</sup> Lushington, p258.

<sup>8</sup> *Oriental Herald and Colonial Review*, vol vi, 1825, p194. Google Books.

<sup>9</sup> *Calcutta Annual Register*, 1821, p32. Google Books.

<sup>10</sup> *Asiatic Annual Register*, 1799, p166, and Williamson, p463.

<sup>11</sup> At Dum Dum thanks to the presence of a regimental school children of artillery men were allowed to remain with fathers deemed to be 'of sober and respectable character'.

the girls continued to be supported at the School indefinitely, until they left to be married or in a few cases become servants.

### **The Calcutta Free School, and the European Female Orphan Asylum<sup>12</sup>**

Two charitable Orphan Institutions in Calcutta around this time, with close ties to the Church of England, were the Calcutta Free School and the European Female Orphan Asylum.

The Free School Society was established on the 21 December 1789 in order to provide for the instruction of the numerous indigent children of both sexes of European extraction, including many with Portuguese background, who were not eligible for the Military Orphan Schools.

In the admission of children the first claim is allowed to Orphans of destitute Europeans, the next in preference are Country born [Eurasian] children, and the offspring of Native Portuguese. Christian children, however, of all denominations and of either sex, inadmissible to the benefit of other Institutions, and whose parents are unable to support and educate them, are received into the Free School, as far as it's means and vacancies will allow.

The rules stated that children must speak nothing but English. A resolution appeared in 1802 'that in future no children be admitted but the descendants of Europeans'. Initially the intention was to provide education only, and in some cases food, but by March 1796 there were 78 children on the foundation who were fully supported boarders, besides nearly 60 children who received education grants. In 1823 there were 411 children although by 1824, due to financial constraints, numbers were limited to 250 boys and 120 girls, and by 1826 had decreased to 195 boys and 85 girls, at which point the Government commenced a monthly grant. Children were generally admitted between the ages of 5 and 9. The intention was that boys generally leave the School at age 14, with maximum age 16, and girls at age 12, with maximum age 14, to commence apprenticeships or be placed as servants. In 1813, day scholars were admitted and in 1817, a separate section for fee-paying children was introduced. In 1795 a house and 15 bighas (about 5 acres) of land was purchased from Mr Louis Baretto, near the Jaun Bazar. An addition was made in 1821 by the purchase of an adjoining house extending to Free School Street.

The European Female Orphan Asylum was established in 1815 to care and educate orphaned female children where both parents were European, principally those where the father had been a soldier in the British Army in India. The Government contributed a monthly payment. The education was to be 'plain and suitable to their situation and prospects in life such as shall tend to make them good and useful members of society, whether they become housekeepers, or servants.' They were admissible (if under age 10) whenever they became orphans, however young. On 1 July 1815, 10 female orphans from HM's 66th Regiment moved into a house in Circular Road. Expanding numbers led to a

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<sup>12</sup> This section is based on Free School Society *Proposals*, Calcutta Free School *Brief History*, and Lushington, pp322-33, 342-48 and app 16, pplxvii-lxxx.

move when a 'capacious house and grounds' was purchased. By 1824 the number of orphans was 76.

### **The Early Years of the Upper and Lower Orphan Schools**

Returning to the Military Orphan Schools (M.O.S.), the School for the soldiers' orphans was initially at Duncansore (Deccanshur, Dakhineswar) to the north of Calcutta, when 96 children, (42 b, 54 g) under the charge of two Sergeants and their wives moved in at the end of 1784, but only for a brief period. There were various problems including the fact that the distance from Calcutta made efficient supervision impossible. In addition, Mr Cowan's school, boarding the officers' sons was found to be dirty, and the food very bad. A large house at Howrah, across the river from Calcutta, known as 'Levett's house and garden' was purchased, where all the orphans were relocated. 'The large four turreted building... presents so striking an appearance as vessels approach Calcutta'<sup>13</sup> (see cover illustration). The soldiers' children occupied the ground floor and the officers' children, both boys and girls were located in the upper storey, leading to the terminology Lower Orphan School (L.O.S.) and Upper Orphan School (U.O.S.). By the end of 1785 there were 96 children in the U.O.S. and 160 in the L.O.S.

### **The Upper Orphan School moves to Kidderpore House**

By 1790 the number of children had increased to nearly 400, 97(57 b, 40 g) in the U.O.S and 295(179 b, 116 g) in the L.O.S. Irritable skin disease had become epidemic, as well as inflammation of the eyes, in many cases resulting in blindness, both attributed mainly to lack of cleanliness. It was realised that more room and freer circulation of air was required. Either the existing house itself had to be greatly enlarged and an independent building erected for a hospital, or else the two schools had to be separated. The deciding factor however, was the desire to move the Upper School to a locality closer to Calcutta to facilitate the marriage of the female wards, as it was feared unmarried girls would become a burden on the Funds. When Kidderpore House was offered for rental, the meeting on Tuesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, 1790, which decided on renting it, resolved that all the Upper School children were to be moved in on the following Monday! And on the Monday they arrived. Kidderpore House also became the managerial centre for the two schools.

Kidderpore House, which was owned by Mr Richard Barwell, (who had been a member of the Supreme Council), was situated in the southern Calcutta suburb of Alipore, about a mile and a half from Calcutta. The suburb of Kidderpore is to the west of Alipore, and extended to the Hooghly River. The address of Kidderpore House subsequently became known as No 4, Diamond Harbour Road, Kidderpore. The house, with grounds of 274 bighas (about 90 acres), bordered in part by the river called Tolly's Nullah, was purchased after it was advertised in October 1798 for auction as a 'capital large upper-roomed house'. Unrelated descriptions said it was 'a large and splendid house, pleasantly situated, near a creek, handsomely furnished, and supplied with every accommodation'. 'The house is very large,

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<sup>13</sup> John Statham, *Indian Recollections* (London, 1832), p390. Google Books.

lofty, and spacious, and situated in a fine airy park'. It was later described as 'a gigantic edifice, like an early Victorian Government House'. In the two years 1803 and 1804 there were large numbers of new orphans as a result of fatalities in the Mahratta war, with its battles of Assaye, Allyghur, Delhi, Laswar-ee, and Deeg. In addition, the School was accepting boarders, child-rem of officers living in remote stations. In 1810 a new building 'in the same park ... at a consid-erable distance' from Kidderpore House, was completed for the boys, which was required due to overcrowding with 77 girls and nearly as many boys.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Lower Orphan School moves to Alipore**

The L.O.S. had remained at Howrah. In January 1798 there were 516 children (252 b, 264 g) and in 1808, Government began to contemplate the removal of the Lower School from Howrah, the building described in 1810 as 'a very old and infirm building'. A decision was made in 1810 to purchase Belvedere House and grounds at Alipore (now the National Library) for the purpose but it seems this did not proceed. Land at Alipore 'wholly distinct, and at a considerable distance from Kidderpore House' was purchased from Mr Dowdeswell, (possibly George Dowdeswell, a member of the Supreme Council from 1815) although there remains the possibility that the land was originally part of the Belvedere House grounds as it was located nearby. New buildings were constructed, for which 339,865 rupees were advanced via the Military Department in the period 1 May 1811 to 30 April 1814 (this was 23% over budget). The children left in 1815 after an outbreak of ophthalmia and were temporarily located in the cadets' quarters at Barasat (15 miles north of Calcutta on the east bank) before moving into their new building. At the end of 1823 there were 649 children, (270 b, 379 g). The numbers had substantially decreased to 491 at March 1828 and still further to 301 (131 b, 170 g) at October 1846.<sup>15</sup>

### **Upper Orphan School, 1820's to 1840's**

Meanwhile, the U.O.S. at the end of 1823 totalled 145 children (65 b, 80 g), of whom 111 (44b, 67g) were orphans and 34 were boarders (21 b, 13 g). In addition the B.M.O.S. was supporting a further 53 (14 b, 39 g) in India, who were living with Friends or Guardians and 130 (66 b, 64 g) in England. In 1846,

the managers of the Upper Orphan Institution, having for some time past had the subject under consideration, came to the determination, last Friday evening, of abolishing the male department of the institution from the 31st of January, in consequence of the small number of pupils attached to it. The pupils, we hear, are to be sent to St Paul's School as boarders.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Quotations from *Calcutta Gazettes*, 1798-1805, p527; *Missionary Herald*, vol 23, 1827, p83; Bell, p299; Wilson, 294; Bell, p299; Lushington, p252.

<sup>15</sup> Grace, p394; *Asiatic Annual Register*, vol xii, 1810-11, p11; IOR: F/4/358/8620, F/4/359/8743 and F/4/1240/40737 (information thanks to Joss O'Kelly); *Parliamentary Papers* (1); *Bengal Past and Present*, vol 2, 1908, p95 (information thanks to John Roberts); Lushington, p257, and app 11, p1; Webb, p126.

<sup>16</sup> *Allen's Indian Mail*, vol iv, 1846, p189. Google Books.



St Paul's School, in Chowringhee Road, had been established in September 1845 in connection with the new Cathedral, on the remnants of an earlier school called the Calcutta High School, founded by Archdeacon Corrie in 1830. In 1864, due to financial difficulties caused by competition from the Doveton College and the Martiniere, because 'Calcutta does not require three schools for exactly the same class of boys'<sup>17</sup>, St Paul's School relocated to Darjeeling where it continues today.

### **Lower Orphan School in the 1850's and the Lawrence Military Asylum, Sanawar**

Returning to the Lower Orphan School, the Court of Directors approved at the end of 1854 a plan to send most of the children to the Lawrence Military Asylum (LMA) at Sanawar, (Sanawur) in the lower Himalayas. The Governor-General, the Marquis of Dalhousie, in a minute dated 28 Feb 1856 reviewing the progress made during his period in office, said that the decision to move the L.O.S. to the 'climate of the hills' was made 'In the belief that the climate of Bengal was enervating and injurious to the health of the children'<sup>18</sup>.

The LMA, a charitable Institution had been established in 1847 largely due to the efforts of the famous Sir Henry Lawrence. He was then Resident at Lahore, and the location near the village of Kasauli (Kussowlee) on a picturesque site of 115 acres in the foothills of the Himalayas was selected to be within his own jurisdiction.. Only legitimate children were admitted, between the ages of 3 and 10. In December 1853 there were 195 children. The Rules and Regulations stated:

The object of the Institution is to provide for the orphan and other children of Soldiers serving or having served in India, an Asylum from the debilitating effects of a tropical climate, and the demoralizing influence of barrack-life ; wherein they may obtain the benefit of a bracing climate, a healthy moral atmosphere, and a plain, useful, and above all religious education, adapted to fit them for employment suited to their position in life, and, with the divine blessing to make them consistent Christians, and intelligent, and useful members of Society. Children of pure European parentage, as being more likely to suffer from the climate of the plains than those of mixed parentage, shall take precedence of the latter in the consideration of applications by the Committee<sup>19</sup>.

Sir Henry subsequently argued for the removal of the Lower Orphan School from Calcutta, and a letter dated 24 Nov 1854 to the Reverend Mr Parker of the Lawrence Asylum, set out the Government's agreement, including the following clauses:

2. 1st That all actual Orphans shall be placed in the Asylum.

2nd That all children, whether Orphans or not, under 12 years of age, not of irreclaimably vicious character, who are now in the Lower Orphan School shall be removed to the Asylum. After these have been educated, the Government foundation at the Asylum is to become one exclusively for Orphans.

3. The Honorable Court have also authorized the Government allowance to children being continued until they attain the age of 16 years, unless previously- provided for, and have

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<sup>17</sup> Reports on Colleges and Schools in India, *Calcutta Review*, vol 43, 1866, p66.

<sup>18</sup> Parliamentary Papers (2).

<sup>19</sup> Material on LMA mainly based on its Brief Account (see List of Sources).

sanctioned the abolition of the regulation which required that the boys shall be enlisted as Drummers and Musicians in Native Regiments.

4. The system under which the Female Orphans now at Alipore have been led to consider themselves as Pensioners of Government unless married, is to be revised, and the Honorable Court desire that Female Orphans shall be trained to some employment by which they may maintain themselves in credit and respectability.

5. The improvement about to be made in Regimental Schools by the appointment, of trained Masters and Mistresses, will afford employment for some of the Female Orphans who may be specially trained for the purpose.

The Guardians of the Asylum had wanted more than the 10 rupees per month per child which the Government was prepared to pay but 'they considered that the interests of the institution and those of Government are identical; while it appeared to them to be a sacred duty to the army, to extend the advantages of the Institution to as large a number of children as possible'. An amount for new buildings was also provided. Forty eight children of the L.O.S. were reported passing through Cawnpore on 27 March 1855 on their way to Sanawar, having first travelled by steamer to Allahabad: 'they travel night and day, in a bullock cart, rather a questionable arrangement for this season of the year'. They arrived in April, probably late in the month, and were accommodated in a school-room until the new quarters could be completed. The balance, appear to have arrived in 1856, stated to be in total 120 but probably greater, averaging in the accounts 132 over the whole year, noting also 10 died in 1856. The B.M.O.S. still maintained a role, as applications for the Lower Orphan School or Government Foundation at the Lawrence Asylum continued to be made through the B.M.O.S. The Asylum encountered dire financial difficulties following the Mutiny, due to the death of Sir Henry Lawrence, who had provided a quarter of the funding, and the death of many other financial supporters. As a result, the Government took financial responsibility from 1 July 1858. A Budget projection early in 1858 shows 369 children of whom 140 were funded on the L.O.S. Foundation. At December 1859 the total had increased to 413 (239 b, 174 g)<sup>20</sup>.

The [London] *Times*, on 10 February 1873, reported:

A Committee has recently made a report to the Governor-General on the conditions of those noble asylums for the orphans and children of our soldiers which bear the name of Henry Lawrence. Since the death of the Rev. Mr. Parker, the Head-master, whom he appointed to his own asylum near Simla, there have been abuses in the management which it was imperative to remove, and a proposal was made by the Directors of the Lawrence Asylum at Murree, to hand it over, with its endowments, to Government. These two circumstances have led to the report, which embraces also the similar asylums at Mount Aboo, for Bombay, and at Ootacamund, for Madras. What Lord Northbrook may do remains to be seen, but I understand that the Committee, of which the nephew of Sir Henry Lawrence was secretary, have recommended that the united Murree and Sanawar Asylum, near Simla, be made a great military school, under a military governor, to train 800 soldiers' children for the ranks, while the wishes of its founder be more carefully attended to in selecting the children who are to enjoy its benefits. If this be carried

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<sup>20</sup> Allen's *Indian Mail*, 1855, p193. *New Calcutta Directory*, 1861. The quotation is from *The Friend of India*, 5 April 1855, p214 (from the website 19<sup>th</sup> Century UK Periodicals).

out on the understanding that a higher career will be available to the boys who may distinguish themselves, the improvement will be great. It is advised that the Ootacamund Asylum be similarly enlarged, and that the small and admirably managed one at Mount Aboo, in Rajpootana, be kept as it is. Those of the soldiers' children who are of mixed blood and thrive best in the plains are likely to be boarded in the Free School, Calcutta, and a corresponding school in Madras.

It is not clear exactly what changes were made, but the Asylum at Murree (Ghora Gali, Pakistan) continues today as the Lawrence College. In 1896-97 the numbers at Sanawar totalled 515 (282 b, 233 g) and in 1901-02 were 499 (266 b, 233 g)<sup>21</sup>. In 1920 the Lawrence Military Asylum's name was changed to the Lawrence Royal Military School. Control of the School passed to the Government of India, Ministry of Defence in 1947, then 1949 to the Ministry of Education. In 1953, there was a further transfer of control to the the autonomous Lawrence School (Sanawar) Society. The school continues today.

### **The Later Years in Calcutta**

The Lower Orphan School continued on in Calcutta after transfer of most of the children to the Lawrence Military Asylum, but in a changed form, being limited to girls. The girls already at the L.O.S. would have all been older than 12 years of age, as all the younger ones had been transferred. The New Calcutta Directories 1856-1862 indicate 'the Boys are at the Free School' with the following numbers given: 1858 five; 1859 six; 1860 ten; 1861-1862 one. In 1856-1857 there were 86 pupils, possibly a total including boys, then the numbers dropped as the girls became old enough to leave: 1858 fifty; 1859 forty-three; 1860 fifty; 1861-1863, thirty-seven. The Street Directory section of the New Calcutta Directory shows that the L.O.S moved from Alipore to Lower Circular Road in 1861<sup>22</sup>, no doubt due to the decreased numbers. Thacker's Directories show a Head Mistress and Assistant Mistress until 1867, suggesting numbers at a similar level, while the 1881, 1883 and 1884 Thackers only show a Head Mistress, suggesting fewer numbers. The L.O.S. apparently closed in the late 1880s as it had vanished from the 1889 Thackers.

The New Calcutta Directories show 43 girls at the Upper Orphan School at Kidderpore in 1858 increasing to 49 in 1863. Also listed under the U.O.S., the boys at St Paul's are shown to be : 1856-1858 eleven; 1859 forty-five; 1860-1861 eight; 1862 nine; 1863 ten. If the 1859 figure is correct, perhaps this represents boys awaiting transfer to England after the Mutiny. However there is no corresponding increase in the numbers of girls, suggesting the 1859 number of boys is incorrect. The B.M.O.S. was closed to new subscribers in 1861. The Public General Act, 1866, an Act 'to make Provision for the Transfer of the Assets, Liabilities, and Management of..., the Bengal Military Orphan Society, and other Funds, to the Secretary of State for India in Council' was passed, making the B.M.O.S. a Government body. Thacker's *Directories* show a Lady Superintendent and a Head Teacher until 1884 suggesting orphans of school age until that time.

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<sup>21</sup> Review of Progress of Education in India, 1897-98 to 1901-02, p340. Parliamentary Papers (3).

<sup>22</sup> *New Calcutta Directory*, 1861, at Alipore; 1862 at Lower Circular Road.

Correspondence<sup>23</sup> commenced with the Government in London regarding the closure of Kidderpore House in 1884 and a decision was made to close it when the numbers fell to 12 or 13. The Upper Orphan School is shown as the Military Orphan School in the 1889 Thackers, following the closure of the L.O.S.. A Lady Superintendent, but no teacher, is shown, suggesting decreasing numbers. It appears that all the Orphans may have been adults, in fact old ladies who had been placed there as girls, the majority of whom had married, lived long lives, been widowed and had returned to Kidderpore House as they had nowhere else to go and no, or very little, money. By 1902 they were living in what had been the hospital of the Upper Orphan School, and this may have been the situation for some time, as it appears the Clewer Sisters were also at Kidderpore House<sup>24</sup>. By 1910 there were 15 wards of the M.O.S. remaining, three of whom died that year, together with 3 other widows, one a previous matron at Kidderpore House. They were offered pensions by the Government and left over the coming months. At the end only two remained, the Lady Superintendent Miss Alice Bethune who seems to have left about November 1910, and the last ward Mrs Caddy who left about May 1911.

### **The European Female Orphan Asylum, and the Calcutta Free School**

The European Female Orphan Asylum also continued. In 1861 it was at no. 35, Lower Circular Road, Town side and there were 69 wards. In 1870 there were 60 orphans, of pure European parentage. A little more than half were the children of soldiers. Lately there were fathers who were 'lower class settlers and mechanics, throughout Bengal and the North West, who have fallen victims to the climate'. It was listed in the 1898 Thackers with three teachers, under the charge of two Clewer Sisters. There were 60 wards in the early 1900s, and two teachers were listed in 1905. It was still under the charge of the Clewer Sisters in 1933 and called the European Girls Orphanage.<sup>25</sup>

The Free School also continued. On 1 January 1865, the school contained 208 boys and 90 girls, of whom 240 were on the foundation, fully supported, and by 1901-02 there were 227 boys and 202 girls, totalling 429.<sup>26</sup> In December 1910 the School Governors requested that the Kidderpore House premises, which had become vacant due to the closure of the Military Orphan School, be granted to them. This request was subsequently withdrawn as part of the property had been assigned for the use of the Governor's Body Guard. In 1914 another request was made for Kidderpore House, in order to relocate the Kindergarten and lower classes, a total of about 150 boys and girls. The Kindergarten School was opened there in 1916. On 1 March 1917 a decision was made to wind up the Free School Society

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<sup>23</sup> IOR: L/MIL/7/15953. Information thanks to Joss O'Kelly.

<sup>24</sup> The Clewer Sisters, or the 'Community of St John the Baptist', were an Anglican Religious Order, based at the village of Clewer, nr Windsor, England. Three of them arrived in Calcutta in 1881 to begin organising nursing work. Their connection with Kidderpore was pointed out by Dr John Roberts. Eventually over 100 sisters worked in India. See Bonham, *Sisters of the Raj*.

<sup>25</sup> *New Calcutta Directory*, 1862; *Friend of India*, 22 Dec 1870, p1457; Carter Letters, 1903; Fibiwiki, *Calcutta Businesses*, 1933.

<sup>26</sup> Reports on Colleges and Schools in India, *Calcutta Review*, vol 43, 1866, p62; see n21, p361.

and replace it by a Society named the St Thomas's School Society. The Free School site in Free School Street, with the exception of St Thomass Church, was sold in 1920<sup>27</sup> and new buildings constructed on the Kidderpore House grounds. St Thomas's School relocated in 1923, when an Act called St Thomas's School Act 1923 (Bengal Act XII of 1923) was passed. The School continues today. It is believed that the Kidderpore House building has been demolished by the School.

*[Part 2 of this article on Life (and death) in the orphanages will appear in the next issue of the Journal]*

### **Acknowledgements**

I live in Sydney, and the information in this article has been limited to what could be sourced from Sydney, both online and in the libraries in Sydney, with a few exceptions. My thanks therefore to David Blake and Joss O'Kelly for finding some references at the British Library; to Dr John Roberts for information on the temporary move of the L.O.S. to Barasat, and the Clewer Sisters and Kidderpore House; and finally to Google Books and the many books about India on its website which enabled this article to be written, and to other online sources for books and newspapers.

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<sup>27</sup> Calcutta Free School, *Brief History*, pp11-12.

## Records for tracing your ancestors

1. A listing of all orphans of officers for the period to 1 Aug 1799, including details of deaths, apprenticeships and marriages is available in *The Continuation or Supplement, to The Code of Bengal Military Regulations* by Henry Grace, pp369-80. For orphans living in England, some details of Guardians, often family members, are given. This is a source of names that is, as far as I am aware, not available elsewhere.
2. The Accounts for 1818 for the B.M.O.S., in the *Asiatic Journal*, Vol X, July–Dec 1820, available on the Google Books website, have an item 'Deposits for orphans' for both officers and soldiers and list out the names of 26 officers and 14 soldiers. This money appears to be amount held in trust from the fathers' estates, implying that at least one child was still a ward of the B.M.O.S.. Perhaps there may also be records of the fathers' wills elsewhere.
3. The India Office Records (IOR) at the British Library holds many records relating to the Bengal Military Orphan Society but these appear to be largely in respect of officer subscribers in England and to the orphan children of officers, largely if not entirely those returned to England eg IOR/L/AG/23/7/8-9: Alphabetical list of orphans in England, admitted to pension c 1818-c 1834, c 1856-c 1866 and giving dates of birth and admission and, for the first listing, discharge. The Society was transferred to the Indian Government in 1866 so perhaps there are government records in India from 1866.
4. The IOR have limited correspondence concerning the Lower Orphan School, but no actual names of children as far as I am aware. The Asiatic Society Library in Calcutta may have volumes listing children in the L.O.S. from 1798 to 1835 but this has not yet been confirmed. This school was always funded by the Government in India, as part of the Military, so perhaps there may be some records in the archives in India.
5. The Ecclesiastical Records in the IOR have separate listings of the Upper and Lower Schools from at least the late 1820's, under 'Districts' of the Diocese of Calcutta such as Alipore Schools, or Alipore, sometimes with L.O.S., or Kidderpore Schools ( not to be confused with St Stephen's Church Kidderpore which was built in 1846.)
6. The Lawrence School, Sanawar has a web address <http://www.sanawar.edu.in> through which the school may be contacted. There are also some records in the IOR, particularly relating to the appointment of Staff. The School was funded by the Government in India from 1858, as part of the Military, so there may be Government records in India.
7. The Free School became St Thomas's School, whose current address is 4 Diamond Harbour Road, Kidderpore, Kolkata 700023 West Bengal. Email for the Boys School is [santhomeb@vsnl.net](mailto:santhomeb@vsnl.net).
8. Regarding the European Female Orphan Society, Christopher Hawes in his book *Poor Relations*, thanks the Secretary of the East India Charitable Trust, Calcutta, for access to the records of the foundation of this institution, which suggests the Trust may have records relating to the orphans themselves (but I have not attempted to confirm this). The address is East India Charitable Trust, 51 J L Nehru Road, Middleton Row, Kolkata-700071. However, as the orphan girls in this Asylum were mainly daughters of soldiers in the British Army, with European mothers, there should be alternative sources of information.
9. Most of the Directories such as Thackers, and similar earlier books, list the schools under Calcutta Educational Institutions and list the teachers, but there is no information about the

children. The Lawrence M.A. is listed in the Mofussil section of the Directories, under Kasauli/Kussowlee; again teachers, but not children are generally listed.

10. Many of the entries on the B.L. India Office Family History Search website and the FIBIS website show connections with the above institutions as does the Bengal Obituary. The FIBIS Fibiwiki webpage *Directories* has many online volumes which also show connections.

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<sup>28</sup> Access to ECCO is restricted to subscribing library cardholders, including National Libraries of Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Australia, State Library of NSW and many University libraries; also available in British Library Reading Rooms.

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## **Wrecked or Captured: the East India Company Ships that failed to arrive**

*By Andrea Cordani*

*An edited version of a talk given to the FIBIS Spring Meeting on 23 May 2009*

I'd just like to start with a little bit about myself. I am employed professionally as a shipwreck researcher, providing material for authors, museums, and also I have to say occasionally treasure hunters and salvage companies. I don't pretend to be an expert on the whole range of the East India Company's ships and mercantile history. A lot of people have done a lot of extraordinarily good work, and there is a short booklist at the end.

My subject is the Company's maritime (i.e. mercantile) service from 1600 to 1834. Ships of the East India Company (EIC) were mostly chartered. Many people are quite surprised by that because the competitors, the Dutch, the French and so on, mostly owned their own ships - they built them and they owned them. But the EIC mainly chartered them from syndicates of owners who were responsible for building the ships and operating them. The ships fell into several categories, or roles:

- Regular ships. These were the big, 3-deckers that traded with the East.<sup>1</sup> They were regular in the sense that they ran to a sort of regular timetable, not quite as often as the number 11 bus, but there was a sort of schedule of out and back, in what were called 'sailing seasons'. They were the mainstay of the trading arm.
- Extra ships. Regular ships were chartered for voyages every year, but occasionally the demands of trade meant that extra ships were needed and the EIC was quite straightforward about it, it called them extra ships, and hired them, often at the last minute, for one or two voyages, occasionally with the promise of more regular charter.
- Licensed ships. We forget in these days of global pluralism that the EIC had a monopoly of trade for much of its operation. So nobody else could go out there and buy cargoes, trade in goods, visit ports, and so forth, and the EIC controlled a lot of the operations out in the sub-continent. But it lost its monopoly in 1813 in trade to India. It then started to license other people to operate ships. Sometimes they carried cargoes for the EIC itself. More often they carried their own cargoes, but they were allowed to trade at EIC operated ports.
- Interlopers – a rather funny expression that the EIC used itself. These were in effect trespassers. They were people who took a chance, decided that they would try trading to the East, see if they could nip in and out, get some cargo, come home, make some money, without the EIC noticing. If they were stopped, arrested or made to desist, they often lost a lot of money and it was a sort of a civil offence.
- The country service. That's a network of shipping between India, China, and many ports in between. These ships went round assembling cargoes at the big entrepôts, ready for the regular ships or the extra ships to pick up.

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<sup>1</sup> Many of these ships were about the size of a Royal Navy frigate.

- And of course the company did operate a fighting arm, called the Bombay Marine (later called the Indian Navy). This was a Company-based private navy that existed to defend the mercantile ships, and there was also a Pilot Service and other government vessels that were employed around the three presidencies.

The term 'ships husband' is a strange one to us but he was the principal managing owner of a ship's owning syndicate. If you see a reference to a ship's husband, it's really the person who is in charge of the building and the chartering arrangements and tendering for ships that were chartered to the Company. One of the reasons why people wanted to get business from the EIC was because you automatically got repeat voyages. Unless the ships really were a bit 'iffy' or they had one of those unfortunate accidents, like being wrecked or captured, then you were pretty well set up to continue to charter to the Company. Even if you lost your ship or it did get worn out, there was a doctrine of 'hereditary bottoms' which always amuses people. This meant that if your ship for some reason was no longer serviceable, you had the right for preferential treatment in chartering a new one to the Company.

How were the voyages organised? We forget sometimes that sailing requires attention to the weather, and so there were seasons for sailing. Normally September to February, ships would assemble in Long Reach in the Thames, or down at Gravesend, start to take on supplies for their outward voyage, and then they would move off into a naval port like Plymouth or Portsmouth, ready to set sail a bit later on in May. They tried to get going by May each year, because if they didn't, some things would happen. You lost your 'take off' slot with the trade winds, because you were relying on getting out there as quickly as reasonable and on catching the trade winds, often down to the 'Brazils' as the coast of South America was known, and if you missed the trade winds you were going to get into some pretty rotten weather, so your chances of coming to grief were increased.

Ships were armed. In the early part of the Company's history, the first hundred years or so, they might be armed with anything from 10 to 50 guns. Towards the latter part, mid-1700s to 1834, they more likely had 36 guns. So they were pretty heavily armed. You didn't want to encounter an East Indiaman who was angry with you! Also they were sometimes protected by the Royal Navy and travelled, often in convoys at key points of their journey, and when they got to the subcontinent there was local protection by the Bombay Marine.

### **Who went on ships?**

Obviously the officers and crew. I tend to refer to Captains but the correct word is probably Commander, and in fact the EIC officers would probably want to be called Chief Officer, 2nd Officer, etc, but in common with the Merchant Service, I do tend to refer to them as 1st mate, 2nd Mate, 3rd Mate and so forth. Then there were the Supercargoes and Factors. Supercargoes were the people who were in charge of the cargo business. Factors were the people who ended up in charge of the factories, which were in fact the depots in the sub-continent. Finally there were 'writers' (the EIC's civil servants), civilian passengers, and of course soldiers – lots of them.

## What happens to the ships?

Well, they were wrecked on reefs, lost in storms, captured by enemies or pirates, caught fire or exploded, or just went missing. In *Lords of the East*, Jean Sutton has a very useful appendix listing all the ships and the numbers of their voyages. I've analysed this to give a flavour of the number of ships and the size of the enterprise.

Period	No. of Ships chartered	No. of Voyages
1601-1657	130	290
1658-1703	290	649
1704-1773	390	1260
1774-1834	426	1976
<b>Total</b>	<b>1236</b>	<b>4175</b>

This is very rough and I'm finding new ships all the time. So over the whole period of operation there are 1,236 ships - a sizeable fleet for the time - and 4,175 voyages. Now, if you think about what a voyage was, you could probably nearly double that figure, because 'voyage' is out and back.

Looking at the scale of the losses, again I've analysed:

Period	Wrecked	Captured	Missing	Other
1601-1657	21	15	2	5
1658-1703	35	17	2	3
1704-1773	52	16	1	6
1774-1834	67	29	1	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>26</b>

**Wrecked** means lost, foundered, wrecked on reefs, or disappeared in some other way. The EIC had different terminology. It distinguished between ships that it called lost and ships that it called foundered. 'Wrecked' means sank, basically.

**Captured** means captured by enemies, the French, the Dutch, sometimes even the Portuguese, or pirates.

**Missing** is an interesting category. There was a lot of coming and going, so other ships often knew what had happened to particular ships that ran into trouble. But the ones that we call missing here are the ones which set sail on a fair day from a fine port and were never heard of again. The expression that they use is 'never since heard of'. It's not the same as knowing you are in a convoy with six other ships and if one of them gets into trouble, and then goes off and obviously must have sunk: those will be in the 'wrecked category'. The 'missings' are the ones that disappear into the blue and are never heard of again.

The **Other** category contains the mishaps and accidents, such as catching fire, exploding, falling apart, etc. The 'other' category increases in the last period of the Company's operation. There's a high increase of ships that caught fire. I wonder whether that's to do with the prevalence of cargoes being flammable and people not taking so much care.

In sum, there were 284 casualties by all causes over the whole period, that is shipping casualties. There were, of course, also massive human casualties and loss of life. This figure represents 23%, nearly a quarter of the ships. However, since there were 4175 voyages or nearly 8350 passages to India and back, if you set sail on an East Indiaman, depending on the period you went there, the risk of disaster was not much greater than 3.4%. And as regards individuals, there was also the question whether you survived yourself, due to sickness, illness, and the general hazards of life at that time; and wars with the Dutch and French at various times made it more or less dangerous. Surges of pirate activity particularly off the East Coast of Africa (nothing changes much!), and of course off the Malabar coast where there was a pirate called 'Angria' who seemed to get angrier by the decade capturing more and more people.

The commercial pressures of 'private trade' might also increase the dangers. One of the perks of being an East India officer was that you got space on the ship to carry your own stuff and do a bit of wheeling and dealing at the ports that you called at. There is some indication that commanders often put into ports that they were not supposed to, but which they wanted to visit to buy something that they thought saleable on their own account back home. Often, completely against orders, they would nip into dangerous places and try to nip out again – not always successfully. [See p58 for an EIC Captain's private trade.]

### **Early unhappy accidents**

The first unhappy accident was in 1613 when a vessel called the *Trades Increase* caught fire when careening at Bantam. Careening means the ship has its bottom scraped and all the holes blocked up with tar and pitch. So they empty out the ship, they all climb into small boats, called jolly boats, make the ship lean over, and they go round and tar-brush all the leaky seams. If somebody is a little too eager with the tar, then you may have a fire and lose the ship. A few years later a ship called the *Hector* went over too far while careening at Jakarta. It didn't actually catch fire. It just leaned over and over and over and – sank! They had a lot of trouble with fire in those days. At Surat in 1633, the *Swallow* caught fire, and before anybody could do anything, the ropes mooring it also caught fire, so it was no longer secured in the harbour, drifted downwind and set light to the *Charles*. So both vessels were totally destroyed. In 1706 the *Loyal Hester* simply 'fell to pieces' – it was just worn out. The point is, of course, that the Company is losing valuable cargo and ships.

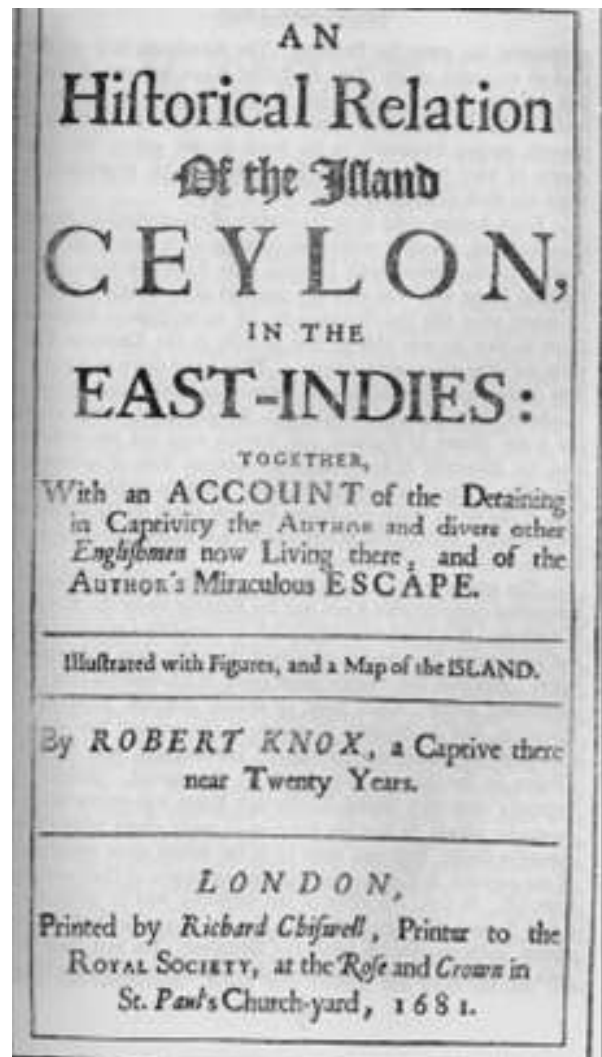
More seriously, what happens to the people? Well, some of them drowned at sea. A very high proportion survived the wreck and got ashore, and that's often where their troubles really started. They might die ashore waiting for rescue, or they died attempting to get to friendly shores, only to find people were actually not disposed to help them – more often they were disposed to kill them. So they could be captured and killed, captured and enslaved, or captured and ransomed.

### **The long captivity of Robert Knox**

He went out on a ship called the *Ann* in 1658, with his father, also called Robert Knox, the Commander of the vessel. They had one successful voyage to the East. On their second

voyage they were unlucky. They were stooging around a bit, trying to pick up valuable cargoes, and the Company's agent at Fort St George in Madras said: 'Go down to Pondicherry. You might be a bit luckier there. There might be some stuff ready for you to bring back to England'. On their way there, in 1659, they were caught in a huge storm. Lots of ships they were in company with were wrecked, and they were told to put in to Kottiar, a small port on the eastern side of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), to repair their mast because if you are dismasted in a sailing ship, it's like losing your engine. So they put in to Kottiar. Having lived in Sri Lanka, I know Kottiar - it's a very nice, protected bay. They put in there and they started to make their repairs and to trade with the locals. They got bullocks, they got fresh meat, they got fresh water. They were all fine, but they should have been a bit careful, because the year before survivors of the wreck of the *Persian Merchant* on the Maldiv Islands, quite close to Ceylon, had made their way there to try to get home. Those people had been captured and enslaved by the King of Kandy in Ceylon, a man called Raja Singa, who was a rather strange ruler, in that he had a penchant for keeping European captives in a sort of menagerie. By the end of his reign he had about 500 European captives. But they weren't 'banged up' in jails. They were distributed among the villages, each village had to support the European captive and give them fresh food daily, for which the captive didn't have to work. And they just had to live there, but they were not allowed to go away.

So, both the Knoxes and various sailors were captured and experienced this for two years, but in 1661 the young Robert Knox, saddened by the death of his father, decided he ought to think about his future. He won the trust of everybody and started making knitted woollen caps, which seemed to go down a treat with the native population, who wanted to buy them. In 1673 he became an itinerant pedlar and went around everywhere selling his caps and looking for an escape route. Finally, in 1679, he made his way out of the Kandyan Kingdom, which is in the centre of Ceylon and made his way to a Dutch settlement, where he finally escaped. When he got back to the UK he then went on another two or three voyages to the East. But he had been away for twenty years and he wrote a book on the journey back to England and



Title page of Robert Knox's account of his captivity in Ceylon

it's a very interesting story because, as well as describing his own experiences, he was a sort of David Attenborough of his day. His observation of Ceylon is extremely well written, it's written in a surprisingly neutral tone despite his twenty year captivity, and is a very good early account of the customs of the place. And he doesn't seem to have been in any way damaged by his experience, which is extraordinary.

### **Captures at Sea**

In 1695 no less than six Indiamen were captured off the Irish coast by a French squadron of six battleships and two fireships commanded by the Comte de Nesmond - a big loss.

In 1692 the Indiaman *Samuel* was captured off the Cape of Good Hope by a French privateer<sup>2</sup>, but the vessel put up a really good fight, and the French were so impressed that the captain ransomed it back to the Company for only £200, which was a snip.

By contrast the *Mocha* frigate made one voyage for the EIC to Surat, and then turned pirate itself in 1695, after leaving Bombay. It went on a piratical cruise for two years and surrendered at Madagascar to Commander Warren. Fourteen of the pirate crew were then hanged at Wapping. It's not entirely clear, and I need to do some more work on this, whether they all had the idea that they were going to be pirates when they set off, or whether they were in fact boarded by a pirate and then fell in with it. A very interesting story.

### **The story of John Dale of the *Winterton***

This is one of the longer stories of shipwreck and survival and Jean Hood's book *Marked for Misfortune* tells the story of its wreck in 1792. If you are interested in survival stories, I recommend that book. John Dale was not very much older than fourteen when he was the 3rd Mate of the *Winterton*. We must remind ourselves that what we would call children, the EIC treated as adults, and one often sees pictures of ship's boats being rowed away from the ship by twelve husky men of 45 years or older commanded by what appears to be a teenage boy and he is the officer. This is a story of survival and human courage against the odds. When people are caught up in events, accidents, tsunamis, disasters abroad, and on the news you see people huddled under a blanket at the airport departure lounge at Madras/Chennai, for example, and they are saying, 'We've been here for 48 hours and they haven't got us home yet', you have to compare it with what the situation was hundreds of years ago to see how much our expectations of repatriation after disaster have changed.

So, the *Winterton* was wrecked off the island of Madagascar. It was trying to pass through the Mozambique Channel which is a wide strip of water. It was wrecked on 20 August 1792. 52 people died and 260 got ashore. There were also 75 chests of silver lost. (Most

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<sup>2</sup> Privateer – was a sort of early 'private finance initiative' by the Government. In wartime commercial shipping could apply for a 'letter of marque', a French term but the practice was not confined to the French. This document allowed you, even though you were ostensibly a civilian, merchant vessel, to prey on enemy shipping with the blessing of your own government, and capture what you could as a prize.

of the East Indiamen carried money, or some valuables.) Interestingly, there were also ten women passengers. One was returning to India to her husband, who was a soldier, and taking her daughters. There were also the Bristow girls, Mary and Charlotte. They were the result of a liaison between John Bristow, an Honourable Company civil servant and a native woman. They had been sent to England for their education, they were now 'finished' and proper young ladies, and were going back to India to join their father and his native wife. John Dale was the senior surviving officer, as 3rd Mate, and set off to Mozambique Island, which is on the coast of Mozambique, to try and get help, leaving the 260 to set up with tents and whatever they could salvage from the wreck and get water. By January 1793, another 80 had died. He reached Mozambique and managed to persuade the Portuguese Governor to lend him some money to hire a boat to go back to rescue the people. And one thing to remember is that, if a crew member is ever caught up in a shipwreck, your pay stops. So, a lot of writing of letters, and letters of credit, to get a boat to rescue the other survivors on which he returns to the wreck on 24 March to rescue the other survivors. By 1 April he has got them back to Mozambique, and now he has get from Mozambique to India. So he hires a Portuguese brig the *Joachim* to take them back and by then more have died and some healthy ones had started sickening. They leave on 10 June for India, and then, just their luck, on 7 July they were captured by a French privateer *Le Mutin* ['The Mutineer'], for while they were away war had been declared – again – between France and Britain.

The Captain of *Le Mutin* was a little bit shocked because he thought he was capturing a Portuguese ship, but when he boarded the ship there were all these English people in various states of decay and dying and sickly and fed-up. And so, he has to decide what to do with them. When you capture another vessel as a privateer, you've now got two ships to command and a limited number of people to do it with. Classically, what you do is put some safe people on the prize, the vessel you've captured, and you send it to a friendly port and then you carry on in your own vessel privateering. So this Portuguese ship with a prize crew and the sickly survivors from the wreck of the *Winterton* were sent off to Mauritius (a French possession). Twenty healthy survivors, including sixteen soldiers and John Dale, were kept on board *Le Mutin*, because it might encounter other vessels and the Captain wants strong, healthy people to be on his side. Then, off Tuticorin the privateer encounters a Dutch East India Company vessel the *Ceylon*, and itself is taken by the Dutch. The Dutch were in competition with the English, so were unlikely allies, but in this case they did the decent thing and sent the prisoners to Madras.

So that sounds fine. The Bristow girls and the other women, I think I'm right in saying, all survived and got settled back in Madras. But it's not quite over yet for poor John Dale. He's the senior surviving officer but he's in Madras with his ship gone and needs to get back to England. So he and a fellow sailor book a passage home – he's written another of those IOUs (drawn on the EIC of course) on the EIC vessel *Scorpion*, which left on 20 September. And then, nearly, nearly, nearly home, on 12 January 1794 the *Scorpion* was captured by a French squadron in the English Channel. Dale was transferred as a prisoner of war, this time to the French frigate *Semillante*. Bizarrely, instead of being taken to

France, he is now sent across to Norfolk, Virginia, in the US, which was operating as a free port for French vessels. Eventually he was freed on parole, and finally returned to England two years and two months after he left. And when he got back to East India House, they said: 'Thank you very much. We recognise very much what you have done. You were responsible for saving a lot of lives in Madagascar and getting people safely back eventually to where they should be. Here's 200 guineas. And by the way, there's another vessel, lading in Gravesend and we'd like you to command that'.

The Company sometimes did send ships to rescue wreck survivors. For the *Winterton*, it equipped two ships at Madras to go to Madagascar to find the survivors, which arrived two months after they had been evacuated by John Dale. So, again, more costs in rescuing people. And it was very concerned to recover treasure<sup>3</sup> and salvage cargo.

### Book List

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|---------------------|--|
| Farrington, Anthony | <i>A Catalogue of East India Company Ships' Journals and Logs 1600-1834</i> ; also <i>A biographical index of East India Company maritime service officers : 1600-1834</i> (London, British Library, 1999) |
| Hackman, Rowan      | <i>Ships of the East India Company</i> (Gravesend, World Ship Society, 2001)   |
| Hood, Jean          | <i>Marked for Misfortune: an epic tale of shipwreck, human endeavour and rescue in the age of sail</i> (London, Conway Maritime Press, 2003)   |
| Knox, Robert        | <i>An Historical Relation of Ceylon, etc</i> (London, 1681) [Can be read at the British Library]   |
| Taylor, Stephen     | <i>The Caliban shore: the fate of the Grosvenor castaways</i> (London, Faber, 2004). [For another great survival story].   |

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<sup>3</sup> East Indiamen frequently carried copper and silver coinage for circulation in India, not because there was any shortage of those metals, but because the Calcutta mint could not strike coins of the high quality now being produced in England at the Soho mint in Birmingham by Matthew Boulton (the manufacturer and partner of the inventor James Watt).



## The Loss of an East Indiaman in 1807: account by Samuel Rolleston

*Contributed by Simon Martin, Rolleston's g-g-g-grandson. The document is evidently a later copy of Rolleston's original manuscript.*

The following account of a disastrous voyage from India in the early years of the century, which resulted in the foundering of the *Ganges* off the Cape of Good Hope is taken from a M.S.S. written by Mr R. of the Hon'ble E.I.Co. Civil Service who was one of the passengers on the ill-fated vessel.

At twelve o'clock on the 26th February, 1807, I embarked on board the Hon'ble E.I. Company's Ship *Ganges* of sixteen hundred tons for England. The deck was filled with passengers and their friends. The latter in a short time quitted us, the sails were filled and we commenced our voyage.

An absence of twelve years and nine months from home, the thought of being once more restored to my family, and the prospect of happiness which I might reasonably hope to enjoy, could not dissipate the melancholy which I felt in quitting a society with which I had in some degree been connected for so long a period; nor check the sorrow for the loss of friends whom I was perhaps fated never to behold again.

To India itself I could abstractedly feel but little partiality. Its climate had early proved uncongenial to my heath, nor did my memory dwell with pleasure on its arid scenery, nor was my mind impressed with much respect or esteem for the general character of the natives.

Our first rendez-vous was Point de Galle where we were to join the Bengal and Madras ships. The wind was happily fair and under the convoy of the *Bellona*, and in company with the *Huddart* and *Castlereagh*, we were on the evening out of sight of Bombay and its Lighthouse.

To follow with undeviating precision the progress of the ships, or to mark the common occurrences of each day would prove tedious and uninteresting. I shall therefore only notice those which offered some change to the usual monotony of the scene

March 2nd. The Commodore chased a ship under English colours, but did not succeed in coming up with her. We passed St George's Island.

March 4th. Anchored in Mangalore Roads.

March 5th. I went on shore and breakfasted with my friend Keate<sup>1</sup>. This jaunt was the more interesting as I had never before visited the place; and I must also acknowledge that I had not yet been able successfully to reconcile myself to the confinement of a ship. The town of Mangalore is neat and populous. It lies close to the sea, which breaks over the bar with no inconsiderable force. The town also possesses the convenience of a river opening a lucrative and easy communication into the interior of the country. The European society of

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Morris Keate, EIC Civil Servant 1796, by now Judge and Magistrate in Canara District.

Mangalore is small. The gentlemen's houses are situated at a short distance from the beach, advantageously built on eminences, which command a prospect of the Bay, shipping and adjacent country and are pleasingly refreshed by the sea and land breezes. The climate is delightful, mild, regular and serene. The country round it well cultivated and dotted with plantations of cocoa nut trees, whilst the river is seen in the distance pursuing its tranquil and winding course. After breakfast we returned on board the *Ganges*, and immediately proceeded on our voyage. I embraced this opportunity, as I also did when off Goa, of writing to Bombay.

March 6th. Saw at a distance Mount Tilly, the termination of the Canara country.

March 10th. Passed Cape Comorin,

March 12th. Made the Island of Ceylon. The country appeared rising in high hills, wild and woody.

March 14th Anchored in Point de Galle roads, when we experienced a severe disappointment in not finding the Madras and Bengal ships, which led us to anticipate a tedious and most unwelcome delay.

March 15th Early in the morning I went on shore. The ship lay about two miles from the bay, on the entrance of which, towards the NW, the fort is built. The Bay forms nearly a half-circle, and appeared about three miles in breadth. On the South Eastern point of it, the ships' boats are easily watered. The Fort of Point de Galle is small and indefensible, being commanded by the heights to the North and North East: it, however, appears in good repair. The town, which is situated on the inside of the Fort is built on a gentle slope and is extremely hot, being partly surrounded by the hills. The houses are in general small though neat, and, with the exception of the commandant's are low roomed. In the course of the day, His Majesty's ship *Wilhelmina* and the Bengal fleet arrived.

March 17th. The weather warm. Everyone anxiously looking out for the Madras ships, which were at length happily descried, and towards evening anchored under the convoy of the *Dasher* sloop of war. We now pleased ourselves with the thoughts of pursuing our voyage. The Madras fleet however had orders to complete their cargoes with spices and were accordingly sent round by General Maitland<sup>2</sup> to Colombo. Delay at this advanced season of the year was of the greatest consequence. A winter's passage round the Cape was apprehended, and the tardy mismanagement of the Madras Government gave universal disgust. To repine, however, was useless and having become acquainted with Major Beavor of the 19th Foot, and aide-de-camp to the Governor, I received from that gentleman politeness so spontaneous and kindness so warm and friendly, as contributed to beguile the tedium of my unwelcome detention.

March 18th. The Madras ships pursued their way to Colombo, nor was it, till the morning of the 26th that they again appeared in sight when we immediately unmoored and continued our voyage. The weather during our stay at Point de Galle was sultry and oppressive, and

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<sup>2</sup> Sir Thomas Maitland, Governor and C-in-C, Ceylon.

the days usually closed with thunder storms and rain. On the 20th the 'Sovereign's' mast was struck by lightning.

Our fleet now consisted of the following ships:

HMS Concorde Capt Cramer

Hon'ble E.I.C. Ships	<i>St. Vincent</i>	<i>Walthamstow</i>
	<i>Lord Nelson</i>	<i>Bengal</i>
	<i>Lady Jane Dundas</i>	<i>Lord Castlereagh</i>
	<i>Hugh Inglis</i>	<i>Asia</i>
Extra Ships	<i>Sovereign</i>	<i>Monarch</i>
	<i>Huddart</i>	<i>Alexander</i>
	<i>Harriet</i>	

Repeater of Signals *Ganges*

So large a fleet proved an interesting sight, and yielded to the mind, in the long and adventurous voyage which we were about to undertake, a pleasing impression of security. Until the 7th April nothing occurred to diversify the scene, having pursued our course until we approached the line (which we crossed on 3rd April. Longitude 85) with tolerable winds and through tranquil seas. This day being unusually calm, the Captains of the different ships signed a letter to Captain Cramer, to request, considering the late season of the year, he would not visit the Cape.

April 12th. The Captains repaired on board the *Concorde* and it was agreed by Capt. Cramer, that they should pursue a direct course to St Helena.

April 27th. We this day first experienced a constant and regular leak of two inches in the hour, and though we were conscious that the ship was weak and unfit for heavy seas, yet the leak was so trifling that it raised no emotions of fear, or possessed the mind with any anticipations of danger. Our chief regret was the state of the pumps which were continually out of order, and for which, we had neither proper materials, nor workmen to repair them.

April 28th. The affections of the mind owe their chief influence to the circumstances under which they are received; and those occurrences, which in the bustle and occupations of life would nearly pass unnoticed, at other periods, impress it with melancholy and protracted gloom. This I experienced in the loss which our little society met from the death of Mr Law, a doctor of the 77th Regt., who expired this morning. He was committed to the deep with decency and respect, the whole ship's company attending.

May 1st. A strong gale during which we unfortunately parted company with the *Lord Nelson*, *Huddart*, *Monarch* *Harriet*. The ship's leak increased to five inches in the hour.

May 5th Saw the Island of St Clair, Madagascar.

May 6th. The ship's leak again happily reduced to two inches per hour.

May 10th. In the evening the Commodore made a signal for land. Captain Harrington informed us it must be a mistake, which ultimately proved correct.

May 12th. Land descried on the African coast, near Christmas river.

May 13th. Land still in sight. The *Lord Castlereagh* parted company.

May 14th. Strong gale and a lofty sea. Our leak increased to twelve inches in the hour.

May 16th. We had this day to regret a further diminution of our society in the death of Doctor Price. This melancholy event had been long expected. His loss was sincerely regretted. The *Sovereign* parted company.

May 17th. Saw the land about Cape Vaccas. Weather unsettled, wind high. The Hugh Inglis parted company.

May 18th. Fresh gales with a heavy head swell.

May 19th. The gale still continuing.

May 20th. The wind high, with a heavy swell at the Westward.

May 21st. Strong gales and cloudy weather with an exceedingly high sea. We descried five sail which proved to be the outward bound Fleet. Our leak had now increased to fourteen inches in the hour and to add to the gloom and dreariness of our situation, we had parted from the whole Fleet, the *St Vincent* excepted.

May 22nd. We this morning found ourselves unfortunately separated from the *St Vincent* the ship rolling deep and the leak increasing from seventeen to twenty inches per hour. Our situation now was alarming, and opinions were entertained of the propriety of attempting to weather the Cape. About ten o'clock we descried a strange vessel. She proved to be a Bremen from Batavia. No doubt was entertained that she was a lawful prize, but the leaky state of the *Ganges* and our want of men prevented our taking possession of her. She was accordingly dismissed. Nearly about this time another sail was descried to the windward, which proved to be the *St Vincent*. This unexpected junction gave us the truest pleasure and served to dissipate the gloom which had darkened our minds from the increasing leak of the ship and from the distressing idea that we were tossing in a tempestuous sea, solitary and in danger. In the early part of the day we experienced severe squalls with thunder, lightning and hail.

May 23rd. A strong gale with heavy swell from the Westward. In order to relieve the ship, all the salt water with which the casks were filled had been started [*tapped?*].

May 24th The weather still unsettled. The leak increasing from seventeen to twenty four inches. On surveying the ship in the magazine, she was discovered to be in a very weak and bad condition. Still further to lighten her, four of the guns were thrown over, and the top gallant masts were lowered down. At eleven we saw two strange sails. They answered our signals, but did not join us.

May 25th. From the weak condition and increasing leak of the ship and the tempestuous weather which we had still reason to expect, Captain Harrington deemed it advisable to go on board the *St Vincent* in order to represent our situation to Capt. Jones to solicit him to keep company with us, and to request that he would accommodate such of his passengers as were then desirous of leaving the *Ganges*. To these requests Capt Jones replied that he could not with propriety receive any of the passengers then, but that he was determined to remain by us, and that should our danger increase he would most readily receive them

all. These assurances were highly gratifying, and the consciousness which most of the passengers felt that Capt Harrington would give them timely intimation when they ought to abandon the ship, checked their rising anxiety and restored some quiet to their minds.

May 26th. The weather proved moderate and fine, and we pleased ourselves with the idea that we might still get round the Cape.

May 27th. The day opened auspicious and fair, and continued so until two o'clock, when the wind rose to a severe gale and the sea became lofty and tempestuous. We now first with certainty learnt the real state of the ship, and the dangerous situation in which we were placed. Capt. Harrington informed us that the stern post had given way, and that it was necessary to lighten the ship as the only immediate means of preserving her. Where the safety of all was concerned, exertion became general and the passengers tendered their assistance either in throwing over the cargo, or in pumping the ship. The guns on the main deck were cast over (the sea preventing the opening of the ports below) with as much of the cargo as was deemed necessary. Constant signals of distress were made to the *St Vincent*, and as night advanced, gloom and apprehension pervaded the minds of all. About ten most of the passengers retired to their cabins, impressed with the melancholy, foreboding that they would perhaps meet no more! Cold, dark, and rainy, was the night. The ship rolling heavily, and every signal of distress remaining unanswered. The hope that the *St Vincent* was in company became now every hour more faint, whilst the dangerous situation of the ship hourly increased. At twelve o'clock the officer on deck, thro' the darkness of the night, observed a light astern. It must be the *St Vincent*! Joyfully he ran to acquaint the Captain with the tidings. Capt. Harrington could scarcely credit it, and although the officer remained firm in his assertions, still as these hours elapsed without its being seen again, all hopes that she was near us became nearly extinct. Melancholy were these three hours, awfully did they pass, the mind relapsing into deeper gloom, from the glimpse of security which had momentarily beamed upon it. At four, whilst the officer was looking out, another blue light was discerned, and the anxious eye was rivetted to the spot till the first dawn of light ascertained that the *St Vincent* was actually astern of us. The *Ganges* was now in so weak and disabled a state as to render the immediate abandonment of her necessary. A signal was therefore made by Telegraph to the *St Vincent*.

"The ship is sinking, send boat."

Every exertion was immediately used to get the launch out. This was happily effected. The ship however rolled so dreadfully that it was found impossible to put the ladies into the boat from the *Ganges* astern (notwithstanding the sailing had been cut away for that purpose) the launch was therefore at all risks brought alongside, and at three quarters past noon, the children, ladies, and the rest of the passengers had safely left the *Ganges*. At this time the *St Vincent* was four miles astern, there was seven feet of water in the well. The stern post had separated four inches from the dead wood and the ship was ungovernable by the helm.

It was nine o'clock 'ere the last boat with the Captain, myself, and the remainder of the officers had reached the *St Vincent*. Happy moment. Miraculous escape! Who can paint the emotions of gratitude which warmed our breasts, first, to the great disposer of events,

and after him to Capt. Jones of the *St Vincent*, who ever since the 21st May, in weather the most unfavourable, and with his own ship in a leaky state, continued to keep by us as well as circumstances would permit, with a care “the most watchful and unceasing”, and afterwards received us on board to the number of 209 with a kindness, liberality, and attention which, whilst it calls for our warmest thanks, will, I trust, serve to irradiate the remainder of his days with the heartfelt consciousness that, but for his humane exertions, we all must have perished. Ungrateful should I be were my acknowledgements here to stop. To the passengers of the *St Vincent* we are next indebted. No office of kindness was omitted by them. We shared their cabins, and whilst they benevolently sympathised in our distress they supplied our wants with the utmost delicacy and unassuming readiness.

May 29th. At daylight this morning the *Ganges* was still in sight about five miles off, with her masts and sails in the same situation as the preceeding evening. At seven o'clock a.m. Capt. Jones bore up to her, when Capt. Harrington, the first officer and myself pulled towards her in the launch in the hopes of saving some part of the property on board. As he approached the ship, the water was seen running out of the scuppers and the ports of the gun deck, and the ship was evidently in a sinking state. We therefore thought it prudent to relinquish our object. Happy was it that we did so. For scarcely had we got alongside of the *St Vincent*, when the *Ganges* in the lapse of one minute sank entirely, going down head foremost with all her masts standing except the main top mast, which broke off at the cap on the main yards touching the water. Thus sunk the *Ganges* in Lat 30.22 South. May the emotions which this awful sight impressed upon my heart prove indelible. Gratitude to my Creator, and confidence in the dispensations of Providence.

### **Samuel Rolleston, 1775-1860**

Samuel Rolleston was born at Alresford, Hants on 11 July 1775. His father, also Samuel (1743-1823) is described in various legal documents as ‘*Merchant of London*’. For his early schooling Samuel jnr attended an ‘academy’ in East Street, Southampton under the supervision of a ‘Mr Bloor’. Evidently he was educated sufficiently for acceptance to Oxford University. According to the ‘*Alumni Oxonienses*’ he was admitted to Merton College in 1793, but there is no record of his graduation. Family notes show that he went to India in 1794 and as a young man spent some years in the Bombay Presidency.<sup>3</sup>

On 30 August 1811 he married Elizabeth Herring, daughter of the Rev Athanasius Herring<sup>4</sup>, Vicar of Uttoxeter. The ceremony was conducted by his younger brother Matthew in the parish church of St Mary’s. In the register of marriages the witnesses listed are Samuel Rolleston (Snr) and Mary Herring. How did the couple meet? They were cousins and the

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<sup>3</sup> By 1807 he had reached the rank of Junior Merchant and held the post of Resident at Fort Victoria (now Bankot) a port and at that time the chief town of Ratnagiri District on the west coast of the Bombay Presidency.

<sup>4</sup> The marriage was recorded in the *General Chronicle and Literary Magazine*. Elizabeth Herring is described as the second daughter of Rev. Athanasius Herring. The IGI lists two christenings on 11 August 1782 at Uttoxeter, one for Mary and another for Elizabeth. It would seem that Elizabeth was the younger twin sister of Mary.

marriage was probably arranged. Samuel's mother and Elizabeth's mother were sisters, the daughters of George and Elizabeth Carr. The couple had two children, George, born in Uttoxeter in 1812, and Harriet, born on the Isle of Wight circa 1821. From family notes it appears that his wife Elizabeth died on 13 November 1825<sup>5</sup>. Samuel married secondly, Harriet Vilett, daughter of the Rev Vilett and sister of Colonel Vilett of Swindon, and it is because of this that so many of the children of George and Augusta Rolleston bear the name Vilett.

One gains the impression that Samuel enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. The family home was Pan Manor near Newport, Isle of Wight. During the years 1838/39 Samuel accompanied his wife and daughter Harriet on a 'Mini Grand Tour', travelling through France and Italy to Rome and Naples, and returning Southern Germany and France. They also visited mainland England from time to time, on occasions spending 'seasons' in Cheltenham. In 1844 and again in 1847 the Cheltenham *Looker On* records the family's arrival and departure. Cheltenham was a very popular destination for army families and families having connections with India. Lansdowne Road, one of the more prominent residential roads, was often referred to as 'Curry & Colonels'.

Samuel Rolleston died at Houchins Hotel, 10 Dover Street, Piccadilly on 10 April 1860 aged 84. The death certificate records heart disease and pneumonia as cause of death.

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<sup>5</sup> The *Monthly Magazine* records Elizabeth's death in 1826 at Bath.

## Using Newspapers and Journals to research your family in British India

By Sylvia C M Murphy

I grew up in a household which had a daily newspaper delivered. From the time I left home at nineteen I have also purchased and read a daily paper. Amongst my mother's personal papers were obituaries and news clippings going back to long before she was born, so her parents would also have enjoyed newsprint. It should not surprise you to learn that I have made extensive use of a range of newspaper titles published in Britain, India and elsewhere during the course of family research over more than fifteen years.

The availability of titles, the means of accessing and searching newspapers for information has changed dramatically over recent years, and it is possible that some of the resources or techniques I write about will have been added to or superseded by the time this is published. However, particularly if you are researching people and events in the 19th century, then wherever you live in the world, it is likely that you will be able to access many of the resources I discuss. You will, though, need to be a member of a library which subscribes to licensed digitised sets of newspapers and/or journals, or be prepared to pay relatively high fees for a personal subscription.

As I look through today's *Sydney Morning Herald*, it is apparent that there is very little, even today, which has no potential value to a genealogist or family historian. Crossword puzzles and the TV guides are relatively recent innovations, but in 50 or 100 years time, a researcher may recognise the puzzle compiler's initials as belonging to an ancestor, or find mention of another ancestor in a programme review or listing.

The first English language newspaper to be published in London appeared in about 1621 entitled *Corante, or Weekly Newes from Italy, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, France and the Low Countreys*<sup>1</sup>. *The Times*, originally entitled *The Daily Universal Register* did not appear until 1785<sup>2</sup>. This has been available and searchable on line as *The Times Digital Archive* for some years now. Before then and still, it was widely available as microfilm with a separate index 'Palmer's Index to the Times 1790-1905'<sup>3</sup>.

### Finding and Accessing Newspapers

Increasingly, historic newspapers, particularly those from the 19th century, are being digitised and made available on-line, either free via *Google Books* or *The Internet Archive*; as licensed resources through a participating library or other institution, or by personal subscription; or as a free service by some national libraries or archives. These digitisations

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<sup>1</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newspapers> (2 July 2009).

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Times](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Times) (2 July 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Palmer's Index to *The Times* for the first quarter of 1895 is available for free download at <http://www.archive.org/details/palmersindextot79unkngoog>. Palmer's index for other periods is also available through Google Books <http://books.google.com.au/> and/or The Internet Archive [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org).



have opened up the world of historic newspapers to a vast number of people who would not otherwise have access to them. The traditional means of accessing newspapers is by viewing them at a library or archive. For those who live in any major city or university town there may be a collection available to you. Even for people in smaller towns, it may be a practical option to request microfilms on inter-library loan through your local library. However, you will need to be clear about the search period as a full year of any newspaper title may be spread over six or more reels of film.

Because newsprint is fragile, prone to discolouration and tearing, it is rare to be able to view papers in their original form. The most popular titles have been microfilmed and copies of these films have been purchased by libraries far and wide. For example I know of at least three libraries in Sydney which hold microfilmed editions of *The Times*, and I regularly visit a university library to read *The Times of India*, *Bombay Gazette* and *The Statesman*, amongst others. Library facilities will usually include being able to take a copy print (photocopy) from the film, and even scanning an image and saving to a USB drive for later use at home is sometimes possible.

Of more limited use are the compilations which have been published by some journalists and editors. Notable are those edited by Ranabir Ray Choudhury, one time Senior Assistant Editor of *The Statesman*. *Glimpses of Old Calcutta* was his first in 1978, followed by *Calcutta A Hundred Years Ago* and these included excerpts from *The Friend of India* and *The Englishman* as well as *The Statesman*. He followed these up with a large tome *Early Calcutta Advertisements 1875-1925* with the contents selected from *The Statesman* categorised and supplemented by explanatory notes. Fortunately all these publications are fully indexed.<sup>4</sup> Display and classified ads such as the following notice are included:

**NOTICE**

My wife, Mary Haslam, having left my protection I do not hold myself responsible for her debt or debts incurred by her from date.

July 11, 1895

W A HASLAM

### How to approach a search of newspapers

Freely available on-line digitised papers are searchable using whatever names or other search terms you wish to throw at them either using a standard search engine such as [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) or, once the item has been accessed, then a search within the document can be carried out. Licensed digitised newspapers come with both simple and advanced search facilities which enable searches to be limited by date and type of item. Browsing by date may also be possible. Results of searches are classified according to whether they are found in:

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<sup>4</sup> Ranabir Ray Choudhury (ed), *Glimpses of Old Calcutta (period 1836-50)*, *Calcutta a Hundred Years Ago (1880-1890)*, *Early Calcutta Advertisements 1875-1925* (Bombay, Nachiketa Publications, 1978, 1987, 1992).

- Advertisements
- Art and Sports
- Business News
- News
- Opinion and Editorial
- People

So, if a large number of results are found, it is possible to select only those falling in a certain category.

However, it is strongly advised to adopt a planned approach to searching newspapers. While this is absolutely essential if viewing microfilm, it is also a sensible approach to take when using digitised papers to avoid unnecessary downloads, which can be tedious and eat into your bandwidth. Be aware that, however well planned your newspaper research, it is very easy indeed to get sidetracked by the many fascinating snippets which you will see while searching for news of events involving your ancestor. A planned approach could be as follows:

1. **Prepare a Time-Line of your Ancestor's life**, and identify (approximate) dates and places you hope to find mentioned in a newspaper. Consider which newspaper(s) are likely to contain the information you want; if titles are not known, think about where they may have been published.
2. **Who (or what) are you hoping to find?** - was he/she a person of national or international status, maybe titled, a commissioned army or navy officer, prominent civil servant, such as a judge or barrister, a bishop or other clergyman, or politician for example? Such individuals may be found in local, regional and national papers of wide circulation, both in India and in their native land. However, if the person of interest is, for example, an army private or bandsman, a railway guard or station master, the likelihood of finding an item in a British paper which mentions them by name is slight indeed. In fact, such individuals may not appear in their own right at all, but may be mentioned in an Indian paper in reference to a report of a railway accident, role in a natural disaster (whether it be bravery, rescue or death), or involvement in crime as a witness, victim, or perpetrator.
3. **What sort of record are you hoping to find?** Announcements of birth, marriage and death were only placed in newspapers after payment of a fee. In 1863, *The Times of India* charged a fee of one Rupee for insertion of a 'Domestic Occurrence'. A surprisingly wide range of Indo-European society used this means to advise friends and relatives of vital events in their lives<sup>5</sup>. Detailed obituaries and reports of funerals appear less often and only feature local or national personalities, depending on the newspaper. They are often 'buried' within the text of a general article and are easily missed.

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<sup>5</sup> There is an ongoing project to transcribe and index the Domestic Occurrences from *The Times of India*, being coordinated in Australia, with the results available for searching on the FIBIS website [www.fibis.org](http://www.fibis.org).

4. **When (approximately) did it happen?** Before the introduction of the overland telegraph to India and travel by steamer between Britain and the east, events, advertisements and notices originating far from the newspaper publisher often appeared many months later. Prior to the opening and use of the Suez Canal by P & O which had the mail contract, *The Times of India* (and other Indian English language papers) issued a twice monthly Overland Edition for the 'home' readership in Britain. This included a digest of local news from India in the previous two weeks, including an extensive list of 'Domestic Occurrences'. As communication became more rapid, reports of events could be read much closer to their occurrence. Therefore, be prepared to extend your newspaper search many weeks and possibly months after an event. As an example, reports of the major cyclone which destroyed ships at Calcutta and Diamond Harbour on 5 October 1864 appeared in *The Times* in December, over two months later.
5. **Where did it happen?** Most of the comments above, under 'When?' apply here also. First reports of people and events in the Presidency Capitals of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras appear within a few days, although follow-up reports can be found up to several weeks later. However, items from the distant *Mofussil*<sup>6</sup> and overseas outposts can take weeks or months to appear. The announcement of a birth of a son on 9 February 1863 at Singapore to the wife of Captain J O Mayne did not appear in the *Times of India* until 18 March, though announcements of other vital events closer to Bombay were on 7 to 12 March. Many news reports are copied and repeated in a paper on the other side of the sub-continent. For example, a report that the Bombay Government had made a land grant in the centre of Bombay to allow Messrs Soundy & Co<sup>7</sup> to build a skating rink, theatre and swimming pool appeared in *The Friend of India in which the Observer is incorporated* (a Calcutta newspaper) on 5 February 1876 but was taken from a previous report in the *Times of India*, and was found by an on-line search<sup>8</sup>.

Having narrowed the time frame and place of publication of newspapers of possible interest, you can begin your searching, or browsing. It is important not to be disappointed if you don't find an obituary or announcement of birth, death or marriage. Instead, try and be alert to other mentions of your ancestor, or activities in which he or she may have been involved. The following list of sections has been developed with particular reference to *The Times of India* but will be found in other major 19th century papers such as *The Madras*

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<sup>6</sup> *Mofussil* – a term used to describe rural as opposed to urban locations, anywhere outside the presidency capitals. A fuller definition can be found in: Ivor Lewis, *Sahibs, Nabobs and Boxwallahs – A dictionary of the words of Anglo-India* (New Delhi, OUP, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Francis Soundy was my great grandfather; he settled in Bombay in December 1859 and died there on 2 April 1911. He had a musical instrument business and seems to have dabbled in theatre and the arts generally.

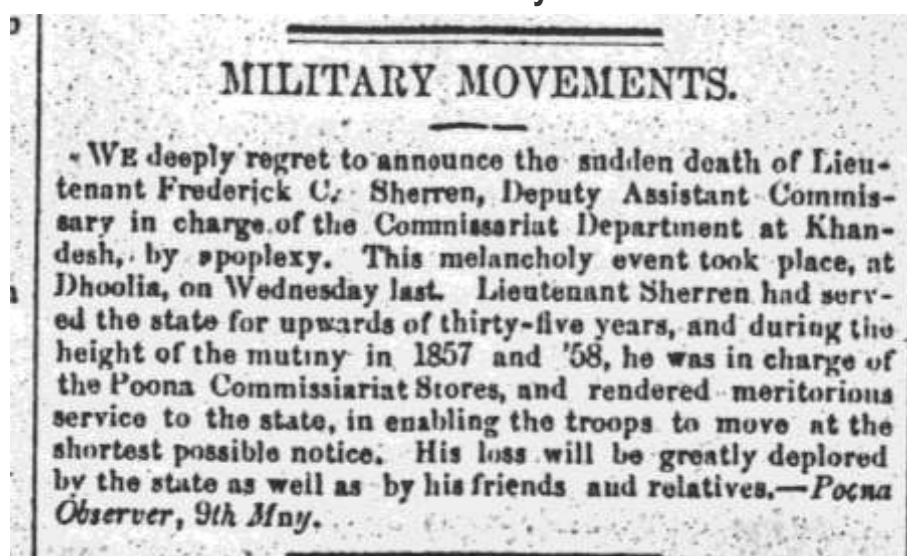
<sup>8</sup> '19th Century UK Periodicals, part II, Empire': one of the Gale group licensed datasets; for background information see: <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/>. For access to digitised datasets, ask your local library or academic institution.

*Times*, *The Statesman* and others. When browsing 19th century papers, it is rare to find headlines or other prominent headings, so it is easy to miss potentially interesting items.

**Sporting.** Most regiments, railway company staff and others managed to field cricket teams, football teams and engaged in athletic and rifle shooting competitions. These are reported simply in the Indian newspapers, but include names and runs/goals/scores of team participants or winners and place-getters in competitions.

**Accidents, Natural Disasters.** Names of many individuals can be found as part of reports of train accidents, accidents at sea, cyclones, earthquakes and other disasters. Your ancestor may have been among them. If not, then their name may be found as a subscriber to the relief effort.

### General Orders Gazetted and Military Movements.



Military, Naval and Civil Service General Orders including promotions, furloughs and retirements as published in the *Bombay Government Gazette*, *Calcutta Government Gazette*, etc, regularly appeared in long columns which require great dedication to read

through in the hopes of finding an item of interest. Reports are not necessarily found in the expected place, for example on 11 May 1863, this appeared under the heading 'Military Movements':

Courts Martial were often reported in detail and can take up many column inches of newsprint, depending on the circumstances of a specific case. The revised finding of the Court in the case of Private Robert Archer who shot his wife on 17 March 1843 (see *illustration on p36*) may not have been the first report of that matter. The initial report of charges laid before a Court Martial at Bangalore on 9 November 1878 against Captain Henry Wilberforce Bird for behaving in a scandalous manner unbecoming the character of an officer and a gentleman, took up about 12 column inches.<sup>9</sup>

### Shipping Information

A variety of shipping information was published, including

- **Overland Mail Steamer:** names of passengers arriving with the fortnightly P & O Overland Mail steamer included in the news section.

<sup>9</sup> *The Indian Mail*, 1843-44, vol. I, p173, digitised by Google, <http://books.google.com/>; *The Statesman & Friend of India* 16 Nov 1878

- **Shipping intelligence:** includes lists of vessels in harbour, their dates of arrival, dates due for departure, names of commanders. 'Intelligence' is news of ships 'spoken to' which are reports of other ships encountered on the high seas and their location and whether they were in any difficulty.
- **Passengers arrived and Passengers sailed** - these are passengers journeying on ships other than the mail steamers. The lists are patchy and not thought to be comprehensive.

Individual names of soldiers in regiments are never shown, though Commissioned Officers and their wives may be.

INTELLIGENCE.		
Per ship <i>City of Agra</i> —On the 25th Nov., lat. 22-51 N., long 22-44 W., spoke the American ship <i>Western Chief</i> , from London to Mauritius. On the 11th Dec., spoke the ship <i>General Butler</i> , from Liverpool to Calcutta.		
Per ship <i>Chanarel</i> , from Liverpool—24th Dec., in lat. 33-11 S., long. 5-4 W., spoke the barque <i>Diana</i> , from Liverpool, bound to Calcutta, 26 days out. On the 29th Jan., lat. 32-54 S., long. 82-30 E., spoke the ship <i>Castlemaine</i> , from Liverpool, bound to Calcutta.		
Per ship <i>Tiger</i> , from Liverpool—On the 17th Feb., signalled the ship <i>Gertrude</i> , bound to Bombay, off Galle.		
PASSENGERS ARRIVED.		
Per ship <i>Chanarel</i> , from Liverpool—Mrs. Leakey and son, and Miss Sharp.		
Per ship <i>Indomitable</i> —Capt. Carren, Mrs. Carren, and Miss Madot.		
Per American ship <i>Whampoa</i> , from Boston—Mr. and Mrs. Munzer; Mr. and Mrs. Ballantine; Mr. and Mrs. Bruce; Miss Abbott; and Mrs. Pritchard.		
Per steamer <i>Benares</i> , from Hongkong, &c.—Mr. S. David and servant; Mr. Nortway; Mr. Ferguson and child; Mr. W. Ceckel; Captain Small; and 6 natives.		
PASSENGERS SAILED.		
Per ship <i>Eloisa</i> , to Havre—General and Lady Brown and 4 children, and Lieut. J. Strettell.		
Per ship <i>Walmer Castle</i> , to London—Captain Turner, 28th Foot; Lieut. Lodge, Royal Artillery; and 74 invalids, 3 women, and 5 children of different regiments.		
VESSELS IN BOMBAY HARBOUR.		
For London.		
2650 Caroline Agnes, Owenstone—Wm. Nicol & Co.	(Feb. 11)	
927 Salamancha, Livesey—Lecale & Co.	(Feb. 14)	
1156 Hornet, Prynn—Ewart, Latham & Co.	(Feb. 25)	
973 Teacer, Profumo—Hajee Moram Joosub.		
For Liverpool.		
478 Queen of Florida, Latham & Co.	(Feb. 8)	

These items of 'intelligence', and records of passengers arrived and sailed, appeared in the *In the Overland Summary of the Times of India* of 14 March 1863.

**Local News.** Look out for news of robberies, assaults, property fires, and accidental deaths, as well as local entertainment. The Bombay Gazette of 4 January 1892 carried a detailed report of 'The Pensioners Fete' held at the Town Hall during which Mrs Forjett assisted by Mr and Mrs Clancey, Miss Kelly and Captain L L Steele distributed presents from under the 'Christmas Tree' ('a miniature representation of the Eiffel Tower!') to the children.

**Public And Legal Notices.** As they do in newspapers today, these may be for the attention of persons interested in the estate of a deceased, or may advise registration or dissolution of companies or partnerships. Divorce cases to be heard can be found in the 'High Court Cause Lists' which are published in the body of the newspaper, and the more interesting of these may

generate a news item. Detailed accounts of court cases are often published and include the names of those empanelled as jurors.



There are many other snippets of general interest to be found in the Indian papers, not least of which may be the Mortuary Report published weekly which analyses the number of deaths for the previous week according to ethnicity/religion and disease. Of more direct concern to the family historian, following every major disaster or when a major local project or memorial to a prominent figure was proposed, a subscription would be called for. This was followed by the publication of lists of the donors' (subscribers) names and the amounts contributed. Of surprisingly little value is the 'Correspondence' or letters to the Editor, as most writers appear to have been recorded by a pseudonym only. On 1 May 1863 letters were published signed: 'Sigma'; 'W.A.'; 'Government Official'; 'C.D.' and 'An Army Surgeon', none of which is much help in identifying a particular ancestor.

A list of some on-line and library resources for newspapers is provided as an Appendix. I hope that you will be able to enjoy many happy and successful hours using these to research the life and times of your ancestors in Colonial India.

### **COURT MARTIAL.**

**PRIVATE ROBERT ARCHER.—1st EUR. L.I.**

**At a General Court Martial, assembled at Subathoo, 12th May, 1843, Private Robert Archer, 9th comp. 1st reg. European light inf. was arraigned on the following charge :—**

**For having, in camp, at Tannaisar, on the 17th March, 1843, feloniously, wilfully, and of malice aforethought, killed and murdered Elizabeth Archer, his wife, by discharging at her a musket, loaded with gunpowder and certain metal slugs, and thereby inflicting mortal wounds upon the face, neck and back of the said Elizabeth Archer, whereof she then and there, on the same day, died.**

***Finding and sentence.*—The Court having maturely deliberated on the evidence produced before them, are of opinion, that the prisoner is guilty of the charge preferred against him, with the exception of the words "mortal wounds" and "certain metal slugs," as only one mortal wound is proved, and there is no proof whatever of the nature of the missile with which the wounds were inflicted; and they do, therefore, sentence him to be hanged by the neck till he be dead.**

***Revised finding.*—The Court, having maturely deliberated, respectfully adhere to their original finding, with the exception of the word "missile," for which the word "material" is substituted.**

**Not confirmed (Signed) J. NICHOLLS, General,  
and Commander in-Chief, East-Indies,**

***Recommendation by the Court.*—The undersigned members of the General Court Martial, taking into consideration the high character so long borne by the prisoner, which leads them to suppose that, at the time of committing the fatal act, of which he has been found guilty, he was maddened by jealousy, caused by the provoking conduct and continued irregularities of the deceased, beg respectfully and earnestly to recommend him to mercy.**

*The Indian Mail, 1843-44; Vol.I, p.172*

## Appendix: Where to find Historic Newspapers

The following are not exhaustive lists, but represent those the author has used or considers of most potential use.

### 1. SOURCES FOR ON-LINE NEWSPAPERS

#### 1.1. On-line free to all without subscription

**International Coalition on Newspapers (ICON)** <http://icon.crl.edu/index.php>

Brings together links to a comprehensive range of on-line newspapers, free and subscription based; indexed-only and full text. It provides a comprehensive bibliographic database of over 25,000 newspaper titles. For researchers who have no idea what may be available to them, ICON is a good place to start.

ICON's guide to Newspaper Collections in Libraries - <http://icon.crl.edu/libresources.htm> understandably has a USA bias and this will certainly assist researchers in North America, but will also provide guidance to researchers around the world as to what is available on line and how to access it. In this respect the page which lists digitised newspapers - <http://icon.crl.edu/digitization.htm> - will be eagerly consulted, under the heading of India only *Andhra Pratika*, 1931-1941 is listed. However, some historic Indian newspapers are available through other sources.

**The Internet Archive** <http://www.archive.org/details/texts> and

**Google Books** <http://books.google.com.au/>

Search for and in titles such as:

*Allen's Indian Mail* – published in London from 1843

*Oriental Herald and Colonial Review*

*Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and Its Dependencies* (title varies)

*Calcutta Christian Observer*

*Calcutta Magazine and Monthly Register*

(Also see: <http://wiki.fibis.org/index.php?title=Directories> for links to many of these papers).

**London, Edinburgh and Belfast Gazettes** for official information: <http://www.gazettes-online.co.uk/>

#### **Australian Periodical Publications 1840-1845**

Browse the list at: <http://www.nla.gov.au/ferg/browselist.html>. Despite the title, some of the digitised papers, which are not all Australian, start in 1835 and others finish in 1852. The set includes titles such as:

*The Colonial and Asiatic Review*. London; 1852-1853.

*The Colonial Magazine and East India Review*. London; 1849-1852.

*The Colonial Magazine and Commercial Maritime Journal*. London; 1840-1842.

*Fisher's Colonial Magazine and Commercial Maritime Journal*, 1842-1843.

*Fisher's Colonial Magazine and Journal of Trade, Commerce and Banking*, 1844-1845.

*The Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review*. London; 1843-1844.

*The New Quarterly Review, or, Home, Foreign and Colonial Journal*, 1844-1847.

*Simmond's Colonial Magazine and Foreign Miscellany*. London; 1844-1849

Also see <http://ndpbeta.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/home> for historic Australian papers.

**Papers Past (New Zealand)** <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast>

Ongoing digitisation of NZ regional newspapers 1839 – 1932, covers 52 separate titles

## 1.2. On-line by subscription or pay to view

British Library site about On-Line 19th Century Newspapers

<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/news/newspdigproj/ndproject/>

These collections of newspapers and journals have been digitized and made available by the Gale-Cengage group. They are freely available in the UK to students of Further and Higher Educational Institutions, or to persons able to visit the British Library Reading Rooms. Elsewhere they may be available at or through certain major public libraries. In Australia, residents of NSW and Victoria who hold a Reader's Ticket to their State Library can access some licensed resources from home as well as at the Library. Residents who hold a Reader's Ticket to the National Library of Australia – [www.nla.gov.au](http://www.nla.gov.au) - are able to access a greater range of licensed digitised resources including those mentioned below. Residents of other countries should enquire of their local, State/Provincial and National Library systems about availability of on-line access to digitised licensed newspapers and journals.

**British Library Nineteenth Century Newspapers** – including a broad selection of regional British newspapers. A full list of titles is available here:

<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/news/newspdigproj/ndplist/index.html>.

This dataset can be accessed by a personal subscriptions direct to the B.L., see:

<http://newspapers.bl.uk/blcs/>

**Nineteenth Century UK Journals** – including such titles as The Oriental Observer; The Friend of India and The Statesman, thus giving a continuous run of Calcutta newspapers from 1827 to 1900. (These titles are drawn from several sources, not just the B.L.)

**Burney Newspaper Collection** (17th-18th Century)

**Eighteenth Century Journals I & II: Newspapers & Periodicals 1685-1815** – includes titles such as The Bombay Courier from 1793-1817 and the Calcutta Gazette from 1784-1797. (digitised by Adam Matthew Publications, <http://www.18thcjournal.amdigital.co.uk> )

**The Times Digital Archive (1785-1985)** If you do not have library access, then see <http://archive.timesonline.co.uk/tol/archive/> for personal subscription.

**The Guardian (1821-1975) & The Observer (1900-1975) Digital Archive**

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2007/nov/03/digitalarchive.digitalarchivefeatures>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/digitalarchive>

**The Scotsman (1817-1950)**

<http://archive.scotsman.com/> and <http://archive.scotsman.com/pricing.cfm>

Access to full text images require a subscription. (May be available as part of a library reader's ticket).



### 1.3. On-line Index Search only

#### **National Library of Singapore Newspaper Digitization Project (NewspaperSG)**

<http://newspapers.nl.sg/>

NewspaperSG provides access to over 548,000 pages of searchable text from the digitized *Straits Times* (1845-1982). The site also includes the NL microfilm database of some 200 Singapore and Malaya newspapers held at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library. Offsite users will also be able to access and search the website but are limited to viewing the first 50 words of each full-text article.

**The Scotsman (1817-1950)** <http://archive.scotsman.com/>

Only the article headlines are available free of charge (see above for subscriptions).

## 2. AT A LIBRARY

Old Newspapers are fragile, so usually need to be viewed in microform. Filming means that newspapers can be made available to libraries around the world. Substantial parts of the British Library's Indian newspaper collection are available at university and other major libraries. Notable titles to look out for are listed in section 3. The listing of National Libraries below does not imply that they hold any English language newspapers from India. Remember to also consult University Library catalogues.

### ***In the United Kingdom***

The British Library

<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/inrrooms/readingrooms.html>

96 Euston Road;

London, NW1 2DB

Access the integrated catalogue here:

[http://catalogue.bl.uk/F/?func=file&file\\_name=login-bl-list](http://catalogue.bl.uk/F/?func=file&file_name=login-bl-list).

Guidance on finding newspaper titles in this integrated catalogue is provided at:

<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/inrrooms/blnewspapers/newscat/newscat.html>.

At the BL, the Asian and African Studies Reading Room is where the Asia Pacific and Africa Collections (APAC) may be consulted, and APAC is the main focus for the BL's collection of English language newspapers from South Asia as well as its collection of oriental language newspapers. In a few instances, the BL's newspaper Library at Colindale<sup>10</sup> may hold a more complete run of a particular title, but APAC should always be the first port of call. All relevant newspapers are in the Integrated Catalogue (through which they must be ordered) as well as in a handlist in a ring binder kept on top of the bank of card indexes, near the film readers. All newspapers are on microfilm.

The National Library of Scotland

<http://www.nls.uk/family-history/newspapers/index.html>

National Library of Scotland

George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1EW

The National Library of Wales

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>0</sup> The Colindale Library is due to move into the main building at the end of 2011/2012.

<http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=introduction4>

Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, Wales, SY23 3BU

(Holdings of early English newspapers, availability of Indian titles not known.)

### ***In the Republic of Ireland***

The National Library of Ireland

<http://www.nli.ie/en/homepage.aspx>

Kildare Street, Dublin, Eire

(Has comprehensive database of Irish newspapers, but am not aware of any Indian titles.)

### ***In Australia***

The National Library of Australia (NLA)

<http://www.nla.gov.au/visit-us/>

Parkes Place, (Parliamentary Triangle)

Canberra, ACT 2600

A comprehensive list of holdings of South Asian newspapers in Australian libraries was made in 1994 and can be found at <http://www.nla.gov.au/asian/gen/sanews.html>. The NLA also hosts 'Libraries Australia' and recommends that this be used to search for current holdings of newspaper titles: <http://librariesaustralia.nla.gov.au/apps/kss>

### ***In New Zealand***

The National Library of New Zealand:

<http://www.natlib.govt.nz/about-us>

Corner of Molesworth & Aitken Streets,  
Wellington

### ***In Canada***

The National Library and Archives Service Canada

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/newspapers/index-e.html>

395 Wellington Street

Ottawa, ON K1A 0N4

## **3. SELECTED 19th CENTURY ENGLISH LANGUAGE INDIAN TITLES TO LOOK OUT FOR**

*The Bengal Hukuru* (1798-1867)

*Bengal Times* (1871- )

*Calcutta Gazette / Oriental Advertiser* (1784-1823)

*The Englishman* (1833- ?1928) – eventually absorbed by *The Statesman*

*The Friend of India* (1820-1826; 1835–1876) – absorbed by *The Statesman*

*Hickey's Bengal Gazette / Calcutta General Advertiser* (1780-1882)

*The Statesman & Friend of India* (1877- ) / *The Statesman*

*Bombay Gazette*

*Bombay Standard and Chronicle of Western India* (1858-1859)\*

*Bombay Telegraph & Courier* (1847-1861)\*

*Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* (1838-1859)\*

*Bombay Times and Standard* (1860-1861)\*  
*Times of India* (from May 1861 - ) absorbed those marked\*  
*The Hindu* (? 1878 - )  
*The Madras Mail* (1883 - 1939)  
*The Madras Times* (? 1859 - ?1914)  
*The Bangalore Spectator* (1877-1895)  
*Delhi Gazette & North West Englishman* (1837 - ?1857)  
*The Pioneer* (Allahabad) (1865 - ?)

## Looking for Gunner Hurley in India (part 2)

*By Lawrie Butler and Malcolm Hurley Mills*

*Many members will recollect an article in FIBIS Journal 17 (Spring 2007), pp32-39, of the same title as above but which should now be regarded as part 1 of the Hurley saga. Briefly Gunner Hurley from Ireland arrived in Bengal on 30 Dec 1841 with his wife Jane. Their children William, Edward and Daniel were raised and baptised in the 1840s. In addition a James Hurley possibly conceived before the voyage out and born around Mar 1842 may well have been the first son but with no family reminiscences of a James and with another James, son of a Daniel Hurley born on 21 Jan 1844, James was 'discounted' as a member of our Hurley family. Malcolm, however, not only returned with thoughts of a 'James' being the first-born within the family but also had evidence that a Stanislaus Aloysius was another son of William and Catherine Hurley.*

*This article is an account of events linking both James and Stanislaus to the Hurley family so that the family now includes one Conductor, one Conductor/Hon.Lieut., a Regimental Sergeant-Major (RSM), a Company Sergeant-Major (CSM) and a Trumpet Major; a very creditable achievement for a Gunner from Ireland. As previously, this is a joint presentation by Malcolm and myself, Lawrie Butler.*

*The more one sees of the Indian Records, the more gems are discovered. Two prime sources used are firstly lists of Widows and Children of Warrant and Non-Commissioned Officers having Warrant Rank admitted to Pension in India held by the India Office Records (IOR) and secondly the Soldier's Effects Records now held by the National Army Museum, Chelsea (NAM).*

### **James Hurley 1842 -1898**

In Dec 2007, Malcolm renewed the search for James Hurley. He had found two marriages of a James Hurley, the father of one being Daniel. The marriage entry<sup>1</sup> showed his bride to be Wilhelmina Brown, 18 years old. As usual with a staunchly Roman Catholic family, the marriage was at the R.C. Church in Fort William on 17 Jun 1869, when James was a 28 year old Staff Sergeant.

He is first mentioned in a Muster of 1 Dec 1856<sup>2</sup> where it is noted that he was born in India and engaged as a boy soldier of 14years 7months in the Band at Meerut on 1 Oct 1856. A later Muster<sup>3</sup> confirms his Army number as 8725 and his post as 1/2 pay bugler. A rather later Muster<sup>4</sup> of 1 Jan 1871 shows that post-Mutiny he has been transferred from the Bengal Artillery to the Royal Artillery and then transferred to the Unattached List as from 6 Mar 1867.

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<sup>1</sup> IOR: N/1/128, ff210, 394.

<sup>2</sup> IOR: L/MIL/10/195.

<sup>3</sup> IOR: L/MIL/10/196.

<sup>4</sup> IOR: L/MIL/10/209.

Baptism entries show that the James Hurley family had a Mary Jane, a Wilhelmina and an Ellen Gertrude. There was also a burial entry of a 2 year old James Hurley. Only two children (females) survived into their thirties and perhaps with the loss of the Hurley name in marriage, this may be one reason why there was a lack of knowledge of this branch within the present family. Burial records<sup>5</sup> show a Conductor Hurley who died of heart disease but give his age as 60 years, not 56 years which he would have been if he was Daniel's first son, born in 1842. Such discrepancies are frequent, if not common when, at burials, relatives may often be asked to quote an age.

So, what are the chances of the James of 1842 being the Conductor James Hurley of 1898? The boy soldier rank is consistent with that of his brothers and it may be possible to relate his Army number to later years. The presence of William Hurley as sponsor at Wilhelmina's baptism also suggests a family link. Malcolm suggested that James's pension records might be illuminating. Fortunately, the List of Departmental and Warrant Officers admitted to Pension in India<sup>6</sup> was located and this shows Hurley J with Regt experience of 13 years 198 days and Departmental Service of 17 years 208 days. He is shown as Conductor, of Ordnance Dept., d. of b. 5 Mar 1842; date when pensioned 13 Nov 1885, starting 17 Nov 1885; cause of retirement 'invalided'; rate of pension £100 p.m.

The Pension Record virtually confirms the position of Conductor J Hurley as being the first son of Daniel but there is more to come. There is a series of files, the L/MIL/14/239<sup>7</sup> onwards which are supposed to cover personnel in the Indian Army from about 1900. While these personnel may have been in the Indian Army. from around 1900, their service records sometimes date from the time of the Mutiny. In James's case while he was pensioned off in 1885 and died in 1898, one would not expect to find his file in this series BUT it is there<sup>8</sup>.

The file shows that Army No 8725 stayed with James throughout his Army life but when he went to the Unattached List, he seems to have acquired a different number with each posting. His enlistment is shown as 1 Oct 1856 (at Meerut) at the age of 14 years 7 months. There is a Declaration made by him when he volunteered from the Indian Forces to H.M. General Army. His record of service and list of promotions are shown. But the file gives a considerable insight to life in the British/Indian Army. He received commendations from his superior officers following service in Jhelum, yet on 15 Sep 1884 he was found drunk in his quarters and charged. This regrettable behaviour may have been connected with his wife's failing health as Wilhelmina died days later on 25 Sep 1884 leaving him with three daughters to bring up. The Court Martial verdict appears to have been tempered by compassion so that while he was reduced in seniority his rank of Conductor was retained.

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<sup>5</sup> IOR: N/1/265, f39.

<sup>6</sup> IOR: L/AG/26/14/2.

<sup>7</sup> See my article in FIBIS Journal 14, Autumn 2005, pp41-48, for a full description of this important series.

<sup>8</sup> IOR: L/MIL/14/17219.

He did however retire to pension shortly afterwards in Nov 1885 before passing away in 1898.

So Malcolm and I have no doubt that Conductor James was Daniel's first son.

### **Stanislaus Al. P. Hurley 1886 - 1918**

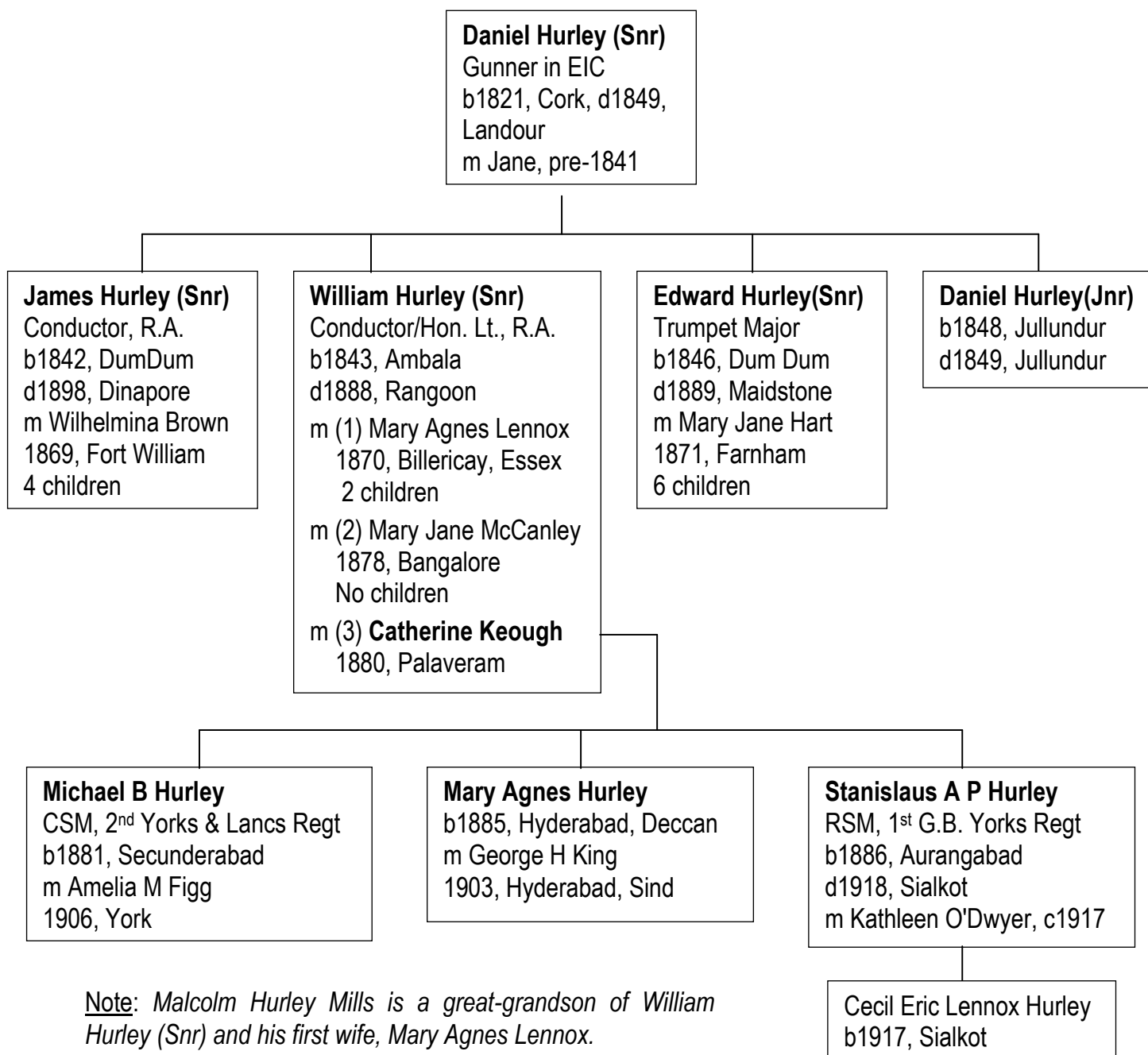
By Jan. 2009, Malcolm was on the trail of other Hurleys and while locating in the 1911 Census his great uncle Michael Bernard Hurley, he was also surprised to find a Stanislaus Aloysius Hurley. Both Michael and Stanislaus were Lance-Sergeants in the 2nd Battalion of the Yorks and Lancs Regiment, stationed at Aldershot. Malcolm wondered whether the two could be brothers and specifically whether Stanislaus could have been a second son of his ggfather's third marriage to Catherine Keough. Interestingly, his ggf had also used the same name Aloysius on his marriage certificate. From family records, Malcolm knew that his ggf. had gone to a Jesuit school and he located two separate Jesuit schools near Bombay (Mumbai), the first known as St Aloysius, founded in 1855, which later merged with St Stanislaus in 1866 to form a single St Stanislaus school which still exists today. Separately, Malcolm had located Commonwealth War Graves Commission records showing SAP Hurley as RSM of the Yorkshire Regiment, born in Aurangabad, Madras in 1886 who died in Sialkot, Punjab on 2 Aug 1918 (but see below). He now asked for a search of an SAP Hurley in the Baptisms but nothing was found in any of the Presidency records. But a check of the Bengal burial records<sup>9</sup> showed that SAP Hurley died on **2 Jul 1918** at the age of 31 years and was buried at Sialkot on the 3rd. His official title was RSM of the 1st Garrison Battalion of the Yorks Regiment. The cause of death was said to be an intestinal obstruction. He is commemorated on the Karachi War Memorial but his grave location is thought to be 'E74A in Sialkot East Cemetery'. His campaign medal roll showed that he was Company Quartermaster-Sergeant No 6333 in the 2nd Battalion of the Yorks and Lancs Regiment followed by RSM No 22304 in the Yorkshire Regiment. This is the 19th Regiment of Foot which sailed to India on Christmas Eve 1915 and arrived on 19 Jan 1916. His brother Michael Bernard retired from the Yorks and Lancs Regiment as a CSM in 1914.

Malcolm had contacted the Yorks and Lancs Regimental Museum enquiry service and they confirmed that the brothers would have been mentioned in the 'Tiger and Rose' Regiment Journals up to Sept 1914; however since these records are at Rotherham in Yorkshire, Malcolm had deferred a visit until other enquiries were complete.

#### **Research**

Members will be aware that Beverly Hallam assumed Research responsibilities from Lawrie Butler in Feb.2009. Lawrie would like to point out that work on some enquiries received by him is still unfinished, and he will be making every effort to complete these as far as is possible from early October onwards. More and more sources are becoming available monthly so that enquiries once deemed impossible to solve now have a chance of a greater degree of completion.

<sup>9</sup> IOR: N/1/431, f298.



The last enquiry was based on the extremely useful information sheets of the National Archives<sup>10</sup>. Item 8 of this sheet refers to Soldier's Effects Ledgers at the Museum of Army Transport, which cover the period Apr 1901–Mar 1960. These ledgers were created as a list of the monies owed to a soldier who died in service, and typically list full name, regimental number, date of death and sometimes the place, next of kin and monies paid to the next of kin. The present fee for provision of such a record is £10 with a written application being made to the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea,

<sup>10</sup> British Army Soldiers' Discharge Papers, 1914-1918: Military Records Information, Sheet 9.

London, SW3 4HT. I suggested to Malcolm that he write to the NAM and in due course he received a very useful sheet of information (see illustration) showing:-

Soldier's Name:	Hurley, Stanislaus [ <i>still no other names</i> ]
Regt., Rank and No:	1st G. B., Yorks Regt; RSM. No 22304
Date and Place of Death:	2 Jul 1918, India
Credits:	Rawalpindi, Sept 1918, £47.10.09d
War Gratuity Date:	Apr 1920, £29.10.00d
Authorised to:	widow Kathleen O'Dwyer, 1 Oct 1920 and 25 Nov 1920.

This was very unexpected news – we had no knowledge that he had married!

Malcolm now carried out a further check of the Army Returns<sup>11</sup> but no marriage was shown; however the Army Returns for 1917, p78 showed a Cecil L Hurley born at Sialkot in 1917. So the India records of Bengal Baptisms were checked again revealing a Hurley in 1918:<sup>12</sup>

Bapt 1 Jan 1918, born 16 Dec 1917

Cecil Eric Lennox, male, son of Stanislaus Aloysius Patrick and Kathleen Hurley of Sialkot.

We now had irrefutable proof of another Hurley, brother of Michael Bernard since Lennox was the Hurley grandmother's maiden name. The given names of Malcolm's great uncle (Stanislaus Aloysius Patrick) and his father's use of 'Aloysius' on his marriage certificate suggest, prior to joining up as boy soldiers, they might have been pupils at St Stanislaus and St Aloysius schools respectively. However, contact with St Stanislaus School has failed to trace any pupil records.

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<sup>11</sup> For those not familiar with Armed Forces Indexes, the following is abstracted from *'Tracing your Ancestors in the National Archives'* by Amanda Bevan, (Kew, National Archives, 2006):

1761-1924 Regimental Registers of Births - these include events in the U.K. and abroad (from c. 1790). There is no index to the marriages shown, and details of regiment and a rough date are required when application is made for copies to the G.R.O. (see below).

1796-1880 [Army] Chaplains' Returns of Births; and Marriages; and Deaths - all relating to events abroad

1881-1955 Army Returns of Births; and Marriages; and Deaths - all relating to events abroad.

These are the major compilations but there are numerous others, fewer in content and more specific in terms of campaigns and locations. The TNA hold all the above records (and others) as microfiche indexes and similar ones may be held by County Record Offices, etc. Copies of particular entries are available from the General Register Office, Southport, Lancs., at their published charges. Indexes can also be searched on a subscription basis at [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com) and perhaps on other commercial sites. The G.R.O address is:

[http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/research/investigatingyourfamilytree/Records\\_held\\_by\\_General\\_Register\\_Office.asp](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/research/investigatingyourfamilytree/Records_held_by_General_Register_Office.asp)

<sup>12</sup> Baptism at Sialkot Catholic Church, IOR: N1/426/107.



**Effects Register Entry: First World War**

Record No	Registry No	Soldier's Name	Regiment, Rank & Number	Date & Place of Death	Credits				Charges				Date of Authority	To whom Authorised	Amount Authorised			No of list in which advertised
					Account & Date	£	s	d	Account & Date	£	s	d			£	s	d	
681692	619962	Hurley, Stanislaus	1st Garrison Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment  Regimental Sergeant Major  22304	2/7/1918  India	Rawalpindi Sept 1918	47	10	9					1/10/20	Widow, Kathleen O'Dwyer	47	10	9	
					<b>War Gratuity Date</b> April 1920	29	10	-					25/11/20	Widow, Kathleen O'Dwyer	29	10	-	

<b>Army form W 5070</b> <b>Sent:</b>

## Addendum

During the search for the Hurleys, a further file was located.<sup>13</sup> This was a list of Widows and Children of Warrant and Non-Commissioned officers having Warrant Rank and admitted to Pension in India:

Mrs Hurley K widow; born 13 Feb 1864, married 20 Oct 1880.  
 Name of deceased officer: Hurley W, Conductor; born 29 Oct 1843  
 Service in India: 30 years, 20 days; pensioned under Circular 7 of 1888  
 Date from which pensioned: 11 Apr 1888; rate £20 per month.

Mrs K(ate) Hurley (previously Catherine Keough) was of course the mother of Michael Bernard, Mary Agnes and Stanislaus Aloysius Patrick.

**Sworn in as a Soldier of the Company**  
 BL ref: Mss Eur B269

MSS Eur B.269

Hart.

February 27 *Benjamin Glafbrook* born *Rygate*  
*Sworn* - *Labourer* aged 16 Years,  
 5 Feet 2½ Inches high, do make Oath,  
 that I am a Protestant, that I have voluntarily engaged  
 myself as a private Soldier, to serve the Hon<sup>ble</sup> United  
 East-India Company five Years at *St. Helena*, or any of  
 their Settlements in *India*; and I do further make Oath,  
 that I am not an Apprentice to any Person, or a Soldier  
 or Sailor in his Majesty's Service, or belong to the Militia,  
 and that to the best of my Knowledge I am in perfect  
 Health, and free from all Disorders.

*London* viz. *Benjamin Glafbrook*  
*mark*

These are to certify whom it may concern, that the  
 aforefaid *Benjamin Glafbrook* came before me, one of  
 his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, and made Oath,  
 That he has voluntarily engaged himself to serve the  
 Hon<sup>ble</sup> United East-India Company five Years as a Soldier  
 at *St. Helena*, or any of their Settlements in *India*, that  
 he has not any Disorder he knows of, and that he is not  
 an Apprentice to any Person, or a Soldier or Sailor in his  
 Majesty's Service, or belongs to the Militia.

Sworn before me, *Will: B. B. B. B. B.* Mayor.  
 the 28 February 1770

I have examined the above Man, and find him fit for  
 Service.

*M<sup>r</sup>. R. G. Marton*

# The memorial to Major William Hodson in Lichfield Cathedral<sup>1</sup>

By Richard Morgan

The lives of the three million or so British who went to India over the centuries were often shortened by disease or warfare but could still be commemorated lavishly, as the



*Joshua, one of the four figures at each corner of the sarcophagus*

memorials in South Park Street and other Indian cemeteries attest. But surely the grandest of all such memorials is that to William Hodson in Lichfield Cathedral. It is certainly not the largest – Begum Johnson's tomb in St John's Churchyard, Calcutta, for example, is far bigger<sup>2</sup>. But Hodson's is opulently covered with a huge slab of chocolate-brown marble flecked with white veins, into which has been carved a splendid cross, with beneath it a grand set-piece relief of the deceased's exploit and at the corners four heroes, Joshua, King David, St Thomas and St George, interspersed with four female virtues – temperance, courage, mercy and justice. It was designed by arguably the greatest of all Victorian architects, George Edmund Street, who was responsible for

(among other buildings) the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand in London, carved by the leading Victorian sculptor, Thomas Earp (who also worked at the Royal Courts of Justice), and it was later decorated with a historic flag and military lances. Who was this man who was so richly commemorated and why is his memorial here?

William Stephen Raikes Hodson (1821-58) is a strange and controversial figure<sup>3</sup>. He was the younger son of a clergyman, attended Dr Arnold's Rugby and then gained a BA at Trinity College Cambridge – an odd preparation for the life of a soldier. For Hodson joined the East India Company's Bengal Army in 1845, just in time to participate in the first Sikh War. He seemed to his contemporaries aloof, arrogant even (no doubt his superior

<sup>1</sup> I am extremely grateful to my friend Stuart Smith for the photographs that accompany this article, to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield Cathedral for permission to take the photographs, and to Mrs Pat Bancroft, the Cathedral Librarian, for assistance with this article.

<sup>2</sup> See the late (and much lamented) Theon Wilkinson's *Two Monsoons*, 2nd edn, (London, 1987), pp114-16.

<sup>3</sup> Sources for Hodson's life include his brother's biography (referred to later), Barry Joynson Cork, *Rider on a Grey Horse* (London, 1958), and the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* article.

education set him apart). But there was no disputing his courage and resourcefulness, nor his charisma as a leader. He was also suspected of dishonesty in handling regimental and other finances. Two enquiries were held with opposite conclusions, one blaming him and the other exonerating him. He may, like others of his contemporaries, have simply been not very good at handling money.

When the Mutiny broke out in May 1857, Hodson was permitted to raise a new regiment of Irregular Horse which became known as Hodson's Horse. He was involved in the assault on Delhi in September of that year and obtained leave to go and capture the King of Delhi, the old Emperor Bahadur Shah who was the titular leader of the rebellion, although as a scholarly octogenarian he had played little part in the day-to-day proceedings. Hodson went with only 50 men to Humayun's tomb near Delhi where the King and his entourage had taken refuge. The king surrendered immediately and Hodson escorted him to the British Commander-in-Chief.

The next day with a larger force – 100 men – Hodson returned to Humayun's tomb to arrest three of the kings' sons. Again they surrendered at once and were placed in covered bullock carts and sent back to the British forces, Hodson following behind. A large and increasingly threatening crowd watched the agonisingly slow progress of the carts. Hodson told the crowd (his Hindi was excellent) that the Princes were murderers of defenceless women and children. This did nothing to quieten the hostility. Hodson then borrowed a carbine from one of his men and shot all three Princes. It must be a matter for speculation what would have happened if he had not taken this action. Would the Princes have been rescued by the crowd? If that had happened, almost certainly Hodson and his men would have been killed.

The following March Hodson took part in the final siege of Lucknow as a volunteer. Although advised to await the arrival of gunpowder, he rashly entered a house not yet cleared of the enemy, and was shot and killed. He was buried at La Martinière under a plain slab with a simple inscription. He instantly became a hero. His brother, The Revd G H Hodson's, biography *Hodson of Hodson's Horse* published in 1883, served further to perpetuate his reputation. In the vindictive spirit among many of the British of the time<sup>4</sup>, Hodson's actions in shooting the Princes seemed not merely necessary to avoid his own destruction and that of his men, but even an act of laudable revenge, although the part played in the Mutiny by the Princes was not conspicuous.

So why Lichfield? Hodson's father was a Canon of the Cathedral and Archdeacon of Stafford who had died in 1855, before his son's rise to fame. The timing was interesting: Lichfield Cathedral had suffered the depredations alike of neglect and botched restoration for centuries. In place of the warm reddish sandstone we see today:

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<sup>4</sup> See for example Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, *The Great Uprising in India 1857-58* (Boydell Press, 2007) reviewed by me in *FIBIS Journal* 19, pp53-55, especially para 2 on p55.

the whole interior was covered with a dead yellowish whitewash. The nave was unused.... and during service in the choir, the nave was used as a promenade by nursery maids with their babies.<sup>5</sup>

Gilbert Scott was appointed architect and embarked on a vigorous (some say too vigorous) restoration. But a fine building needs appropriate furnishings and G E Street was commissioned to provide a suitable memorial for the Archdeacon. This was erected on the south side of the south choir aisle and consists of a double arch (like an enlarged piscina) between each arch of which can be seen reliefs of the crucifixion and ascension, with below them further reliefs of the entombment and resurrection. The carvings are by Thomas Earp, a prolific and well-known sculptor who had worked with Street before at St Paul's Camberwell and St James the Less Vauxhall Bridge Road, both in London<sup>6</sup>.

When the younger Hodson became a national hero it seemed logical to erect a memorial to him to match that of his father and engage the same team of Street and Earp. The result is described by the late Sir Nikolaus Pevsner as

Totally unlike the Street one knows. Showy, restless, with chunky forms heralding today's Brutalism<sup>7</sup>.

Certainly the brown marble with strong white veins is striking. Several brown marbles come from Baluchistan in present day Pakistan, and I suspect this is the origin of this exotic stone. Below this are Earp's reliefs already mentioned and in the middle one depicting



*The central relief.  
Hodson taking the surrender of the King of Delhi.*

Hodson taking the surrender of the King of Delhi. The king has just been brought there in a palanquin – shown so foreshortened as to look more like a European sedan chair. He looks decidedly Old Testament, not to say patriarchal, as he hands over his *tulwar* (sword) with a reverential bow to Hodson. Retainers crowd behind the King. Hodson is in uniform with helmet, surrounded by his troops and their horses,

<sup>5</sup> Canon Lonsdale *Recollections* 1850s, quoted in Gerald Cobb, *English Cathedrals: The Forgotten Centuries* (London, 1980), p148.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Mitchell, *Thomas Earp Master of Stone* (Buckingham, 1990), p30.

<sup>7</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Staffordshire* (Harmondsworth, 1974), p185.

and armed only with his cavalry sabre – no sign of the carbine used the next day. The other carvings have already been mentioned. Opponents of Hodson may question why Justice and Mercy are there.

Over the years other items have been associated with the tomb. Both the Hodson memorials have substantial railings (which complicate photography!) and to William Hodson's are attached three pairs of formidable cavalry lances (see illustration on back cover). They are about 15 feet long. They are reputed to be as follows:

- Red tassels: Queen's Own Corps of Guides – a regiment Hodson served with – used at Lucknow in 1857;
- Blue and red tassels: 10th Bengal Lancers, deposited 1903;
- Red and white tassels: 9th Hodson's Horse, deposited 1910.<sup>8</sup>

On an adjacent pillar is the Union Jack<sup>9</sup> said to have flown over the Lucknow Residency night and day from 1857 to 1940. Opposite and adjacent to the Archdeacon's memorial is a brass commemorating the men of the 9th, 4th and 10th Hodson's Horse.

Has Hodson got the memorial he deserved? Pevsner called it showy and chunky, and heralding today's Brutalism. Showy? Chunky? – well perhaps, but Brutalism may be apt.

### **The British in India Museum**

FIBIS members, especially those living in Lancashire and Yorkshire, may like to know of this small museum at Nelson (on the M65 between Burnley and Skipton) containing a collection of Raj memorabilia. Its website is at:

<http://www.britishinindiamuseum.co.uk/>

### **Oral History at the Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge**

The Centre has a large collection of tape-recorded interviews with people who lived in India during the last years of British rule. The interviewees include Europeans in many different occupations, and Indians who worked for independence. Made in the 1970s and '80s, the collection is being digitized and made available online at <http://www.s-asian.cam.ac.uk/audio.html>. FIBIS members may be interested to sample these voices of the Raj recalling their lives in British India.

<sup>8</sup> These identifications are from Lt Col M B Savage, *Lichfield Cathedral: A History of the Naval and Military Monuments, Memorials and Colours* (Lichfield, 1945). It will be noted that if the Corps of Guides lances were at Lucknow in 1857 they were not used by Hodson who did not go there till 1858.

<sup>9</sup> Before someone tells me it is a Union Flag and not a Jack, let me remind him that men died in two World Wars calling it the Union Jack.

## Reviews

***The Indian Mutiny Letters of Colonel H P Pearson August 1856 – March 1859*, edited by T A Heathcote (Royal Armouries in association with the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council), 209pp.**

**ISBN 978-0-948092-57-2. £10.95 plus p&p**

Within a couple of years of the Mutiny, some 44 first-hand accounts of the great events of 1857-58 had been published, and by 1996 a further 82 had appeared<sup>1</sup>. Journals kept at the time of the events must be the preferred form - or failing that letters, though the latter may be more slanted towards what the recipients want to hear. The later accounts tend to be reminiscences written in old age and often with selective recall. And still they come. Late last year we had June Bush's editing of *The Warner Letters* (Delhi, Rupa & Co) and now we have the letters of Col Pearson of HM's 84th Regiment.

Pearson arrived as a young Ensign at Madras in late December 1856. The early letters to his family are concerned with shooting birds to which he was addicted. Then his regiment was posted to Rangoon. But no sooner had he got there than the 84th was recalled to Barrackpore to be present in a show of force at the disbanding of the 34th NI. The regiment remained in India for the whole of the events of the Mutiny. By June he was at Cawnpore to witness the pitiful remains of Wheeler's stand. Wheeler's forces had included some 100 troops of Pearson's regiment under Lt F J G Saunders.

Pearson was next at the capture of the Alam Bagh at Lucknow (Nov 1857 to spring 1858). He then joined Sir Edward Lugard's flying column for numerous actions in the Jugdispore area where Koer Singh still operated. Up to this point Pearson is involved in several battles and is clearly a very brave and dedicated soldier. From mid-1858 onwards we have a bit of an anticlimax as he awaits near Buxar news of his regiment's recall to England, which finally takes place in March/April 1859.

Pearson comes across as a typical product of his age – brave and cheerful in the face of hardships, not particularly bright, and his enthusiasm for killing wildlife is hardly attractive today. But then he is writing to his father who was an old soldier similarly addicted to shooting. This perhaps is the trouble with letters. For example he gives no details of the ghastly fate of Lt Saunders at the hands of the Nana Sahib's sowars – doubtless because he wanted to spare his family the full horror. He is quite a dull writer and too much of his correspondence is concerned literally with pay and rations. We must regret that the Journal Pearson apparently kept during the earlier part of his campaign did not survive an attack on stores at Cawnpore after he had left.

The Editor, Dr T A Heathcote, is the author of books on the Indian Army, the Afghan Wars, and the Mutiny. He was at one time at the National Army Museum and later Curator and Archivist at RMA Sandhurst. The editing reflects his military interests: weaponry for

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<sup>1</sup> These figures are compiled from a cursory examination of the bibliography in the excellent P J O Taylor's *A Companion to the 'Indian Mutiny' of 1857* (OUP Delhi, 1996).

example is well covered. But in other respects the editing is curiously bloodless. We get precious little view of Pearson's social circle at home. His family are at Bourton, but it is never explained which one this is out of the eight villages of that name. People who are not involved in military affairs are largely ignored. Who is Mr Wratislaw? The mention of 'George' on p150 is not explained in the Commentary. You have to guess he is a cousin also called Pearson, and then you can look him up in a section called 'Biographical summaries of Individuals'. The individuals are almost all military and the information about them is obsessed with details of their promotion, derived doubtless from *Hart's Army List* or the *East-India Register and Directory*. The Biographical summaries and Commentary ignore non-military matters. We learn from the letters that Pearson attended Felsted School. Was there a sort of Felsted mafia among officers in the army, as there was certainly a Rugby mafia? What more is known about the King of Oudh's silver carriage (p138) which was destroyed in the assault? Is the portrait on the cover of Pearson himself? If so, details please: who is the artist?

The letters are apparently published in their entirety. No mention is made of any selection process and there are numerous rather tedious repetitions (inevitable when Pearson had not got his earlier letters beside him as he wrote again to his family).

This is a new first-hand account, but the effect of all this is to make a somewhat dull and stilted narrative from the stirring events, and from a family or more general historian's point of view much useful background information is lacking.

*Richard Morgan*

***Engines of change: the railroads that made India*, by Ian J Kerr (Westport, CT; London: Praeger, 2007), 169pp. ISBN: 0-275-98564-4**

Any book by Ian Kerr on railways in India comes highly recommended and *Engines of change*, his latest, is no exception. It looks set to become the standard primer, supplanting J N Westwood's *Railways of India* for so long out of print.

As is to be expected from someone who has been writing about his subject for 30 years (his review of *Railways of India* appeared in the May 1979 issue of *The Journal of Asian Studies*), Professor Kerr sweeps through the landscape in magisterial form, yet is always ready with detail, fact and insight. In only eight chapters and 169 pages, he takes the reader from earliest beginnings shortly before 1850 through growth and development firmly tied to the needs of the Raj, then the trauma of Independence and Partition, before bringing the story right up to date with the completion of the Konkan line in 1998 and construction in the 21st century.

This is no Ian Allan guide and neither is it an apologia for the Raj – the author is at pains to point out the short-comings of the British and the inadequacy of the legacy left in 1947 as he considers the impact of the iron horse not just on the countryside but also on Indian politics, society, mores and culture. He also looks at the part it played in the awakening of an Indian national consciousness and which it continues to play in shaping the modern nation. Kerr keeps firmly under check the Marxist tendency that perhaps mars his 1995



work, *Building the Railways of the Raj 1850-1900*, although occasionally jargon as well as the obvious slip out – “The spatiotemporal-social making of modern India was influenced strongly by the fact of colonial rule.”

Given the fact and detail that ooze from every page, it is reassuring that there is a full section of endnotes, an exhaustive (eleven page) bibliography and an index. A surprising omission is the lack of a listing by name of the 45 or so various railway administrations (or groupings) that existed in the imperial period nor is there one for the sixteen zones that currently make up Indian Railways. There is also scant coverage of the Princely States and of their part in the railway story.

With the caveat that there is no personal or genealogical data covered, the family historian with Indian railway connections who wants help with “fleshing out” the story, will find much within (and here the notes and bibliography will reward the careful reader). Kerr is particularly good on the early construction phase, the detail of the workforce and the place of the railway in the grand, British scheme as the following illustrates:

Permanent railroad employees numbered 69,233 in 1870; 437,535 in 1905. Among the latter, 6,320 were Europeans (despite the use of the term 'European' these were almost entirely British) and 8,565 (2 percent) were Anglo-Indian. The overwhelming majority, 422,650 or 96.6 percent, were Indian. The 'Anglo-Indians' – the Eurasian offspring of what initially had been Indian mothers and British fathers – had become over time and to a considerable extent, a self-perpetuating, endogamous, that is marrying within the community, population. Anglo-Indians formed less than one half of one percent of India's total population but provided 2 percent of all railroad employees; more tellingly, roughly 50 percent of all Anglo-Indians came to be supported by railway employment either directly or as a dependant of a railway employee (p81).

Kerr also observes that while the coming of the railway undoubtedly promoted Indian integration, it also led to unequal socioeconomic growth. As early as 1901, William Digby, a sometime member of the Indian Civil Service, commented upon

ANGLOSTAN, the land specially ruled by the English, in which English investments have been made, and by which a fair show and reality of prosperity are ensured;

HINDUSTAN, practically all India fifty miles from each side of the railway lines, except the tea, coffee, indigo, and jute plantations, and not including the Feudatory States.

This, Kerr argues, intensified inter-community grievances that violently manifested themselves, alongside those of religion, in the bloodbaths of 1947 and after.

Some publishing aspects grate. The use of the Taj Mahal in silhouette for two of the three photographs on the dust jacket is so well-worn a device to signal a connection with the sub-continent as to suggest a shallowness in the publisher's library of stock images. The third photograph confirms this suspicion. What can be more innocuous than some railway trackwork? But this is no Indian set of points – neither wide enough to be broad gauge nor narrow enough to be metre gauge – and the closeness of the sleeper spacing and the straightness of the switch blades look suspiciously like standard gauge North American practice to this rivet-counting reviewer.

And the final grouse? At £26.55, it is expensive – if tempted, please do use the online FIBIS Shop to order your copy but at the price, it is too much to hold as stock for the FIBIS Bookstall. A compelling and enjoyable read, wholeheartedly recommended, but one for the Inter-Library loan system!

*Hugh Wilding*

***A Tug on the Thread*, by Diana Quick (Virago Press, 2009), 316 pp  
ISBN 978-1-86049-844-2. £17.99**

The authoress is probably best known for her performance in *Brideshead Revisited* opposite Anthony Andrews in the television series of that name, but she is also well known for her many roles on stage. It was while playing opposite the late Lord Olivier in *Brideshead Revisited* on television that she was motivated to investigate her family background. Miss Quick played a daughter of Lord Marchmain (Olivier's part) and she is the one who has to decide if he should die without the absolution of the Roman Catholic church. Her part caused her to recall her own father's death some years before when he had had a full Roman Catholic Requiem Mass - she hadn't even known he was a Catholic - and she resolved to investigate her own family's background. She had also been intrigued by something her grandfather had said to her from his sick bed when she had visited him at the age of nine: 'Be sure you marry a full-blooded Englishman!' As with so many of those with links to India, she was soon to discover all manner of hidden facts relating to her ancestors. It has clearly taken Miss Quick many years to uncover her antecedents and she presents her story in a most readable way. The book is unusual in that Miss Quick relates the parts she has played as an actress to situations she herself experienced in real life and some of the experiences of her ancestors, several of whom appear to have undergone severe trials and tribulations. The Anglo-Indians did not have a happy time under the Raj, belonging to both sides and neither of the cultural divide. This caused them concern at partition and motivated those who were able to seek a better life elsewhere, mainly in the English-speaking countries.

This is a most welcome addition to the literature on the Anglo-Indian community and is a jolly good read. An added bonus for the reviewer was that, reposing in his modest medal collection, is a medal awarded to the authoress's great-uncle for his service in the Indian Medical Department. Recommended.

*Allan Stanistreet.*

***Farewell Raj: Witness to the End of Empire*, by Tony Hearne (Eastbourne, Tommies Guides, 2009), xxxpp. ISBN 978-0-95556-986-9. £11.95 (pbk).**

The title gives the immediate impression that this book is likely to be another academic analysis of the reasons for, and the events leading to, the end of British Rule in India. Little could be further from the truth. In fact, it is the autobiographic experience of a 21-year old Army Sergeant during the month or two before and after 'Independence Day' in August 1947.

Tony Hearne was a British soldier caught up in the daily rioting in Calcutta between the Hindus and Moslems during the approach to Independence in 1947. He very graphically describes the awful nightly scenes in that vast city at that time and the incapacity of the military power to do little more than observe their consequences.

Then, having been granted early discharge from the Army during these riots, and faced with a promised new career in Kuwait, he travels first by train from Calcutta to his parents' home in Lahore. Far from escaping the riots that he left behind in Calcutta, his train, full of Muslim soldiers, is attacked and burned by Sikh terrorists. Saved by a Muslim soldier, he manages to escape only to encounter further danger as he tries to cross the newly formed Pakistan border. The story continues.....

This is truly an enthralling read – but the title gives little inkling of the excitement that the book contains.

*Peter Bailey*

### **FIBIS Fact Files**

FIBIS has recently published the following 'Fact Files', price £1.50 for members, £2 for non-members plus 50p postage, orders by email to [sales@fibis.org](mailto:sales@fibis.org), or by post to FIBIS Sales, 14 Gableson Avenue, Brighton, BN1 5FG

#### **Fact File 1. Researching Anglo-Indian Ancestry**

Two articles by FIBIS members who are themselves Anglo-Indians in which they draw on their own experience of researching their ancestors to offer advice on how to tackle the subject.

#### **Fact File 2. Getting Started with the India Office Records**

Our former Research Officer gives practical advice for the beginner on the basics of family history research in the India Office Records, with an article by a 'Newbie' on her own 'First Visits' to the British Library where the IOR are held.

#### **Fact File 3. Indian Directories**

A previously unpublished guide to the printed Directories on people who lived or served in British India, with particular emphasis on the often underused *Thacker's Indian Directory*.

#### **Fact File 4. Research sources for Indian Railways, 1845-1947**

After a brief introduction to the subject this file provides comprehensive lists of the relevant UK archives covering not only the India Office Records, but also The National Archives, the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, and the Centre of South Asian Studies. There is also a very full Book List, a Glossary, and – something which has probably never before been attempted – a complete Finding list of railways known to have operated in India between 1853 and 1947.

*Page from account book of Capt William Hambly, EIC maritime service c1755-1786, Commander of the 'Lord North', during his voyage to Bencoolen and China 1780-83. BL ref: Mss Eur C425*