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Contents

Editorial.....	2
The Mysterious Murder at Agra.....	3
Rosemary Reardon	
Edward Squibb – letters from a Bengal Cadet	15
Charles Gordon Clark	
John Braddock – Powder Master	25
Sylvia Murphy	
The Assassination of Thomas Parr, Resident of Bencoolen	32
Joanna Cicely Fennell	
Medals to a Nurse.....	39
Allan Stanistreet	
Lost and Found - the records of Pembroke House.....	41
Sylvia J Dibbs	
A Northumberland Fusilier in India, 1886-1896.....	46
Ruth Sear	
Yet more on noses.....	47

Contributions:

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Material should be sent via email to fibis-editor@fibis.org or to 80 Brighton Road, Watford, Herts, WD24 5HW

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Editorial

It is well known that life could be short for Europeans who went to British India and I am sure in your own research you have come across numerous ancestors for whom this proved true. Conflict and particularly disease claimed the lives of large numbers of those who travelled to South Asia. Too many soldiers did not return from service in India and young Bengal Army officer Edward Squibb is one such example. Charles Gordon Clark relates his story through the letters Squibb sent home from Bengal (p15).

A much less common cause of a life ended early was murder and there are two stories in this issue of the *Journal* that recount murder tales. Joanna Fennell has researched the assassination of Thomas Parr who was the Resident of Bencoolen and hers is a fascinating, tragic tale from that beleaguered outpost (p32).

The second story is a murder that happened in my own family, as told by my mother (p3). The article does contain rather a lot of names, so I have taken the liberty of including a little 'dramatis personae' at the end, which hopefully will smooth out any moments of confusion. Of course, if anyone is related to any of the people mentioned in the article I would love to know. The reports of the case in the Indian newspapers provided family information we could not have learned elsewhere and a picture of our ancestors' lives in the cantonment that has been invaluable to us. If you had relatives stationed in India with British regiments then the story provides a little glimpse of the lifestyle that some other ranks were leading in the second half of the 19th century.

If many ancestors lived shortened lives in India, it was not the case for all. John Dibbs's family may have thought he was another victim of the dangerous sea voyages of the pre-steam days, but Sylvia Dibbs discovered he was not in fact one whose life was cut short by his journey to India. Read more about Captain John Dibbs from p41.

Helping my mother with her article has been a lesson in the importance of strict reference keeping. Much of the research was carried out in the earliest days of our family history hunting and it seems our excitement sometimes got in the way of keeping a good note of sources. Luckily we have been able to dig them all out (from amongst scribbled notes, digital photos and even archive 'to do' lists populated by screenshots of online catalogues), but it was a reminder that one's research is only as good as the proof that referencing provides. How are you at this vital part of record keeping? I know from working on the *Journal* that many of you are more organised than me. I have improved over the last few years and now note down all sources used, but I confess that far too often these are still quick pencil notes in the chaos of my research notebooks.

The *FIBIS Journal* tends to require quite comprehensive referencing and alongside the high standard of proof this gives our articles, I do hope members find it aids their own research by allowing them to follow up potentially useful sources. However, if you're considering writing up a story from your own family history for the *Journal* but are worried about providing the same level of citation that you have seen in other articles, let me reassure you that if you have a good tale to tell we can work together to fill any gaps.

Sarah Bilton

The Mysterious Murder at Agra

Rosemary Reardon

Descended from a quiet-living railway family in India, I embarked on an innocent journey to draw up a family tree and in doing so came across a murder that no-one seems to have known anything about for several generations. This article is an account of what was uncovered and it also considers how such revelations affect a family researcher

Rebecca Crowe was born at Poonamallee, near Madras in 1860.¹ She was the only surviving child of Private Henry Crowe, a British Army soldier from Norfolk,² and his 'Indo-Briton' wife Mary Ann Robins.³ Rebecca's father retired from military service a year before her birth and remained in India as a Queen's Pensioner. Although his burial record has not been found, his pension was not paid out after March 1875.⁴ The following year, Rebecca, who was by then sixteen, married 26-year-old Charles Low⁵ of the Royal Artillery, in the Poonamallee Wesleyan Methodist Chapel.⁶ Two boys were born of which only the second, Robbie, survived.⁷ In early December 1879 the Lows and their battery E/6 left India for Hilsea, Portsmouth during the annual relief season.⁸

In April 1880, the Royal Artillery's O Battery 3 Brigade (O/3)⁹ arrived in Hilsea from Ireland. One of their corporals was Henry George Inwood, who had been born in Woolwich, Kent in 1856.¹⁰ Enlisted in 1875 and posted to Ireland for three years, pay lists record an unblemished service.¹¹ Henry's younger brother William Inwood had joined the battery in late 1879.¹² After eight months in Hilsea, the Inwood brothers sailed

¹ Born 19 March 1860, IOR N/2/41/89

² TNA WO 97/1522/154 Chelsea Pensioners Service Records - in HM 63rd, 51st and 43rd Foot.

³ Mary Ann Robins born 29 October 1835 to Samuel Robins, trumpeter 6th Madras Light Cavalry and Maria Mansell, IOR N/2/16/133

⁴ IOR L/AG/26/16/10 Chelsea Pensions paid out in India - Madras

⁵ TNA WO 69/79 Royal Artillery Recruit Register; Born 6 March 1850, GRO Newcastle XXV 353

⁶ IORN/11/5/933, 21 Oct 1876. For reasons unknown, the couple married again (N/11/7/1489) six months later in Kamptee where Low's battery 20/F was stationed and this wedding marked their entry onto the regimental Married Establishment (*Times of India*, 6 Jan 1883). Perhaps Charles had not originally obtained the necessary permission of his Commanding Officer to marry or maybe he had lost the proof needed to get onto the Married Establishment and married again.

⁷ GRO Regimental Births, Indian Subcontinent: Charles H Low, 1877 312 150; Robert D Low, 1879 314 266. No death/burial record has been found anywhere for Charles, but as only one child is noted in the RA pay lists when the Lows are in England, he must have died.

⁸ *The Times*, 15 Dec 1879, reports the battery (renamed E/6) boarded troopship HMS *Crocodile*.

⁹ Previously 14 Brigade F Battery. *Battery Records of the Royal Artillery* compiled by MES Laws (3 volumes) is useful for tracking number changes and stations.

¹⁰ Born 14 April 1856, GRO Greenwich 1d 593

¹¹ TNA Artillery Musters Books and Pay Lists including WO 10/2490/2, WO 16/184, WO 16/193

¹² TNA WO 97/3130/67 William Inwood's Chelsea Pensioners British Army Service Record

for India with O/3 and arrived in Agra on 23 January 1881.¹³ Charles Low returned to India in March 1881 with Rebecca and Robbie and transferred to O/3.¹⁴

Perhaps the Lows and Inwoods met at Hilsea, but they certainly did in Agra where Charles and Henry, both corporals in O/3, struck up a close friendship. They bought half-shares in a pony and trap and Henry would often spend his days at the Lows' quarters.¹⁵ During this period Rebecca was in charge of the eye ward at the Artillery Hospital. In September 1881 Rebecca had another son William Herbert and Henry Inwood was made the boy's godfather.¹⁶ Henry's captain, James Hurley Rosseter, said he bore 'an excellent character in every way;...peaceable, quiet, orderly and well disposed.' He referred also to him as a 'well educated man' and all of this must have contributed to Henry's promotion to sergeant in June 1882 at the fairly young age of 26.

Dead at my feet

What had started so well in Agra did not last. It seems that Charles had met a young woman whilst at Hilsea. In August 1882 he was laid up with ague in the Artillery Hospital when Rebecca found two love letters that had arrived from the girl in England. She made copies and spoke about the communication to both her mother Mary Ann Crowe (who was living in the cantonment pensioner lines) and a neighbour Agnes Roberts, the wife of a corporal. Rebecca took the letters to her husband and fellow patient Sgt J Hutchinson of the Northumberland Fusiliers heard her tell him 'I would rather see you dead at my feet than live with you again.' Charles asked Hutchinson to write on his behalf to the girl and it was said that he seemed remorseful for his actions.

Rebecca, who was still only 22, then wrote what was considered a 'most improper' letter from a wife to a husband; a letter that indicated that Charles had also made some accusations against his wife.

Corporal Low,

I wish to know once and forever if you intend seeing the captain. If you are I will show everybody those letters and leave your house in a few days. I can get rooms outside in a minute. Another thing; If I hear the least whisper about me, I will tell them all about you. Don't think for a moment that I will be made guilty while you are really the guilty one. I have done nothing wrong or anything to (be?) ashamed of. So please let me know your intentions and oblige. – Yours (Sd) R. Low

Charles replied with the following rather unusual written declaration.

Declaration of Charles Low

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ TNA WO 16/301 Artillery Muster & Pay Lists. The reason for the return and transfer is unknown.

¹⁵ From here on, all facts and quotes given are from *The Pioneer*, 3-10 January 1883 and *The Times of India*, 6-12 January 1883 (BL microfilmed copies), unless otherwise stated.

¹⁶ IOR N/1/178/2; the information about the godfather is from newspaper reports.

I, C. Low, promise with the help of God, never to speak an angry word, or displease my wife in any way whatsoever but will do my best to please her, and also to be to her a fond, kind and loving husband; and also do swear in the presence of God, never to be false or untrue to her, so long as I shall live; so help me God – (Sd) Charles Low

Agra, 17 August 1882

Charles was back in hospital in early September. Overcome by unease regarding his friend Henry and his wife, he sent a written complaint to Captain Rosseter. Henry was called to the Captain in the presence of Sgt-Major Robert Renton, and when ordered not to go to Charles's married quarters or dance with his wife, he reportedly made no comment on the justness of the accusation but gave an assurance he would not visit. Further, he said the Captain would hear no more about it. How much attention Henry paid to the injunction is questionable. A while later, sensing not all may be right, Charles left the hospital for his quarters and found Henry there with Rebecca. A fracas ensued and Henry being the stronger man knocked his chum down.

On 18 September, Captain Rosseter met with Charles to ask if matters were now alright with his wife and Charles informed him that they were 'perfectly so.' He added that he did not believe that there had ever been any 'criminal intimacy' between Rebecca and Henry, but that he had arranged for her to go to Madras for a while if the Captain would sign a pass giving her three months leave. Rosseter gave the go ahead and permission was given for Charles to withdraw Rs.100 from his deposit in the Savings Bank.

However, several weeks later on 5 October, Rebecca was still in Agra and she and Henry were seen talking quietly at a table in the regimental coffee shop. Gunner James Owen was there and reported that Charles arrived and sat at a table opposite that of his wife, fiddling with a padlock. Gunner Owen asked him 'How are you Corporal Low this morning' and received the reply 'I am nicely thank you Owen.' Owen left the coffee shop and from outside heard a scuffle. He called out to Gunner Moore and together they went back inside and found Charles and Henry struggling with each other. Charles was trying to hit Henry, who was holding the smaller man's arms to prevent him. Owen stated that Charles seemed very angry and Henry said 'if you don't leave off, I'll strike you in a minute.' Moore called firmly 'Don't do that Inwood' and the situation diffused.

On the morning of Friday 6 October, Captain Rosseter signed another pass that would allow Charles to accompany Rebecca by rail as far as Toondla from where she would begin the journey to Madras alone. Rebecca told Agnes Roberts that she was 'going away because of Low being so jealous of Inwood and until the bother blows over.' The Lows set off from Agra Fort Station without their children and travelled as far as Toondla. But Rebecca did not continue her journey and the couple returned home.¹⁷ Later she told

¹⁷ At Toondla, Rebecca delivered her original ticket and an unused luggage receipt to the station master who passed it to an Indian Christian ticket collector called Bernard. An application for a refund was not passed to the correct authority and Bernard and another ticket collector called John Tewari were had up before the magistrate where their rambling defence involved an imaginary friend gone to Delhi and a mythical coolie who 'found' the ticket. Both

Agnes Roberts that she did not go as her husband would not allow her to take the children. Meanwhile Henry had got wind of Rebecca's departure and went to the station to see if Charles had managed to get Rebecca away. He asked Edwin White, the Station Master, who had not been on the platform but did recall signing a warrant for Toondla. Edwin White queried Henry's interest and the soldier replied that the woman was from his battery and she had left two helpless children in the care of a weak sickly father, one of which was his godson. Henry appeared very agitated and said it was not for the sake of the woman he enquired, but for the sake of the two little children and he punctuated his speech with several exclamations of 'Oh my God! My God!' All that is known of the rest of that day is that the Lows attended a dance at the Metcalfe Hall!

The Pucca Road

Three days later, on Monday 9 October, the Low family breakfasted together at 10am. Rebecca then set off to visit her mother at the Harveys' bungalow where she lodged. Curiously though, Mrs Crowe is said to have spent much of the day at her daughter's quarters. Later, Charles saw Captain Rosseter yet again, this time requesting a fourteen day pass to accompany Rebecca and the children to Madras - he alleged his wife refused to take them with her. Rosseter agreed. He had noticed the corporal's fragile mental state for some time and felt that day he had 'forgotten his manners and did not stand like a soldier.' At 2pm, Charles, conscious of his wife's absence, instructed Mangla (the Lows' cook) to take Rebecca some dinner at the Harveys. At around 'stable time' (5pm) Mangla took the Low children for a walk and saw Rebecca and Henry (who had spent the day preparing to instruct the gunnery class) talking near the canteen.

That night the Gaiety Company were holding a concert at the Metcalfe Hall and the Lows, despite their difficulties, were to attend. They intended to stop on their way and take their leave of Barrack Sergeant Samuel Dukes and his wife Catherine before the trip to Madras. Charles had been on friendly terms for some time with Samuel Dukes and Rebecca's mother, Mrs Crowe, was 'attending' to Catherine who had recently given birth. At about 7.15pm Charles sent Mangla to buy two concert tickets and asked his wife what time the gharry should be booked to collect them. But Rebecca told him they should walk, adding, 'why incur the expense?' At 7.30pm Mrs Crowe took her grandsons home with her for the evening and Mangla left for his own home. The children were to be collected by their parents after the concert.

Shortly before 8pm Rebecca was outside the married quarters with her neighbours Agnes Roberts and Lily Whybrow (wife of Bombardier Whybrow) who felt she was unusually talkative. Charles seemed in a hurry to leave for the concert, saying that if they were to go via the Dukes they must get on. According to Agnes and Lily, Rebecca seemed reluctant to go and Charles had to once or twice say 'come on Bec'. He brought his wife some lemonade and she asked Agnes Roberts to come inside and tie a ribbon

Bernard and Tewari were imprisoned for a fortnight and week respectively to deter such events in the future. *Times of India* 10 November 1882

around her neck. When finally the Lows stepped off their veranda, Charles turned to take the kutchra road (makeshift) and Rebecca started off towards the pucca road (superior). The latter was a longer route past the cantonment cemetery and involved crossing the Grand Parade Ground. Charles repeatedly asked, 'come this way Bec' but she refused. In the end he ran after her and took the pucca road.

Near the cemetery wall

At about 8.15pm Samuel Dukes - who had thought the Lows would not now visit and had gone to bed - was woken by Rebecca calling to him. Opening the door in his nightgown he reported that she cried 'My God, my husband has been struck down by a native.' Dressing hastily, Dukes called his syce and set off with a hurricane lamp. Near the cemetery wall, Dukes found an insensible Charles, face down with blood pouring from the back of his head. Dukes called out for help and a lad named Cox and two sepoys answered his call. One of the latter was sent to warn the doctor and fetch a dooly.

Meanwhile Catherine Dukes asked Rebecca what had happened. She was told that Charles was likely dead out on the parade ground and that the attacker had been a tall man wearing a yellow pugri. Rebecca had been walking a little in front of Charles and had turned upon hearing her husband struck. She added that the instrument used had sounded hollow like a tent peg.

The sepoys carried Charles past the Dukes's bungalow and Rebecca caught up with them at the Native Infantry Hospital. Dukes tried to persuade her not to look at her husband as his wounds were so serious, but she insisted, crying out 'My God, look at his eye'. Surgeon Samuel Ferguson Bigger of the Indian Medical Department ordered she stand back. As they waited, Dukes asked Rebecca what had happened near the cemetery, so she recounted the story but made no mention of a tent peg. Once Dr Bigger had dressed Charles's wounds he saw him transferred to the Artillery Hospital, so Dukes went home to change and Rebecca and the boy Cox went along with him. At the Dukes's bungalow Rebecca said she wished to be with her children and mother but as she was too frightened to go alone, Dukes said he and Cox would accompany her in his trap. On the way, Rebecca asked to see the site of the attack, so by the cemetery Dukes stopped and struck a match. The pool of blood on the ground caused Rebecca to gasp. Dukes then suggested they look for any weapon and Cox found a stout tent peg covered in blood. Asked if this is what had been used on her husband, Rebecca made no reply.

What she did say though, was that she wanted to see her husband and so Dukes agreed they would go straight to the Artillery Hospital. After dropping Cox at his gate they arrived to hear that Charles was alive and being treated. Rather surprisingly Henry Inwood was also there. He had been at the Metcalfe Hall theatricals when Sgt Old arrived to tell Sgt-Major Robert Renton about Charles. Henry had suggested he and Renton go to see him. They ordered a gharry and met with the dooly leaving the Native Hospital. Renton headed home after putting Henry in charge of the injured man on his journey to the Artillery Hospital. Once there Henry helped lift Charles out. Samuel Dukes called Dr Bigger to inspect the tent peg and they took it inside the hospital, leaving Henry and

Rebecca alone. No one heard what they said to each other. Then Dukes called out to Rebecca: 'The doctor says your husband is dying fast and you had better come and see him.' She and Henry went in immediately. Rebecca looked at her husband lying on the bed, pulled the sheet from his mouth, gave a deep sigh and left the room. Dr Bigger was surprised that she did not kiss him or show much emotion. Within a few minutes, Charles died. The time was recorded as 11.30pm. Henry – as part of his official duty - asked for Charles's whip and spur and returned to barracks. Samuel Dukes drove the new widow to the Harveys' bungalow, where she asked him to break the news of her husband's death softly to her mother. Dukes explained everything to Mrs Crowe and when he left them, both mother and daughter were crying.

The investigation

At the Metcalfe Hall a little before midnight, Major Frank William Chatterton, cantonment magistrate for Agra, was approached by two soldiers from the battery who said that the talk was that Inwood had murdered Low. Major Chatterton ordered Captain Rosseter to the Artillery Lines to call all the soldiers onto the parade ground. Whilst the parade was in progress, Sgt-Major Renton received orders to take Henry into the guardroom. Major Chatterton and Captain Rosseter examined his hands and clothes and found nothing to indicate that Henry had been involved with the death. Back at the mess Henry said, 'If I am not the murderer, I sure am going to be accused of it.' Next, Major Chatterton saw Rebecca at the Harveys' bungalow and took a statement.

On 10 October, Rebecca went to the magistrate's court and swore a statement as to the events of the previous night. Charles's cause of death was recorded as a fractured skull.¹⁸ He was buried that day in the cemetery near which he had been attacked and a headstone was later erected acknowledging his violent death.¹⁹

The following afternoon, Major Chatterton and Major Graham (the Superintendent of Police) searched Henry's quarters and found a pair of regimental trousers with faint spots that they thought could be bloodstains. They were torn and damp and had been placed in his bathroom. Henry explained he had been peahen shooting and that detaching a bird's head had spilt blood down the trousers. He also noted he had recently been in a scuffle with Charles and a resulting scratch to his nose could have bled on to the garment. Two tent pegs were found in his bag and Chatterton asked why there wasn't the usual third. Henry replied that he only used two to peg his pony and that was customary in their battery. Major Chatterton ordered his arrest.

¹⁸ GRO Army Returns of Deaths 1882/305

¹⁹ Robin Volkers, *Agra Cantonment Cemetery* (BACSA, 2001). The memorial inscription reads: 'IHS Sacred to the memory of Corporal Charles Low O.3.R.A. who was murdered near this cemetery on 9th October 1882. This stone is erected by the officers and certain N.C. Officers and men of the battery as a token of respect.' It was from this entry in Volker's book that I first found out Charles's death was a murder. The inscription is rather pointed.

Chatterton and Graham next visited the Lows' quarters and found the letter and declaration that Rebecca and Charles had written. Chatterton considered Rebecca's statement to the magistrate. Although Sikh soldiers of the Native Lines at Agra often wore yellow pugris when in 'undress', Chatterton was not aware of any ill feeling existing at that time between the European and Native troops. All the same, that night he obtained pugris of different colours and checked to see if they could be distinguished in the dark. A sepoy was ordered to put on a pugri and asked to stand at different distances. The Major concluded that even when the sepoy was close he could not identify the colour. Chatterton felt he had reason to disbelieve Rebecca's story and had her arrested too.

Many national and local newspapers reported the death of Corporal Low. Titles such as *The Times of India*, the *Civil & Military Gazette*, *The Pioneer*, the *Lucknow Express* and the *Indian Mirror* kept readers informed of matters as they proceeded. On 20 October the Magistrate Mr Finlay opened a hearing that called 40 witnesses and at times bordered on the farcical.²⁰ By 6 November, *The Times of India* reported, the rather protracted enquiries into the murder had advanced another stage as Sgt Inwood had been committed for trial at the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad on the charge of murder, with Mrs Low on the charge of abetment.

The trial at Allahabad

The case of the Queen Empress versus Henry George Inwood and Rebecca Low commenced Wednesday 3 January 1883. The court was 'terribly crowded; ladies even and heads of department struggled for seats whilst behind them Tommy Atkins in their hundreds determined to hear all.'²¹ The judge assigned was Justice Douglas Straight, a flamboyant character in his late 30s, who as a barrister had worked on high profile cases in London. On his appointment to the High Court at Allahabad in 1879 he had been caricatured by *Vanity Fair*.²² The Prosecutor was a Mr CH Hill who claimed in court that in all his time in the profession he had never been called upon to conduct a case more difficult or mysterious. John Digby Gordon, the young barrister engaged for the defence was not long out from England. He later wrote a book that recounted the case with some wit and he noted that arriving in court Henry "look[ed] smart and soldierly despite the long imprisonment" whilst Rebecca appeared "dark and repulsive but strangely calm and

²⁰ John Digby Gordon, *Work and Play in India and Kashmir* (1893, reprinted 2009)

²¹ Ibid. p31

²² See back cover. Douglas Straight (1844-1914), a Harrow alumnus, was a journalist when a young man but was called to the bar in the 1860s. He was MP for Shrewsbury, 1870-74. In 1877 he defended Elizabeth Ann Staunton in the famous Penge Murder case. After his period in India, Straight resumed journalism in London, editing the *Pall Mall Magazine/Gazette*. The *New York Times* reported on 11 October 1908 that Straight had announced he was to 'retire from everything except the task of trying to enjoy himself.'

indifferent”.²³ Both prisoners were charged that they had committed offences that were punishable by death. Both pleaded not guilty.

The trial lasted four days and much of what is written above is derived from witness testimony. The prosecution’s case was that the prisoners had been engaged in an intrigue for some time and acted in concert to arrange that one would detain the victim until it was dark and the other would get to the cemetery corner unseen to deliver the fatal blow and then return to the sergeants’ mess (where a game of cards was taking place in the library). But John Digby Gordon for the defence submitted this premise was implausible. He had offered a rupee to each of his syces to test how long it would take a good runner to leave the barracks, reach the cemetery corner by the pucca road and return. Gordon was then able to show, using witness statements as to the time the Gun had been fired that night and, relatedly, when Henry had been seen in the Mess, that although Henry was unseen for 27 minutes (he said he was studying in his room) it was impossible for him to have run so fast as to commit the deed and be back at the Mess with no sign of exertion, no marks on his clothing and with a normal calm demeanour.



Sgt Henry George Inwood, taken in Dalhousie, c.1885

Regarding the blood found on Henry’s trousers Major Graham had sent the garment to the Chemical Examiner at Roorkee for investigation. Gordon argued that the explanation Henry had given to Majors Chatterton and Graham was supported by witnesses and Gunner William Moore gave evidence that he had seen the bloodstained trousers before the night of the murder. Gordon submitted that it was perfectly logical for Henry to be afraid that the innocent spoiling of the trousers could be used against him and to try and keep them from being found. When defence counsel also reminded the court that Henry had been put in charge of Charles’s bleeding body and had lifted him from the dooly to the hospital bed it was apparent that even Mr Hill for the prosecution was unaware of the accused’s involvement in these last moments of Charles’ life. Most importantly, the Chemical Examiner Dr Murray Thomson reported that no genuine human blood stains could be found on the trousers.

Soldiers’ wives who were Rebecca’s neighbours were very eager to provide evidence for the prosecution but Gordon was able to argue much of it was unsubstantiated gossip. By Friday 5th January the case for the prosecution was running into trouble. Justice Straight directed that a third charge should be added that the deceased was murdered by some person unknown and that Rebecca was an accessory to the murder.

²³ Gordon p31

When the court reconvened on Monday 8 January the case had so thoroughly broken down that Mr Hill asked to withdraw the charge against Henry saying the prosecution could offer no evidence to afford reasonable grounds that he had killed Corporal Low. Justice Straight consented, stating that during the trial he had come to the conclusion it was absolutely impossible Henry could have committed the murder. Indeed, he hoped the jury would agree with him that the supposition was 'preposterous'.

With regards Rebecca, the judge instructed the jury that if the case was dropped against Henry they would have to consider if the prosecution had provided sufficient proof to suggest she alone murdered her husband or had hired some other person to do so. Justice Straight said that he had examined extremely carefully all the evidence and concluded that

though it was not always possible to reconcile Mrs Low's conduct with what one might have expected, the jury would have observed from her demeanour in the dock, that she was in fact one of those cold placid natures that nothing seems to excite or disturb.²⁴

He noted that even when her mother entered the court she had sat in a cold indifferent way, which had prompted a remark from him at the time. Straight reminded the jury that those who most exhibit their feelings under grief or sorrow were not necessarily sincere, but added that surely under such peculiar circumstances on the night of her husband's murder Rebecca might have given some indication of her feelings. Despite this, Straight said that what was important was that Rebecca's two formal statements agreed and were corroborated by the evidence heard at the trial. He advised the jury remember that 'very often people do and say the most stupid things and these things might at first seem very suspicious, but in reality have no room for suspicion.' He believed that whatever Rebecca's part in the murder was, the prosecution had failed to show it and that it would be 'dangerous to society if he and the jury were to proceed on bare suspicion.'²⁵ Though not wishing to restrain the jury to any one course, Justice Straight directed that in the circumstances it would be wise if they brought a verdict of not guilty to both prisoners.

After a few moments consultation in the courtroom, the jury returned two formal verdicts of not guilty and the prisoners were discharged. Henry left the court to cheers from his comrades, Rebecca left almost unnoticed.

Aftermath

What happened after the acquittal? In a scathing editorial on 12 January 1883, *The Times of India* expressed outrage at the verdict. Whilst saying that it was not for them to argue for the innocence or otherwise of Rebecca, they condemned the ineptitude of the police in their preparation of the evidence, concluding it would be a grave public scandal if the case was permitted to stand as it was. They took the opportunity to generally condemn the public in India for their indifference to such 'vulgar horrors' (an indifference

²⁴ *The Athenaeum And Daily News*, 20 January 1883

²⁵ *The Athenaeum And Daily News* 20 January 1883

they said would not happen at 'home' or in France) and suggested that higher authorities should waste less time on 'legislation for generations still unborn' and a little more time seeking to implement a more competent police department.

But the case did stand as it was and no one was ever convicted of the murder of Charles Low. Henry returned to his battery and Rebecca to the cantonment. A few months after the trial she paid John Digby Gordon a visit at his office in Agra.²⁶ Rather oddly, Rebecca told him she was well, 'despite the unfeeling conduct of her late husband.' Gordon recalled feeling creepy and asked her 'what does he do?' Rebecca answered 'not much, but he looks over my shoulder when I comb out my hair! *Br-r- Qy hail! brandy peg, jaldi lao*'.²⁷

In September 1883 the service record of Henry Inwood's brother William shows that he transferred away from O/3 in Agra to M/3 Battery in Meerut. It is likely he and Henry transferred together as later discharge records show Henry also in M/3.²⁸ On 21 October 1883, just nine months after the trial ended, Rebecca gave birth to a boy. Family recollection has always claimed that her son George was born in Meerut.

A few months later, in January 1884, M/3 moved to Peshawar.²⁹ On 9 October 1884, the second anniversary of Charles's murder, a George Edward Lowe was baptised in St John's Church Peshawar.³⁰ The father's name is not given, but the mother Rebecca Lowe is recorded as a single woman living in Rawalpindi. The priest was James Consterdine.

On 12 February 1885 Henry George Inwood and Rebecca Low married in St John's Church Peshawar.³¹ Henry's abode was given as Peshawar and Rebecca's Rawalpindi. The priest was again James Consterdine and the witnesses



Rebecca and her son George.

²⁶ Gordon, p32

²⁷ Roughly, 'What is it! Bring me a peg of brandy quickly.'

²⁸ TNA WO 121/253/73 Register of men discharged without pension, Nominal List of Men Discharged by the C-in-C in India, December 1887

²⁹ M battery 3 Brigade RA Digest, 1884, Royal Artillery Library Woolwich

³⁰ IOR N/1/190/60, 9 October 1884.

³¹ IOR N/1/191/161. Rebecca is recorded here as a widow.

were his wife Auguste and also William Inwood. William returned to England in 1887³² and it is not known what the large Inwood family were told of events in Agra.³³

Henry completed his twelve year service period in December 1887.²⁸ He then joined North Western Railways as a driver and he and Rebecca had seven children after George, all born in Rawalpindi.³⁴ Their youngest daughter Ellen was my grandmother.

Henry George Inwood died from cholera in 1907 in Saharanpur.³⁵ His sons and daughters, most of whom I knew well, always spoke of him with great affection and pride. Rebecca lived until 1939, finishing her days in Jodhpur.³⁶ She and her son George, who was called George Inwood all of his life, lived together always.

So, what has it been like to find a set of events such as these? From a research perspective it has been exciting and unexpectedly rewarding. I started with one marriage reference found on the FIBIS database and uncovered a huge event in my family history and a colourful snapshot of the cantonment life my ancestors lived: coffee shops, dances, sport and friendships. I have also been intrigued by how this young Anglo-Indian woman was perceived and how it took a judge of much experience to make sure that perception alone did not send her to the gallows. But these people are my family and the murder story has an unfinished ending. It is most frustrating not to know what really happened on that dark night by the cemetery. If anyone in the generation of my grandmother knew their parents' past – and it's hard to think that they didn't – they kept the secret well. It has been shocking to find my grandmother's parents were tried for this brutal murder. When considering the evidence it has been hard not to side with my ancestors and it was initially a challenge to afford Charles the sympathy he deserves. I have had to decide whether to keep my forebear's tradition of silence. Certainly some in the family have thought I should. However, as a consequence of this gruesome death a new line of descendants was created that include me. This is a difficult fact, but one that has played no small part in my decision to tell the story of Charles's murder.

³² TNA Army Service Records WO/97/3130/67

³³ As for Charles's family, research indicates by the time of the murder he may have had just one surviving family member, a younger brother Alfred.

³⁴ Charles's children, Robbie and William Low(e), were brought up by Henry and Rebecca with their half-siblings. Robbie joined North Western Railways and Willie joined the British Army, serving in the Rifle Brigade.

³⁵ IOR N/1/345/282, 5 October 1907.

³⁶ 17 October 1939 – from memorial inscription recorded on a photograph owned by the family.

Dramatis Personae	
<p>Charles Low – a soldier in O/3 Rebecca Low – his wife Henry George Inwood – a soldier in O/3 Mary Ann Crowe – Rebecca’s mother Mangla – the Lows’ cook William Inwood – Henry’s brother, soldier O/3 James Hurley Rosetter – captain O/3 Robert Renton – the Sgt Major Samuel Dukes – the Barrack Master Catherine Dukes – his wife Cox – a boy Sgt J Hutchinson – a Northumberland Fusilier Gunner James Owen – a soldier in O/3 Gunner William Moore – a soldier in O/3 Sgt Old – a soldier in O/3</p>	<p>Edwin White – a railway station master Dr Samuel F Bigger – a surgeon of the IMS Maj Frank Chatterton – cantonment magistrate Maj Graham – District Supt. of Indian Police Dr Murray Thomson – Chemical Examiner Justice Douglas Straight – the judge John Digby Gordon – defence barrister CH Hill – prosecutor Mr Finlay – magistrate Agnes Roberts – wife of a corporal, neighbour Lily Whybrow – wife of a bombardier, neighbour The Harveys – couple with whom Mary Ann Crowe lodged</p>

About the author:

Rosemary Reardon worked in education and the voluntary sector (running a prisoner justice and welfare organisation) before, much like Justice Straight, retiring from the task of everything except trying to enjoy herself. One of her five children is the FIBIS Journal Editor and they have very much enjoyed uncovering this somewhat inglorious episode in their family history.

Edward Squibb – letters from a Bengal Cadet

Charles Gordon Clark

My paternal grandfather, HH Gordon Clark ('Harry', 1861-1951) was proud of belonging to a family that was very largely of London stock, and to be the third generation to run the firm of wine and spirit importers, Matthew Clark and Sons, which his grandfather had founded in 1810. His father, Gordon W Clark, had been interested in the family's history, and Harry in his 60s compiled much of the material in a privately published work, *The Family of Clark* (1925). I have been lucky enough, as Harry had 18 grandchildren, mostly older than I, to be the one who inherited some of the manuscripts that he decided to keep. These include many letters relating to India and a journal Gordon Clark kept on his own voyage out to India. I have been able to do a certain amount of research which fills out the information I inherited. In this article and another in the next *FIBIS Journal*, I will use letters sent by my ancestors to illustrate some of the experiences and concerns of young military officers in India from 1820 to 1860.

Edward Squibb (1802-24), was the brother of Harry's grandmother Catherine Squibb (1793-1877), who married Matthew Clark (1786-1866) in 1814 at St James's Church, Piccadilly. This was her parish church, as she and Edward were two of the many children of a prominent West End auctioneer, George Squibb of Savile Row, and the grandchildren of a Mayfair clockmaker, John Fladgate, whose wife Ann had run his business after his early demise. Edward Squibb joined the Bengal Army in 1820.¹ On the whole, the Honorable East India Company's officers were more 'middle class' than those of the Crown; fewer aristocrats and country gentry, a number of tradesmen's sons. As the son of a successful London auctioneer, Edward was typical of the Company's officers. It was precisely this class of thrusting, entrepreneurial middle ranking folk who provided the majority of officers for the Indian forces.

On Edward's maternal side he had various connections in India. His cousin Charles, the third son of his uncle Francis Fladgate, went out in 1818 as a cadet in the Madras Establishment.² Travelling on the *Rose*,³ it must have been a rather jolly journey, as besides seven other cadets and two 'free mariners', there were seven unmarried ladies on board.⁴ Edward and Charles's grandmother, Ann Fladgate (who ran the clockmakers) had been born Ann Cox in 1734. Her nephew Hiram Cox (1760 - 1799) was a captain in the Bengal Army who was sent on what seems to have been an ill-starred mission to

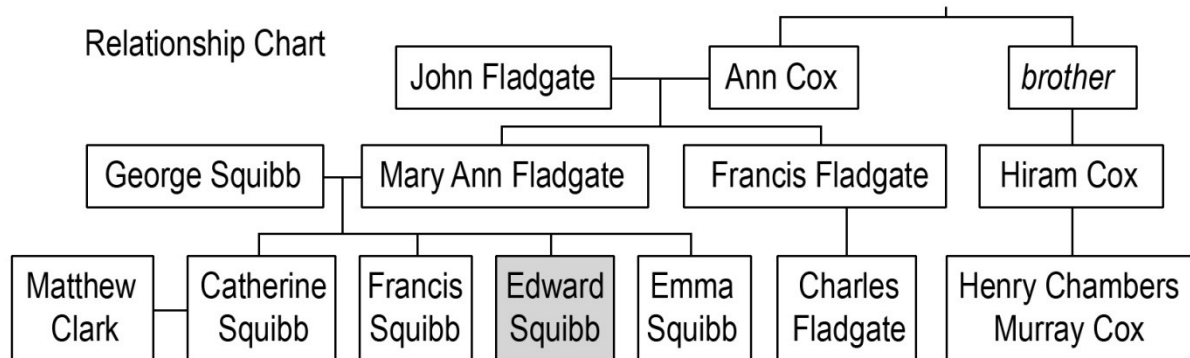
¹ IOR L/MIL/9/137/183-6 Bengal Army Cadet Papers. These detail: Edward Squibb's nomination by HEIC director Robert Campbell 'as a favour to' Edward's brother Francis; Edward's baptism at St James, Westminster in March 1802; his education at Harrow (Classical and Mathematical); father's profession; and a parent/guardian certificate, signed by both his brother and father on 12 Jan 1820.

² Charles Fladgate would rise to the rank of Major in the late 1840s.

³ This vessel of 955 tons made eleven voyages to India & China 1810-34.

⁴ *Madras Almanac* (1820) Arrivals: 24 July 1819 the *Rose* (transcription on FIBIS Database)

Burma in 1796-8.⁵ On his return he was posted to Palongkee as Superintendent of that station and assigned the task of rehabilitating Arakanese refugees. He died soon after of fever at Chittagong on 2 August 1799 and his name survives in the nearby town of Cox's Bazar.⁶ Hiram's son Henry Chambers Murray Cox also served in the Bengal Army and seems to have once been a channel for magazines from England to Edward Squibb.⁷ He ended a long career soon after promotion to General in the 1870s.⁸



First Impressions of India

Edward Squibb went to India when he was eighteen, sailing from Gravesend on the *Ganges* in February 1820, just one month after his cadet papers had been signed. The ship touched at Portsmouth but after leaving that port on 21 February saw no more land until arrival at Madras on 18 June. From there Edward wrote the first of sixteen letters that survive. They have no envelopes, and are sealed with a signet ring with the Squibb arms and ES; the longer, earlier letters are crossed but are in a fluent, readable hand. Aside from one to his brother-in-law Matthew Clark, all the letters are to Edward's father – addressed 'Mr Squibb Savile Row London'. Taking on average 6½ months to arrive, they had to be paid for on arrival, and the sums appear to have varied remarkably,

⁵ Hiram Cox *Journal of a residence in the Burmah empire: and more particularly at the court of Amarapoorah* published posthumously with preface by HCM Cox, (1821). This was scathingly reviewed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (vol. 130): 'we cannot fairly suppose that the author ever intended to give it to the world in its present imperfect state' and by the *New Monthly Magazine* (vol. 3): 'the writer...has been betrayed by his veneration for the Honourable East India Company into a degree of dull minuteness...' See also, GP Ramachandra 'Captain Hiram Cox's Mission to Burma 1796-8; a case of irrational behaviour in diplomacy', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (Vol 12, No 2, Sep 1981). Papers concerning the mission of Hiram Cox to Ava are in IOR H/480 1796-1798.

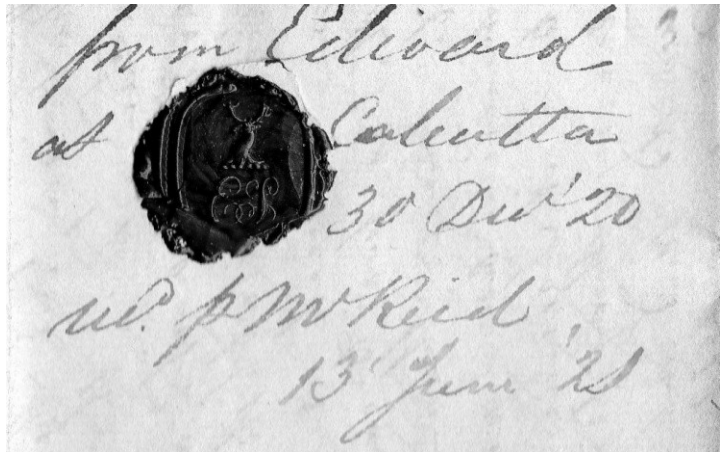
⁶ Major VCP Hodson *List of the Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1834* (London: 1927) p400

⁷ Edward Squibb, 6th Letter.

⁸ Hodson, p399: HCM Cox was born in Calcutta on 11 Aug 1789 and joined the Bengal Army in 1805. He trained at Barasat Cadet College, near Calcutta and was commissioned Lieut in 1809, after which he was involved in many actions, including Java in 1811. As a captain, he was appointed to raise and command the Bundelkhand Provisional Battalion in 1825. He died in Burnham, Somerset, 22 July 1876, aged 87.

between one shilling and three shillings and eightpence – why is difficult to see; weight seems irrelevant, but perhaps some enclosed letters to other family members.

A journal Edward kept on the *Ganges* has not survived, but his letters from Madras show the voyage was notable for friction between the cadets for the Madras and Bengal Presidencies.



A detail of one of Edward's letters, from Calcutta, with seal 'ES'.

We Bengalles as a body pride ourselves upon having conducted ourselves in a better manner than that [of] the others, whilst among the Madras fellows there are some so exceptionable that I should not like to be in the same regiment with them.⁹

The captain had been reduced to threatening to put in irons any of his young passengers who fought (these had been 'a very heterogeneous set, some had been midshipmen, one or two in the King's army, others boys just left school'). Edward's letter shows his older brother George (1798-1859, later a well-known and fashionable London doctor) was contemplating a career in India:

I should be glad to see George out at Bengal as Assistant Surgeon, but if he brings a wife I should advise him by no means to come out in a private trader but in a regular Indiaman.¹⁰ There were 3 married ladies on board the *Ganges* and they might as well have been on board a convict ship, for a single cadet it don't signify much...

The cadets for Bengal had to wait a fortnight at Madras before moving on to Calcutta. Edward wrote home describing his living arrangements and servants:

We are expected to live ashore all the time, but all Cadets and Assistant Surgeons are allowed quarters free of expence [sic] in the Fort and their meals at the rate of 3 rupees i.c. [inclusive?] (7s. 6d.) pr day. In fact it is contrary to orders for any Cadet or Assistant Surgeon to live at or frequent taverns... Every one is obliged to keep a Dubash who employs under him a Maki, or Shoe black, it being contrary, the dubash says, to his cast[e] to do such menial offices. The business of the Dubash is to be always attending upon you from sunrise to sunset for which I pay mine at the rate of 3 pagodas (10 rupees & a half) pr month. They talk a little English and are able to transact any business. It seems as if they were employed on the principle of set a thief to catch a thief. It may easily be supposed that every body tries to cheat strangers so that the Dubash, if he is at all honest, may save his master a good deal of money. My Dubash I believe to be honest, he is well paid and therefore has not so

⁹ Quotations are extracts from letters written by Edward Squibb. Some punctuation has been added to Edward's letters for readability.

¹⁰ The *Ganges* was a chartered ship which made two voyages for the EIC between 1829 and 1832. www.eicships.info/ships/shipdetail.asp?sid=976

great inducement to pilfer & cheat as others – he repeatedly cautions me against the black fellows, of whom there are always a great many at the Messhouse (which is the Cadets' quarters) at some pretence or another for, as all the rooms are open in the day time, if small things are not locked up they can manage to take them away without the centinels [sic] or anyone else perceiving it. So many fellows get into the Messhouse at times that it is like the Royal Exchange or any other much frequented public place and we are often forced to kick them out for as they are a passive lot nobody hesitates to treat them like dogs.

The British superior attitudes caught on early; all Indians were 'Blacks', even those riding in carriages. Edward also wrote of the exotic scenes he had witnessed in Madras:

The road is just like a good English road only rather redder. I could have imagined myself in the Regents Park, the houses being not unlike – but then again we met Camels, bullock carriages, palanquins etc and now and then an Elephant and his train, which made it quite Eastern. The houses are much grander in outside appearance than most great houses in London. If this Mess house were transported there it would be taken for some rich nobleman's at least.

Calcutta, which Edward reached on 9 July 1820, made a more favourable impression than his first stop:

In Madras the little care that was taken of us was disgraceful – the Marquis of Hastings¹¹ has...issued [orders] for the better welfare of the Cadets on their first arrival from England. There is a mess instituted in Fort William at which an officer presides, for those Cadets who have no friends to go to, and it is expected that every Cadet under his care will not hire any servants, nor buy any part of his equipment that may be expensive without consulting him. This is done with the view to protect the cadet from being cheated or robbed etc.

Luckily, Edward had come fortified with a good many letters of introduction, and 'private letters directed to individuals procured [him] very civil treatment'. One, to a Mr Campbell, immediately brought him an invitation to stay at his house at Garden Reach, about four miles from Calcutta. Edward's brother-in-law Matthew Clark had clearly exerted himself to get introductions from various people, but as Edward explained to Matthew in a very respectful letter written on 14 August 1820:

I cannot but make the remark here that in general, where I expected to receive the most civility, I received none and when I expected none, I received the most. If I were to advise a Cadet as to what letters would be advantageous to him, I would say that the only letter he need bring to Agency houses is a Letter of Credit, that letters to individuals will procure him some kind of civility, but that letters to officers in the army have the best chance of being serviceable to him, that if any body makes a great favour of giving him a letter he may be sure it will be worth nothing at all to him, and that should he happen to have no letters at all with him he need not care much for he can live very cheap at Fort William and will be taken very good care of. Finally it may be taken as a general rule by every body that your reception in India depends more upon the nature of the person to whom you may have a letter, than upon the claim you may have upon the said person.

¹¹ Francis Rawdon-Hastings, Governor-General of India 1813-23

This letter to Matthew was written on board a boat taking Edward and other cadets up the Ganges to the Company's European Regiment at Dinapore.¹² Unfortunately, and typically of Edward's letters, there is no description of scenery or any 'local colour'. As in his first few letters to his father, it was his future that concerned him – 'I may say I like India, meaning, as I should think most people mean by such an expression, that I like my situation as I am perfectly convinced I could not do so well in England' – and how soon he would become a lieutenant was of all-absorbing interest. He was by now ranked an ensign (roughly the equivalent of a 2nd lieutenant) and there were 150 of these out in Bengal, but proposals before the HEIC Directors to increase the army establishment meant 'that if the Directors will decide upon any of them, we shall all be lieutenants in less than a twelvemonth – otherwise it may take two years before such a number will be digested.' Promotion would be a constant theme of his letters: you needed either a good word put in by someone important, or (ominously) enough of your seniors to die.

Training in Dinapore

Edward arrived at Dinapore about the end of August 1820, and was plunged into so busy a training routine that he did not write home till 4 October.

I assure you I have not been idle, as I have been under the sergeants' hands all the time. We rise at gun-fire (half past five) every morning and have an hour's drilling before breakfast on parade. During the day we have a sergeant for the sword-exercise, and another for the musket for an hour at our own quarters. And in the evening about 6 another drill on parade – this with the occasional mounting guard &c has kept us well employed.

It was the only letter in which he talked, even in such scant detail, of his military duties. But as ever it was the future which concerned him most; until the proposed new regiments were authorised the prospects of promotion seemed bleak – 'only the old twoddles in Leadenhall Street [the Directors of the EIC] take such a time to consider about it'. For the immediate future he had hopes:

As they do not post us until we are lieutenants, we are allowed the option...of doing duty with any corps we please until our promotion. Lieutenant Roger W. Wilson of the 29 N.I. brother-in-law to Mrs Roebuck, is adjutant to an Infantry levy at Minpore (near Etawah and not far from Agra). He has written to me inviting me to do duty with his levy when I leave this. I shall accordingly apply for it, and as soon as the necessary orders come from the Adjutant-General's shall take my departure to Minpore.

Edward's letter showed that a distrustful, superior attitude to Indians had already hardened; writing about four ensigns in jail in Calcutta awaiting trial for murders, he sought to excuse them:

There are great allowances to be made for all this, as some of the black men are horridly provoking. The story of one of [the ensigns] is that being in a rage with one of his servants

¹² *Asiatic Journal*, 1 Apr 1821. Issue 64, p385 (this and subsequent *Asiatic Journals* via the 19th Century UK Periodicals Database): 'Cadets recently promoted to rank of Cornets & Ensigns, July 17 [1820] – Ensign Edward Squibb with Company's European reg at Dinapore.'

he struck him with his fist on the head, and the fellow dropt down dead [sic]. The least thing kills them – they are such weak devils. It happened to each of them whilst on the river. A great deal of this comes from not knowing the language. If a servant does any thing wrong, and he endeavours to speak in his own defence you only get the more enraged because you can't understand him, and the climate itself is enough to make one irritable. Indeed I don't know whether it is not a sort of affectation or not, some treat their servants as if they were assassins of who they lived in continual danger never threatening them with less than a loaded pistol – it is no wonder then that these things happen.

There's no idea that it might be worth while learning any of the languages...

Edward's plan of going to Minpoorie was blocked – 'it is contrary to their custom to let unposted ensigns do duty with irregular corps' – so he applied for Juggernaut Poorie where the 1 Bn 29th NI were stationed and set out for this coastal place of pilgrimage with the noted 'Juggernaut' idol.¹³ But Edward got no further than Calcutta from where he wrote on 30 December 1820 that he had heard they really were soon to be posted somewhere, and that he had permission to stay in Calcutta, living back with the Campbells. He would be a fifth or at worst sixth ensign in the battalion and sounded almost resigned to a long wait for a lieutenancy. The first letter to him from home had arrived, from his sister Emma.

Stationed in Keitah and Kalinjar

After this letter from Calcutta, there are no more that survive for a year and a half. Edward did receive a posting, as the *Asiatic Journal* records he was to join the 8th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry, 1st Battalion, at Keitah in January 1821.¹⁴ Keitah was a cantonment in Bundelkhand, between Jhansi and Banda, and located very near the present town of Rath. It was abolished as a military station by the Governor-General in September 1831,¹⁵ perhaps in part owing to the notoriously unhealthy climate. Abandoned by the British, it is not easy to locate on maps made after the 1830s.

Edward's next letter was from 'Kallingur' (Kalinjar, some 30 miles south of Banda), written in June 1822. How long he had been there I do not know, but Edward's father wrote to him in July and said the family had heard that he had acted as 'Adjutant to a Detachment',¹⁶ so perhaps his time at Kalinjar was in that role – the regiment was certainly still based at Keitah.¹⁷

¹³ *Asiatic Journal*, 1 May 1821, Issue 65, p497: 'Ensigns attached to HC European Reg appointed to do duty – Oct 28 [1820] E Squibb 1st bat. 29th, Juggernaut Pooree'

¹⁴ *Asiatic Journal*, 1 Aug 1821, Issue 68, p179: 'Cornets and Ensigns Permanently Posted, Jan 1 1821 – 8th Regt, Ensign Edw Squibb, 1st bat. at Keitah'

¹⁵ *Asiatic Journal*, Jan-Apr 1832, Vol VII, p154: 'Military Station of Keitah'.

¹⁶ *Asiatic Journal*, 1 July 1822, Issue 79, p86: '8th Regt, Dec 20 [1821] – Ensign Squibb, 1st bat to act as Adjutant to a detachment'.

¹⁷ This is confirmed by the fact that Lt Col Stephen Nation, 1st battalion, 8th Regiment, commanded the post of Keitah in 1821-3 *East India Military Calendar* vol 2 1824

Kalinjar Fort in Bundelkhand had been conquered by British troops in 1812, along with the nearby and equally interesting fortress of Ajaigarh. Just at the time Edward went there, the *Asiatic Journal* was printing an extremely long and detailed account of the 'extraordinary' fortress of Kalinjar, 'the Gibraltar of India' and the remarkable antiquities found there.¹⁸ It's possible that Edward may have described the fort and its political and artistic significance in an earlier, lost letter, but given his general lack of interest in his surroundings, I doubt it. One would not think his father was a London auctioneer dealing with *objets d'art* of all kinds. At least, unusually, Edward finds space to say that Kalinjar and the post eighteen miles away at 'Adjgush' (Ajaigarh) were on rocky hills high above the plain: 'Kallingur is the largest and in my opinion the pleasantest of the two. It is also reckoned the healthiest as having less jungle about it, though I believe both are very well for that.' He felt it very wearisome toiling up the mile to the fort though. Otherwise, Edward wrote about the international situation: an early instance of the fear that Russia would conquer Persia and then attack 'Hindoostan' – 'it is not likely they will invade India – indeed I do not see how they possibly can.' He also repeats a request for some of his books, and had been amused by reading in the Calcutta papers about the Queen's 'trial'.¹⁹

The next letter, written in October 1822, also from Kalinjar, was short and rather depressing. Edward had 'so little to write about at present' and they may or may not 'be ordered into Keitah the coming Cold Weather.' He commented on family news and wrote that the newspapers and magazines which his father had sent were not worth their postage as 'the news they contain is generally old by the time...they reach me' – the magazines were 'dull things'. In January 1823, he was more upbeat and chatty, writing from the battalion headquarters at Keitah. He was by now a third ensign and reconciled to promotion being a slow business. Unusually, he gives some details of his military life: he was to go on a 'Command' 'to convey, or escort, treasure from Calpu²⁰ to Sangar' and this meant that a proposed visit of inspection by the 'General of the Division' would probably be put off. This was perhaps welcome; rather modestly Edward wrote 'I had got my white Tights and Hessian boots ready for him – but I don't make a good figure in them.'

In fact, as his next letter written in March recounts, although they were away for a month (and 'quite tired of it by the time we returned') they were relieved about five marches short of Sangar (Saugor?) at 'Keerahpore'. Sadly, Edward gives no description of life on the march, but he makes some mention for once of the British way of life in Central India:

¹⁸ Vols 10 and 11, 1820 and 1821

¹⁹ This was not in form a trial, but the reading of the Pains and Penalties Bill 1820 introduced by the government to strip Caroline of Brunswick of her title of queen consort and dissolve her marriage to George IV. It was later withdrawn. Edward may not have known that there was a very amusing cartoon of Caroline being knocked down at auction – by George Squibb!

²⁰ Kalpi, then the headquarters of the Bundelkhand Agency.

We are now preparing for the Hot-Winds which begin about the middle of this month and preparing our tatties accordingly. You will not perhaps understand what the tatties are, unless I explain it – The fact is the Winds that begin blowing about the 15th of this month are so hot, that independent of the sun they are enough to scorch you in your own bungalow, to prevent which, we have these tatties which are made of the roots of a long grass called huss-huss, fixed & fastened together by means of bamboos and string. They are made to fit in the door-cases, and moved about from west to east, or whatever quarter the wind comes from which is continually varying. The huss-huss is placed so as to admit the wind through its crevices, and a man remains outside watering them all day long – so that by this means we get the wind cool. This is rather an artificial way of life, but in this manner we are found to live for nearly three months in the year.

By 27 May 1823 Edward was back at Kalingar and wrote to say the books he had asked for had arrived in very good condition. He found 'the series of the New *Monthly Magazine*...very entertaining and instructive.' He had also been glad to hear of his sister Emma's engagement;²¹ rather touchingly adding that 'anything that tends to make her or any of the family happy – must make me so.' He mentioned he was not in touch with his cousin Charles Fladgate (in the Madras Presidency) and rather wishes he was, but he was clearly rather shy of taking the initiative.

Writing on 20 July 1823 to acknowledge letters of the end of January, Edward says he will answer his father's request for 'a more particular account of how I pass my time' and explains that 'I always spend a part of my time now in the study of the Languages – a plan which I certainly intend to follow up'. One would assume that these are the local languages, but he goes straight on to say he had been looking at his old school books 'with some edification' and asks for more of them, mostly classical texts and dictionaries. His letters were by now quite short – about a third of the earliest ones, barely 400 words, and in fact he said nothing more at all about how he passed his time. He did however say 'we are in a very comfortable bungalow, and one, which is not always the case, that keeps the wet out.'

Less than four weeks later another short letter had the good news that there were to be four new regiments, with two 'marine' ones to serve anywhere east of the Cape of Good Hope, so Edward's hopes of promotion were again high, even of a staff appointment. And he was excited that his father had said that he might be able to get letters of recommendation to the Governor-General and to the Commander-in-Chief. Much of the letter was taken up with a request for a watch – he was willing to pay for it himself, but it was impossible to get anything but an expensive yet unreliable one in India (at least 200 Rupees, he says - £25). It seems curious to us that the grandson, as Edward was, of a watch and clockmaker should not have had one as a matter of course, but in 1820 a pocket watch was still a luxury item.

²¹ She married Henry Wyatt, 9 November 1823

A move to Mhow

By 11 September, when Edward wrote a letter to his father of a little over 300 words, he was expecting a move up to Bareilly. Writing again only a fortnight later, he was clearly looking forward to this move:

We expect to get strawberries and apples at Bareilly – these are very great delicacies in India. We get a kind of crab-apple at Keitah and they say strawberries will grow here, but I have never seen any. We shall be all very glad to move I dare say, for although it is a great trouble moving all one's things, the marching in the cold weather is by no means unpleasant – and we shall not begin our march till November.

However by 15 October, the news of the reorganisation was finally through²² and Edward was off in a quite different direction – 'to the 1st Battalion of the 28th which is at present at Mhow²³...rather to the south of this – more towards Bombay.' At last he would be a lieutenant and take rank from 11 July 1823 – 'I have been exactly three years an Ensign reckoning from the time I landed in Calcutta which was on the 9 July 1820.'²⁴

He took five weeks to reach Mhow. The distance is about 350 miles in a straight line; so he travelled about ten miles a day on average – 'a long and tedious march' he wrote in what was to be his last letter on 12 February 1824. Was he on his own, or were other subalterns posted between the two? Was he accompanied by any servant? Where did he stay, and how did he eat on the way? There are so many things one would like him to have dealt with!

For Edward there was one great advantage to this large station with its three battalions, cavalry regiment, and some artillery: Mhow had 'a Library and Reading Room which belongs to the Military and is certainly a very good institution.' In recent letters Edward had asked for two works by Lord Byron, *Hours of Idleness* and *English Bards & Scotch Reviewers*.

The letter arrived with George Squibb in London on 19 August 1824; he answered it on 22 September – but Edward had died on 29 August.²⁵ He had never been so long without writing; had he been taken ill soon after he arrived at Mhow?

Perhaps Edward's letters to the rest of the family were more interesting, but to his father he wrote mainly about his anxieties for promotion, or for things he wanted sent out. In his last letter from Kalingar he wrote that he was 'glad to hear my name has been mentioned

²² In 1824, the Bengal Infantry was reorganised into 68 regiments of one battalion each.

²³ Founded as a cantonment town after the defeat of the Holkar maharajahs of Indore in 1818.

²⁴ The official notices in the *Asiatic Journal* confirm events: *AJ*, 1 Apr 1824, Issue 100 p454: '1823, Military Appointments, Promotions etc – Ensigns to be Lieuts...E Squibb, posted to 28th Regt' and *AJ*, 1 May 1824, Issue 101, p545: 'HQ Cawnpore Sep 20 1823 – The Commander in Chief is pleased to post to regt and bats consequent to the promotion and arrangements for new regiments as follows: ...28th Regt, 1st Bat (now 55th Regt) – Lieut E Squibb'.

²⁵ *Asiatic Journal*, 1 Apr 1825, Issue 112, p471: 'Deaths – Aug 29 [1824] at Mhow, Lieut Squibb 55th NI'. His burial does not appear in the IOR N series and so his cause of death is unknown.

to Lord Amherst and Sir Edward Paget'. As we have seen, Edward took an occasional interest in the news, and made some effort to read and even to study – though the conventional classical education seems not to have resulted in him thinking there anything worth studying outside his school curriculum. The impression he gives is that he found his professional life pretty boring, and after his first sight of Oriental scenes at Madras and then Calcutta he seems to have had little interest in India apart from the weather. Matthew Clark, we learn from the letters, had given his young brother-in-law a gun, but Edward never says anything about shooting game, a chief interest among British officers abroad.

Before writing him off as 'uninteresting, lazy' it's as well to remember the harsh exile that army life in India meant. Edward was away from home for four years and had no home leave or, from the evidence of his letters, any prospect of it. Nor does he seem to have had any local leave. Although his cousin Charles Fladgate was also serving in India, they never met – one after all was in Madras, the other Bengal. Further, it was a time when the Company had already taken over much of the centre of India where Edward was stationed, so it seems he did not even experience the excitement of a military campaign.

There have been other young people who have found it difficult to write interesting letters home. Edward had just not been bred to it. The letters of his family's next generation, sent home from India by Edward's nephews Gordon, Campbell and Edgar Clark, proved to be a somewhat different case and it is to these we will turn in *FIBIS Journal* 29.

About the author:

Charles Gordon Clark read history at university many years ago and though in his 60s he studied geology and earth sciences with the Open University, he has always remained interested in history and in how his family's doings illuminate and are understood by historical processes. Charles has transcribed Edward Squibb's letters and they can be read in full on the FIBIS database, in the Personal Papers section.

John Braddock – Powder Master

Sylvia Murphy

John Braddock (1794 – 1840) was one in a long line of men of the same name. I first came to know of him when John Croll, a descendant, showed me some beautifully written notes with a brief (but incomplete) pedigree which had passed down through the family. Much of the content was copied from the Parish Registers of Waltham Abbey in Essex and the Harleian Society manuscripts in the British Library.

John Croll sought my assistance in verifying and filling out the biographical details of the John Braddock who was sent out to Madras in 1813 as a gunpowder expert to work in the Powder Mills there. Despite finding references in Google Books to John Braddock's published writings from the 1830s on gunpowder manufacture and other matters, early research efforts failed to turn up any employment or career details. Time and persistence were rewarded, as some less usual sources became available. This article will show how some of the details of John Braddock's life in India were filled in.

John Braddock was born in 1794 to John Braddock, Master Refiner of Saltpetre at the Royal Powder Mills, Waltham, and his wife Sarah whom he married in 1793. Young John was baptised at the Parish of St Martin in the Fields on 30 April 1794. His mother Sarah Braddock died on 5 November 1834 aged 70,¹ and her husband John died in 1840 and was buried close to the south wall outside Waltham Abbey.²

The historical notes inform that young John Braddock:

...was sent out from Waltham Abbey in 1813 by the Hon. East India Co under Captain Fraser of the Engineers *and*

Altho' in the Civil Service he was made a Lieut to enable him to rank with the Officers of Madras Corps.³

In looking for evidence online to corroborate the hand-written notes, we found digitised on Google Books a *Memoir on Gunpowder* which had been authored by John Braddock, Deputy Commissary of Ordnance and published in 1832.⁴ It is in John Braddock's letter to the Secretary of the Military Board, Fort St George, dated 1 July 1829, which is printed at the front of the memoir, that we find a summary of some of his time in India. Through this, John impresses as a man of great modesty and humility, no doubt caused in part by his mixed fortunes in India, of which more later. He is also clearly skilled and knowledgeable in his field of endeavour. He presents the memoir to the Military Board

¹ Waltham Holy Cross Parish Registers, digitised by www.familyrelatives.com (actually a collection of deaths gathered from newspapers etc).

² Recorded in family historical notes, p1

³ Ibid, p5

⁴ *Memoir on Gunpowder in which are detailed the Principles both of its Manufacture and Proof.* By John Braddock Esq, Deputy Commissary of Ordnance. Printed at madras at the expense of the Indian Government for use of the Artillery (reprinted London, 1832).

‘not to be made public, but for purposes of private convenience’. He then goes on to remind the Board that he was sent out by the Honourable Court of Directors in 1813 in the gunpowder department, under the late Captain Fraser of the Engineers. He notes his prior experience and education at HM works at Waltham Abbey, and observes that:

the plans which Captain Fraser submitted to the Military Board in 1813-1814 were either copies of the sketches I then took, or original designs of my own;...

Indeed the Military Board was so impressed with the contents of the *Memoir*, that the Deputy Secretary, H Moberly, writes under the orders of the Military Board that:

Viewing the work as one of great merit, and likely to prove of considerable utility to the Corps of Artillery, the Board recommended to Government that 300 copies of the Memoir should be printed at public expense and under your superintendence.

From the above, you would probably expect that John Braddock had spent all of the last sixteen years in Madras using and gaining further expertise in the field of gunpowder manufacture. This was not the case.

Mr John Braddock arrived at Madras on 9 August 1813 on the HC Ship *Hugh Inglis*, occupation shown as Gunpowder Manufactory.⁵ Strangely, he is not listed in the editions of the *East India Register and Directory* for many years following. Neither do personal records relating to his marriage or baptism of his children show him working with gunpowder:

Marriage:⁶ 19 February 1819, St Mary’s Church, Madras
John Braddock to Elizabeth Stephenson

Baptism:⁷ 13 June 1822, Black Town
Elizabeth the daughter of John Braddock, **Examiner in the Accountant Generals Office** and Elizabeth his wife, born 9 April 1822, baptised by Wm Roy, Chaplain

Baptism:⁸ 3 August 1824, Black Town
Mary Jane daughter of John Braddock **Examiner in the Accountant General’s Office** and Elizabeth his wife born 5 August 1824, baptised by Thomas Lewis, Chaplain

Baptism:⁹ 2 October 1826, Black Town
John son of John Braddock and Elizabeth his wife born 9 July 1826 was this day baptised by me; A Denton, Chaplain

⁵ FIBIS database: ‘Arrivals from Madras Almanac 1810-1820’; Note: JB is recorded as John Braddock

⁶ IOR N/2/7/113 (LDS Film 521880)

⁷ IOR N/2/8/254 (LDS film: 521837)

⁸ IOR N/2/9/251 (LDS Film 521838)

⁹ IOR N/2/10/89 (LDS Film 521838)

Baptism:¹⁰ 21 April 1830, Vepery Church

Henry Stephenson son of John & Elizabeth Braddock, **D[eputy] Ass[istan]t Com[missar]y of Ordnance** born 11 Jan'y 1830 was baptized by me. Wm Roy, Senr Chaplain

Finally in this last we see a hint that John Braddock may have been doing work in connection with his area of expertise!

Finding a formal record of John Braddock's employment using resources available in Sydney proved impossible. We then discovered a copy of HA Young's book *The East India Company's Arsenals & Manufactories*, republished approx 2004 in soft cover.¹¹ From here we learned that six men had been engaged from Waltham Abbey and the charcoal works at Petworth on five year contracts in Madras at 10 shillings per day, and they would be ranked as Conductors of Ordnance. These were:

J Braddock, R Todd and W Taylor, all expert at making Gunpowder

J Hattersley, J Tims and M Tims were expert at charcoal burning.

The Court of Directors had also paid £40 for expenses for each man at the Boatswain's Mess. Apparently things didn't work out too well for any of the men. One died on the way out, three were sent to Bengal and two – Hattersley and Braddock remained in Madras. John Braddock senior wrote to the Court in early 1817 complaining that his son was 'left in a state of inactivity'.¹² This was despite the fact that his covenant stated 'that he was to practise and teach the art of making gunpowder.' Indeed he was certainly inactive in this respect.

Early in 2011, sponsored by FIBIS, a set of LDS Microfilms was obtained on indefinite loan for the local family history centre.¹³ These were the lists of early non-official European Residents in India, IOR series O/5/24-31, contained on films 2104564 – 2104568. Most of the lists from Madras during the period 1801-1820 contain very detailed information. From these we were able to start building a picture of John Braddock's career in India. It is doubtful that he ever practised and taught the art of making gunpowder during the period he was contracted to do so, though whether or not he was paid any compensation is not known. As early as the end of 1814 he is shown doing other work:

¹⁰ IOR N/2/13/118

¹¹ HA Young (Brigadier-General) *The East India Company's Arsenals & Manufactories*, (pub. The Naval & Military Press Ltd in assoc with The Royal Artillery Museum, Woolwich, originally published 1937)

¹² Op cit. pp93 & 94

¹³ LDS Family History Centre; 169 Pennant Street, North Parramatta, NSW 2151, Australia

A list of unlicensed Europeans who have arrived at Madras since the 10th April 1814 or who have been permitted to reside there by the Government subsequently to that period subject to the approval of the Honorable the Court of Directors

Name:	Braddock, J
Country or Place of Birth	London
Whence Arrived & Date of Arrival	9 th August 1813
By What Ship:	The <i>Hugh Inglis</i>
Former Occupation	HC Service
Present Occupation	Auctioneer
Remarks:	He was sent out by the Honorable the Court of Directors to be employed in the HC Powder Mills & the term he was engaged for expires on 9 August 1818

Similar entries continue in the following years. On the list completed 25 March 1819 his present occupation was described as 'Commission Warehouse Keeper and Auctioneer employed by Messrs Griffiths & Co.' However in 1820 he is shown as 'Examiner in the Accountant General's Office.' This appointment is the start of his rehabilitation in the service of the East India Company and a steady rise in deserved status and respect.

The collection of inhabitants' lists also includes for 1818, 1819 and 1820 lists of uncovenanted civil servants employed in Madras. In the *List of Uncovenanted Europeans Employed in the Honble Company's Service under the Presidency of Fort St George with a statement of allowances drawn by them as it stood on the 30 April 1820* the name John Braddock appears as an Examiner in the Accountant General's Office, having been employed in April 1820 on a salary of Rs175.¹⁴ John seems to have continued in that role at least for the next two or three years.

However, when the officer in command of the Carnatic Ordnance Artificer Corps died near the end of 1824, John Braddock was appointed Superintendent of the Corps.¹⁵ From 1825 he starts to be listed in the Directories as a Deputy Assistant Commissary and Superintendent of the Corps of Carnatic Ordnance Artificers with an appointment date of 19 November 1824¹⁶. On 20th August 1831 he was granted the rank and allowances of a Deputy Commissary of Ordnance.¹⁷ In 1833 he was transferred to the Arsenal at Fort St George.

According to Young he was appointed Lieutenant in the 1st Native Veteran Battalion in 1833, but also was acting in-charge of the Gunpowder Manufactory for a short time during 1832.

¹⁴ IOR O/5/30 part 3, LDS film: 2104567

¹⁵ Young p95

¹⁶ *East India Register & Directory* 1825, 2nd ed corrected to 16 Aug 1825, p265 (Google books)

¹⁷ *Asiatic Journal & Monthly Miscellany*, Vol.8, May-Aug 1832, p.43 (per Google books)

The 1830s were definitely John Braddock's decade, a time when he held both civil and military appointments and was extensively published and quoted.

1 August 1834: Lieut J Braddock, non-effective establishment to be secretary to the Mint Committee.¹⁸

Although not found in the *Asiatic Journals*, Brigadier Young writes that in November 1835 John Braddock was posted to the Powder works to assist in the renovation and improvement of the machinery:

7 July 1837: Lieut Braddock, of non-effective establishment, to act as actuary and accountant at Government Bank and actuary at Savings Bank, during absence of Mr Skill on sick certificate, or until further orders.¹⁹

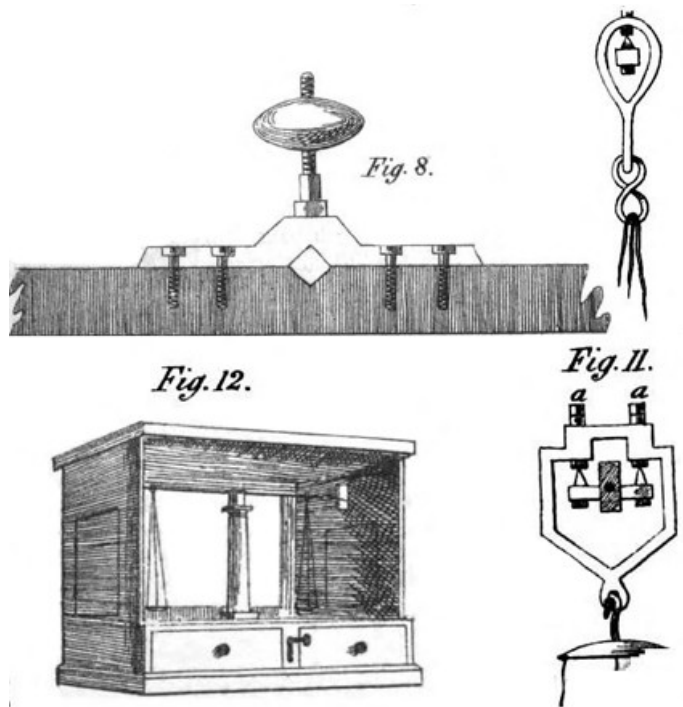
Presumably John Braddock had developed significant financial skills during his time spent as an Examiner in the Accountant General's Office during the early 1820s to equip him for this post.

On 19 July 1837, W Bannister esq, assay master, took charge of the mint, and mint machinery, from Lieut Braddock, for the purpose of conducting the copper coinage.²⁰

15 March 1839, Capt Cordlandt Taylor, artillery to be superintendent of gunpowder manufactory, but to continue to perform duties of deputy principal commissary of ordnance until relieved; and;

Lieut J Braddock to act as superintendent of gunpowder manufactory, during employment of Capt Taylor on other duty or until further orders.²¹

John Braddock's curious career with the Madras Government is only a part of his story. However, once he was properly on the ladder of progress, he must have grown in the esteem of his peers and seniors. He must have been something of a man with a shed, someone who loved tinkering and inventing, but a person who went the next step, by writing and publishing details of his inventions and findings for the benefit of those who followed him.



Detail of Braddock's drawings of his set of balances
(Google Books)

¹⁸ *Asiatic Journal*, 1 Aug 1834, p305, issue 56

¹⁹ *Asiatic Journal*, 1 Dec 1837

²⁰ *Asiatic Journal*, 1 Jan 1838

²¹ *Asiatic Journal*, 1 June 1839

Best known is his authoritative *Memoir on Gunpowder* referred to earlier, which was both reprinted and referred to over many years. He investigated and wrote on diverse topics, which submissions can be found most often in the Madras Journal of Literature and Science. These are some of the matters he commented or wrote about:

Mr Previté's mode of preserving bread for ships etc. This invention was to drive off inherent moisture in bread by moderate heat; then hermetically sealed in tin boxes. When needed the bread is exposed to steam and rebaked lightly and rapidly on the surface. In response to this, Lieut Braddock advised that the same principle had long been practised in Madras where native cooks sprinkle dry hard bread with water, place between two hot earthen pans over a fire, which allows steam to penetrate and soften the mass.²²

A description of a set of Balances made for the purpose of delicate weighing; illustrated by drawings, was the subject of a 7 page letter by Lieut J Braddock²³

And how about this letter on a very different subject:

*Description and drawings of a self-performing barrel organ.*²⁴

John Braddock admits to constructing this about 3 years ago (1832) for his own amusement, all the parts were locally sourced and internal workings made by him to his own design, though he admits the outward casing – a handsome piece of furniture - was made by a cabinet maker.

On Assaying Silver – shows the chemist at work again; he has clearly studied the old literature and methods before developing improvements.²⁵

And lastly:

On the Rule of a Clock with a Wooden Pendulum; and on the longitudinal Expansion and Contraction of Wood

This letter of 10 pages begins: 'Being in the practice of amusing myself during leisure hours in experimental and philosophical pursuits, I took a fancy about a year ago to make an astronomical clock, intending it to be a correct time-keeper.'

John Braddock also engaged in some explorations of the *Seven Pagodas*, sculptures, excavations and diverse findings at Mamallapur. His descriptive pamphlet was subsequently much quoted and republished in 1869 in *The Seven Pagodas on the Coromandel Coast*, edited by Captain Carr.

Lieutenant John Braddock and his wife are known to have fathered five children of whom one, Elizabeth, died aged 2 in 1824. The eldest, Sarah Charlotte Braddock (no baptism found) said to be born 10 December 1819, married John Macdougall in Vepery 8 November 1837 and died in 1906 in Edinburgh, Scotland; John Braddock jr (the ancestor of John Croll) married 28 June 1853 in Singapore to Catherine Moore. He died of snake

²² *J. Asiatic Society*, Calcutta, 1 Apr 1834, p206, issue 28

²³ *Madras Journal of Literature & Science*, 1 Jan 1835, p86-93, issue 6

²⁴ *Madras Journal of Literature & Science*, 1 Oct 1835, p343-356, issue 9

²⁵ *Madras Journal of Literature & Science*, 1 April 1836, p72-86, issue 11

bite near Pulicat on 19 November 1864. Neither Mary Jane Braddock (b.1824, d. Melbourne, Victoria 1901), nor Henry Stephenson Braddock (b. 1830 – d. 1850) married Lieutenant John Braddock, gunpowder expert, auctioneer, chemist, inventor, accountant, actuary auditor, and seemingly a generally good all round fellow, died at Madras on 9 September 1840.

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About the author:

Sylvia Murphy is a Sydney resident who commenced her own Colonial India research in about 1996. Since then she has helped many other Australians during her time as the FIBIS membership liaison for Australia and as a volunteer at her local LDS FamilySearch centre and the Society of Australian Genealogists' library.

The Assassination of Thomas Parr, Resident of Bencoolen

Joanna Cicely Fennell MA PGCert Genealogical Studies

Thomas Parr was the son of Dublin-born Lieut-Col. John Parr, 20th Regiment of Foot, and Sarah Walmesley. He was baptised on 20 Mar 1768 at Wigan, Lancashire. His father John Parr was appointed Governor of Nova Scotia in 1782, a position he held until his death in 1791. The Parr family claims descent from Sir William Parr, brother of Katharine Parr, the sixth wife of Henry VIII. Through his paternal grandmother Eleanor Clements, he was a descendant of Rev. Robert Clements, who settled in Haverhill, Massachusetts in the 17th century.¹ Parr's mother was a member of the Walmesley family of Ince Hall in Lancashire and his maternal grandmother Ann Braddyll was a descendant of Everard Braddyll, cup-bearer to Edward III.² Thomas was educated at the Macclesfield School and nominated to the Bengal Civil Service in 1783 by J Clements of London.³ He worked as a Senior Merchant for the Company for many years before his appointment as Resident of Bencoolen in April 1805. On 1 September 1798, at St John's Calcutta, he married Frances Roworth, sister of Thomas Roworth, a wealthy Bengal merchant.^{4 5}

Thomas and Frances Parr had issue as follows:

1. Frances Harriet Goodla(n)d Parr. She was allegedly born on 7 August 1801⁶ in Bengal.⁷ On 24 August 1824 she married Rev. Roger Carus Wilson at Bath.⁸ She died at Bath on 24 February 1880.⁹

¹ Other notable descendants of the Clements family include Samuel Clemens (better known by his nom de plume Mark Twain) and Mary Clements Osgood, one of the last women accused in the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. One branch of the Irish Clements family became Earls of Leitrim.

² John Burke & John Bernard Burke, *A genealogical and heraldic dictionary of the landed gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*. Volume II. (London: Henry Colburn 1847) p1502

³ IOR J/1/11/160-2. Civil Service recruitment records. J Clements was probably John Clements of Upper Grosvenor St, who was Parr's cousin and godfather. He made provision for both Thomas Clements Parr and Frances Harriett Goodland Parr in his will. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills (1384 - 1858). PROB 11/1596. Will of John Clements of Saint George Hanover Square, Middlesex. 3 September 1817. Accessed online 14 May 2012 www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

⁴ IOR N/1/5/133

⁵ Of Thomas Roworth & Co. He was described as an auctioneer in a list of European Inhabitants of Bengal dated 1805, which also recorded that he had first arrived in India in 1785. IOR O/5/26 Vol.1, List 6

⁶ Sir Charles Fortescue-Brickdale (ed), *Major-General Sir Henry Hallam Parr: Recollections and Correspondence, with a short account of his two sons A.H.H. Parr and G.R. Parr*. (London: T Fisher Unwin Ltd, 1917) p35

⁷ England and Wales Census, 1861, Clifton, Christchurch, Gloucestershire. 369. ED 11. p63. Accessed online 16 July 2012 www.ancestry.co.uk

⁸ *Lancaster Gazette*, 4 September 1824, p3. col. 1

⁹ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1861-1941. 1880. W>Wi p112. Accessed online 16 July 2012 www.ancestry.co.uk

2. Thomas Clements Parr, B.L. He was born on 15 July 1803 and baptised on 16 August 1803 at St George Hanover Square in London.¹⁰ He married Julia Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Charles Abraham Elton, on 6 January 1836 at Clifton, Gloucestershire.¹¹ Thomas Clements Parr died at Clifton on 1 Dec 1863.¹²
3. Emily Ann Parr She was born on 25 January 1805 and baptised on 24 February 1805 at Calcutta.¹³ Emily Ann Parr died in Oct 1806.¹⁴
4. William Parr He was born on 6 December 1806 and baptised on 6 Jan 1807 at Calcutta.¹⁵ He died c.1809.¹⁶

The East India Company presence in Sumatra dates from 1685, when it established a small factory at Bencoolen. Prior to that, the Dutch had enjoyed a monopoly on the pepper and spice trade in the area. The EIC built Fort Marlborough at Bencoolen between 1713 and 1719 to protect its interest in the pepper trade. Bencoolen remained under British control until 1825 (excluding a brief period of French rule in the 1760s), when it was ceded to the Dutch under the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824.¹⁷

Parr's appointment as Resident was no doubt due to his skill as a businessman; his background was not in administration but finance. The small residency of Bencoolen on the west coast of Sumatra had been a constant drain on the Company's finances and a strong hand was needed. A memorandum written in 1809 outlined the deep-rooted problems that the administration faced:

In the year 1785 the Presidency of Fort Marlbro' was reduced to a Residency, and made subject to the control of the Bengal Government.

In the year 1800 the Government of Bengal resolved to commit the charge of the Residency to a Civil Officer with the appellation of Lieutenant Governor who was to be appointed from Bengal, and in whose person were to be united the Civil and Military powers of the Settlement.

In 1801 however the Court observed that the Company has sustained an annual loss of £87000¹⁸ by the Settlement of Fort Marlbro' they therefore resolved that the out residencies

¹⁰ London, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538-1812. Bishop's Transcript. Westminster, St George Hanover Square, 1803, p8. Accessed online 16 July 2012 www.ancestry.co.uk

¹¹ England, Marriages, 1538–1973. 6 Jan 1836. Clifton, Gloucestershire. FHL film no. 1595528. Accessed online 20 May 2012 www.familysearch.org

¹² England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1861-1941. 1864. P. p241. Accessed online 15 July 2012 www.ancestry.co.uk

¹³ IOR N/1/7/70

¹⁴ *Asiatic Annual Register for 1807*, Vol. IX. (London: T Caddell and W Davies; Black, Parry, and Kingsbury, 1809) p218

¹⁵ IOR N/1/7/240

¹⁶ IOR F/4/345/7982 p15

¹⁷ Under this treaty the British gained Malacca.

¹⁸ Approx £2.8 million, based on a conversion of £87,000 in 1800 to 2005. TNA Currency Converter. Accessed online 28 May 2012 www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/

should be withdrawn and the permanent Establishment reduced to a Resident 4 Assistants and 4 Writers the whole expense of which including the Military was not to exceed Dollars 61,610¹⁹ p. Annum.²⁰

Both Thomas Parr, and his successor Richard Parry, would complain about the 'embarrassment' they suffered due to the lack of qualified civil servants at Fort Marlborough.²¹ An example of the disorganisation and corruption that was endemic in the establishment at Bencoolen can be seen in the case of Thomas Blair, who was suspended in May 1806. Resident Parr recorded a minute outlining the impropriety of Blair's conduct as Resident of Sillebar (some 10 miles south of Fort Marlborough). He drew particular attention to the 'violent and unjustifiable exercise of his authority' and also to the 'enormous expense he incurred in the construction of the public buildings at Poola Bay'. He added that Blair had also neglected to pay the customs on pepper, which were owed to the Sultan of Maco Maco.²²

During his short time at Bencoolen, Parr managed to significantly reduce the residency's expenditure. However, his economic policies, though in the interest of the government of Bencoolen, were ultimately what led to his demise. Lady Sophia Raffles, the second wife of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (who became Lieutenant-Governor of Bencoolen in 1817), wrote the following account of Parr's policies:

On the arrival of Mr. Parr great reductions took place in all the public establishments, by which numbers of people were suddenly thrown out of employ, and many reduced to starvation. Trained in the strict practical forms of Bengal, and accustomed to unlimited obedience from a submissive and subjugated people, Mr. Parr unintentionally gave great disgust to by carrying the same arbitrary ideas and principles among a people who require an opposite mode of treatment. He made great alterations in the native courts, without the concurrence or advice of the Chiefs, and occasionally assumed an arbitrary and independent authority in it, which made them fear for their ancient institutions and customs ... In carrying into effect his plans of economy, he certainly proceeded with too much haste, and without due consideration; insults offered on various occasions of some of the principal Chiefs, produced a deep sensation in men of violent and vindictive tempers, and the attempt to coerce the cultivation of coffee appears to have brought the discontent to a crisis ... The country was in a state of revolt; but Mr. Parr was blind to the danger with which he was threatened.²³

Parr's business acumen, while valued by the Bengal Government, incited hostility from local Malay chiefs. His efforts to encourage the cultivation of coffee is generally considered the principal cause of his assassination:

¹⁹ The Sumatran Dollar was the currency of Bencoolen at that time.

²⁰ *Memoranda respecting the Establishment at Fort Marlbro'*. IOR O/6/4 pp691-2

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² IOR O/6/3 pp69-70

²³ Lady Sophia Raffles, *Memoir of the life and public services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles*. (London: John Murray, 1830) pp301-2

It is well known that [the cultivation of coffee] was extremely obnoxious to the local people, and has generally been considered as one of the causes which led to his unfortunate death. The true causes of this melancholy event perhaps lie deeper than the enforcement of a single order...There seems no doubt that the whole of the chiefs of the country were perfectly aware of the attempt to be made on Mr. Parr's life...The country was in a state of revolt, and the circumstances under which the assassination took place, would have justified, and seemed to call for more decisive measures than were used.²⁴

Only two and a half years after his appointment, Parr was murdered in an unexpected attack on his country home, Mount Felix, on 23 December 1807.²⁵ Frances Parr's account of the murder of her husband describes the brutal nature of the attack:

[M]y beloved husband was, on the night of the 23rd of December, torn from his bed by Malays and murdered in my sight, but do not believe that Parr's wife, and your sister, endeavoured, like a coward, to save herself by flight until she had used her weak efforts to assist the father of her children, the dear valued friend and husband of her heart. Not, my brother, until I had my hands and body stabbed did I think of my poor infant boy in the next room...

Yes, they cut off the head of my Parr to take to their chief. Blessed head! Blessed face! But his last breath was mine, He saw me struggle with the first monster who came into the room, to seize his creese²⁶ that I might gain it to defend himself with - all would not do. My hands were cut to pieces, my bosom had four stabs, and I was stamped on and kicked to the other end of the room...

How I should have boasted of them [her wounds] had my Parr's life been spared, and he would have so flattered me for my activity. Why did I not always make him keep arms. But he was displeased when I ever urged it, and asserted: "I never did an injury to any man, I have nothing to fear." From a revengeful assassin he had everything to fear.²⁷

Frances' letter also states that the Malays left Parr's head in the nursery, and they took instead a watch to present to Dion, the Malay chief she believed to have ordered Parr's assassination, as proof that his orders had been carried out. Thomas Parr was not the only victim of the Malay attack on Mount Felix. Both Frances Parr and the Resident's second assistant Charles Murray were injured. Murray died several days after the attack, as a result of his efforts to protect Parr. Frances Parr describes her affection for Murray:

My dear, dear brother, Mr. Murray was a second Parr; can I say more? But his manly heart burst with anguish, he became almost frantic at seeing the beloved form of his friend cut to pieces.²⁸

²⁴ *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register*, Vol. XIII. Jan-Jun 1822 (London: Kingsbury, Parbury, & Allen) p471

²⁵ IOR N/7/1/216

²⁶ An alternative spelling of *kris*, a ceremonial dagger typically worn around the neck

²⁷ Fortescue-Brickdale, pp33-4, Letter from Frances Parr to her brother Thomas Roworth of Coombe Lodge, Blagdon, Somerset, dated 16 January 1808, in which she apprises him of the murder of his brother-in-law.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p33

The unhappy event was widely reported, in dramatic fashion, by many British newspapers. The following report from *The Examiner* provides an account of the events at Mount Felix:

The Dispatches brought by the East-India fleet were opened on Monday at the India House ... A shocking murder was lately committed at Fort Marlborough. A party of about three hundred Malays, finding but few military in the place, attacked the Government House²⁹, and barbarously murdered the Company's Resident, Mr. PARR. Their murderous assault was made in a manner the most sudden and unexpected, but the few troops in the place succeeded in defeating the assailants, and saving the lives of the other British inhabitants, upon the whole of whose lives the Malays are said to have had a design.³⁰

There is no evidence to suggest, as this report claims, that the Malay contingent had any motive other than the murder of Thomas Parr, given that the death of Charles Murray was based solely on his attempts to protect his superior. Frances Parr's injuries were likewise incidental.

The most immediate consequence of the murder was the despatch of two Bengal Marine Regiments to be entrusted to the supervision of Captain James Templer Parlbey 'for the defence of the settlement'.³¹ Local villages were razed and suspects 'hung in chains' and 'blown off from the mouth of a cannon'.³² Mount Felix, which overlooked the bays of Bencoolen and Pulo, was abandoned after the murder and let to fall into ruin.³³ Parr and Murray were buried in adjacent graves within Fort Marlborough, at the Ravelin.³⁴ The following death notice appeared in the *Lancaster Gazette* in 1808:

Lately, at Bencoolen, in the East Indies, Governor Parr (who was massacred by the Malays) son of Mrs. Parr, of Preston. Also the Hon. Charles Murray, son of the late Bishop of St. David's, and nephew of the Duke of Atholl, and of the late Lord Charles Aynsley. He fell a sacrifice to the great exertions he used in the defence of Mr. Parr.³⁵

It appears that Parr's personal finances left something to be desired, as the East India Company offered to pay for the passage of Frances and her son William on their return to England. Thomas Parr's widow and children were provided for in the will of his mother Sarah Parr who died in 1813.³⁶ Thomas's brother Major John Parr of Burrow Hall, Tunstall

²⁹ The attack actually took place at Mount Felix, the country seat of the Resident, located several miles from Fort Marlborough.

³⁰ *The Examiner*, 21 August 1808, p11, col. 2.

³¹ IOR F/4/324/7414 p1 Records of the Board of Control

³² Benjamin Heyne, *Tracts, historical and statistical, on India*. (London: Robert Baldwin; Black, Parry, & Co. 1814) pp872-3

³³ *Ibid.* p400

³⁴ IOR F/4/345/7982 p45

³⁵ *Lancaster Gazette*, 10 Sep 1808, p3, col. 4.

³⁶ Prerogative Court of Canterbury wills (1384 - 1858). PROB 11/1557. Will of Sarah Parr, Widow of Preston, Lancashire, 7 June 1814. Accessed online 2 June 2012 www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

in Lancashire also made provision for his nephew Thomas Clements Parr, who was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford.³⁷

The will of Thomas Parr reveals some interesting information, about Thomas' pre-marital (or extra-marital) affairs. On 30 July 1806, prior to a voyage to Calcutta aboard the *Perseverance*, he made a codicil to his will in which he stated that, in the event that both he and his wife and their children perish, he wished to leave the residue of his estate to his natural children George & Francis Halifax.³⁸ He also requested that a sum of 2,000 rupees be put aside for the purchase of a 'piece of plate for Thomas Roworth [his executor and guardian of his surviving, legitimate, children after the death of their mother] in Testimony of my regard and affection.'³⁹

Frances Parr and her youngest son William sailed for Calcutta after the murder of Thomas Parr, arriving in March 1808. In April of that year Mrs. Parr addressed a memorandum to the Bengal government, which led to some suspicion regarding the conduct of William Byam Martin, Head Assistant to the Resident, who had also been at Mount Felix when Parr was murdered.⁴⁰ Martin had escaped when the house was under attack, but was subsequently cleared of any wrongdoing.



*The monument to Thomas Parr in Bengkulu in 2010. The surrounding paving is recent.
Photo by kind permission and © of Nurul Iman Supardi of <http://potokito.blogspot.co.uk/>*

³⁷ Prerogative Court of Canterbury wills (1384 - 1858). PROB 11/1706. Will of John Parr of Tunstall, Lancashire, 24 Dec 1825. Accessed online 2 June 2012 www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

³⁸ IOR L/AG/34/29/20 no. 28

³⁹ IOR L/AG/34/29/20 no. 28

⁴⁰ IOR/O/6/7 p793

In a further cruel twist of fate, Frances and William Parr never arrived in England after setting sail from Calcutta in 1808/9. In 1810 a Company minute declared that Frances Parr appeared to have been "on board one of the ships which have been so long missing".⁴¹ Some accounts record that Frances died on board the *Georgiana*, however that particular ship was not one of the many vessels lost during 1809. The Company expressed concern for the two remaining orphans of the late Resident and declared its intention to compensate them.

A fine monument was erected in memory of Thomas Parr and Charles Murray, outside Fort Marlborough, at some considerable cost to the EIC. Known as the Thomas Parr Monument, it is still standing to this day and is one of the few architectural reminders of former British colonial presence in Bencoolen. A wooden plaque within the mausoleum, which was still extant in 1963, read:

Here are deposited the Remains of Thomas Parr Esquire
Resident and Representative of the Honourable E.I. Cy.
at Fort Marlborough in Bencoolen who although a benevo-
lent Father to the Malay Inhabitants and solicitous to
improve their Freedom and Prosperity in the prudent and
gradual Introduction of Spontaneous
fell with(out sent)ence of the ... and (unr)ivalled
atrocit(y under the misguided and barbarous Fury of a Band
of Assassins in the Night of the 27th of December A.D.
1807 in the ...th Year of His Age.⁴²

About the author:

Joanna is a FIBIS member and professional genealogist based in Dublin and London. She is the 5x great grandniece of Thomas Parr of Bencoolen. Joanna welcomes correspondence from anyone connected with the Bayley family of Manchester, many of whose members joined the East India Company in the 19th century.

⁴¹ IOR F/4/345/7982 p15

⁴² Alan Harfield, *Bencoolen: The Christian Cemetery & The Fort Marlborough Monuments*, (Putney: BACSA, 1985)

Medals to a Nurse

Allan Stanistreet

Some readers may be aware of my interest in medals and awards and my current interests are medals to the Indian Medical Department, Postal Department, Telegraph Department and medals to women.

Some 35 years ago, I acquired through a dealer friend, who was aware of my interest in women's medals, a General Service Medal 1918-1962 with the single clasp *Iraq*. All campaign medals, save those awarded for World War Two, are normally issued named on the rim and in this case the medal is named to 'T/Nurse W. McGregor'.

As it does not indicate to which nursing service Miss McGregor belonged, I consulted another friend who is an authority on women's medals. His opinion was that it was the Indian Army Nursing Service, or the Queen Alexandra's Military Nursing Service (India), as it was at that time. So far, so good.

I managed to acquire a copy of Miss McGregor's medal index card (MIC), which confirmed her entitlement to the medal and evidenced that her British War Medal and Victory Medal for service in the First World War were issued by the Government of India. The latter tended to confirm that she was a member of one of the Indian nursing organisations.

I have spent many years attempting to discover more about Miss McGregor. Her surname is clearly of Scottish origin and the Scots were probably our greatest colonisers with their descendants being found today in all the countries of the Commonwealth (formerly Empire). However, without having any further information it has so far been impossible to discover anything more about her. I do not even know her Christian name, nor from where she came. My friend who originally advised that she was an Indian Army nurse did tell me that she served at No 12 Indian General Hospital from December 1919. And there the search almost ended.

Recently, I was surfing the net, as they say, when I googled in Miss McGregor's name, more in hope than in expectation. I was rather taken by surprise to find that her name appeared in a Supplement to the *London Gazette*. Researchers into military affairs will know that service personnel appear in this publication for such things as appointments, promotion, retirement and, perhaps most pertinently, medals and awards. I duly clicked on to the relevant page.

The preamble to this particular Supplement, which forms a despatch from Lieutenant-General W.R. Marshall, KCB, KCSI, Commanding-in-Chief, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force and dated 11 November 1918, states, *inter alia*, 'I have the honour to submit herewith a list of names of those officers, ladies, non-commissioned officers and men serving, or who have served under my command, whose distinguished and gallant services and devotion to duty I consider deserving of special mention.' There, on page 2595 of the Supplement to the *London Gazette*, 21 February 1919, under the heading 'TEMPORARY



Nurse McGregor's medals are, from left to right, British War Medal, Victory Medal and General Service Medal 1918 with bar Iraq. The oak leaves on the Victory Medal ribbon signify a Mention in Despatches.

NURSING SERVICE, INDIA' is the name McGregor, T./Nurse Miss W. Her name appears with six other temporary nurses similarly mentioned.

Since I have little hope of ever finding Miss McGregor's missing British War and Victory Medals, I have taken the liberty of adding a genuine, unnamed specimen of each to her General Service Medal. This now completes her group, which, with her Mention in Despatches found in the *Gazette* makes them more attractive than before.

By the very nature of things, women's medals are, even today, much less common than those to their male colleagues and although, clearly, there must

be many more medals to nurses of the Indian Army out there, one rarely comes across their campaign medals today. Medals to members of the Indian Army and Navy, save those to the officers, are extremely difficult to research, though members of the Indian Medical Department may be found in the contemporary Indian Army Lists. However, Miss McGregor was not an officer or warrant officer, so she is not to be found there.

Nurse McGregor obviously soldiered, or nursed, on after the end of the war, since the *Iraq* medal was awarded for service between 10 December 1919 and 17 November 1920. Did she serve on after the end of 1920, since she was still a Temporary Nurse then or did she perhaps go on to serve yet again in the Second World War? I note in the FIBIS Members Interests two members who are interested in the name MacGregor but nobody who lists McGregor as their interest. I would dearly like to know more about this lady who served her country and its troops with such devotion as to earn official recognition of her efforts. Are any of her family out there now? I would appreciate any assistance anyone can offer in tracing the life of this lady.

About the author:

Allan Stanistreet is a medal researcher and collector.

Lost and Found - the records of Pembroke House

Sylvia J Dibbs

For over 174 years Captain John Dibbs was assumed to have been 'lost at sea'. He apparently disappeared from Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, in 1835. John Dibbs was the father of three well-known Australians, the youngest being Sir George Richard Dibbs (1834-1904), the first premier of New South Wales. George grew up without the benefit of a father's guiding hand, John Dibbs having disappeared shortly after his birth on 12 October 1834.

On the other side of the world in the 1970s, the author of this article, quite unaware of these historical events, began researching the Dibbs family. After tracing the line back to a cluster of Dibbs in Scotland in the 18th century, the next project was to try to follow lateral lines forward to the present. With the arrival of searchable databases, this became a fruitful activity and revealed some famous and adventurous Dibbs. Sir George Dibbs of New South Wales was one such character. In the *Who was Who* for 1916-1923, an entry for a Sir Thomas Dibbs, General Manager of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, showed that his father had been a Captain John Dibbs of St Andrews. Both Thomas and George Dibbs were filed away until any compelling evidence for a family connection to the author came to light.

Re-examining the Dibbs family members found in Scotland, the 1841 census showed that an 1827 marriage previously assumed to be for a John Dibbs born in 1790, was not his after all, but the second marriage of his aged father, to a woman young enough to be his daughter. So the younger John Dibbs effectively disappeared from the records after his baptism on 14 November 1790 in St Andrews, Fife, Scotland. Where had he gone?

Assuming that not all Scots emigrated to the far corners of the earth, but went only as far as England, a search for 'Dibbs' born 'Scotland' in the 1841 census for England and Wales produced just one, a John Dibbs, naval officer, aged about 50 years (so born about 1790) residing as a patient in Pembroke House in Hackney, London. An internet search easily established that Pembroke House and its successor the Royal India Asylum in Ealing, London, were lunatic asylums run by the East India Company for its afflicted personnel, many of them sea captains like John Dibbs.

For a while that seemed to be the end of the story, a line had been traced forward as far as possible. It seemed worth doing an internet search for Sir George Dibbs at this point in the hope that something useful might come to light. *The Australian Dictionary of Biography* (online edition)¹ came up in an instant with the significant detail that George's missing father, Captain John Dibbs, was born in 1790. Further search results confirmed that Sir George and Sir Thomas were brothers and also made reference to Captain John Dibbs' birth in St Andrews & St Leonards in Scotland.

¹ <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dibbs-sir-george-richard-3408>

Suddenly a closed line was re-opened. All the East India Company records are kept at the British Library, where they are catalogued and quite easy to access.² The Pembroke House records are in IOR K/2. The most useful were K/2/1, giving an index of patients, K/2/3 giving case histories for the named patients, Case Books K/2/34-39 with nominal rolls and reports on patients' health. Also useful was the Military Department Special Collection L/MIL/5/423 coll 390, which contains correspondence about several insane patients awaiting transfer from India to England.

Here in the India Office Records was John Dibbs. With a great deal of personal detail, it was possible to piece together his life story. It left little doubt that Captain John Dibbs of Sydney had not been lost at sea in 1835, but had landed in India and been taken from there to London. It would seem that originally he had left Scotland for Australia and had eventually ended up in the care of the East India Company in London. How had this adventurous captain travelled so far?

For about fifteen years from 1820, records³ show that he had sailed ships in the South Seas, including the *Endeavour* chartered to missionary John Williams and from which John Dibbs charted the positions of two of the Cook Islands for the first time.⁴ Then an entry from the *Sydney Gazette* under 'Shipping Intelligence, Departures' shows Captain John Dibbs as a passenger, in the company of fellow passenger Captain Carew and his family on the *Africaine*, setting off for Madras on Saturday 15 August 1835.⁵ Dibbs was never seen again in Australia. It may be no coincidence that the East India Company had opened up its trade routes to free traders in 1834. It is also noteworthy that Company officers liked to take their three year furloughs in New South Wales, where the climate was better than at home in England. So John could have been in contact with well-placed people staying in Sydney, who would have heard about the relatively good care given to European 'lunatics' that found themselves in Company territory in India. There was no such care available at that time in Sydney. The Castle Hill Asylum, Sydney, had been opened in 1811 to take 'lunatics' from the gaols, the first medical officer being Dr William Bland, himself a pardoned convict transported from India.

John Dibbs first appears in the records of the European Lunatic Asylum at Bhowanipur in Calcutta, on 28 October 1836 in a letter from the Members of the Medical Board to the Governor of Bengal:

My Lord, We have the honour to recommend that the following persons at present maintained by the Government in the Lunatic Asylum at Bhowaneepore may be provided with passages to Europe in the earliest ships of the season J. McCarthy, W.E.W Hawkins, J.

² Ian A Baxter, *Baxter's Guide to Biographical Sources in the India Office Records* (FIBIS 2004).

³ <http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/>

⁴ Brian Hooker 'The European Discovery of the Cook Islands' originally published in *Terrae Incognitae*, volume 30, 1998, pp54-62, copy at <http://findingnz.co.nz/av/gav22.htm>

⁵ <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2199789> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, Tuesday 18 August 1835

Dibbs. We beg to annex the statements regarding the above insanes for the Honourable Court of Directors.

We have the honour to be the s of J Langstaff 1st MMBd and Jno Swiney 2nd MMBd.⁶

This Calcutta asylum was established in 1817 and was run by Isaac Beardsmore.⁷ Asylums were intended to fulfil a need from about 1787 to treat both the Europeans and the Indian soldiers employed by the British East India Company. Surgeon Beardsmore established his new asylum in a building behind the Presidency General Hospital, with cleaner conditions than earlier institutions, and a garden for the 50 or more European patients. Treatment consisted of bleeding with leeches, the use of opium and morphine and hot baths, not what would be used now, but at least some attempt was made to improve the state of the patients and not simply keep them away from the rest of society.⁸

In the statement of the case of John Dibbs, he was described as having mania furiosa. After some difficulties he 'yielded to advise (sic)' and 'gave such indications of improvement as led me to hope he would soon be restored to a sane state of mind.'⁹ It was not to be.

In his medical records, the write-up of John Dibbs' own statement reports: 'This gentleman states that he was born in Saint Andrews Scotland - his father was a grocer and alive in 1829...His wife and children are in Sydney where he is said to have some property.'¹⁰ A voyage to England, with his new bride, in 1829 is on record in Sydney.¹¹

From 1836 there is correspondence between the asylum authorities and the Bengal Governor's Office finally agreeing that John Dibbs and others would be provided with a passage to England. Concern was expressed that they should be shipped so as to arrive when the weather in England was warm. Unfortunately it would seem no ship's captain was willing to cooperate. There was 'very strong objection to the reception of these very unfortunate people on board a ship'.¹² Letters went to and fro until a Captain Rose of the *Catherine* made a verbal offer on 30 May 1837 to take 'the four insanes' on condition that they remained in separate cabins and on payment of 600 rupees for each one. On 31 May 1837 the Governor of Bengal felt 'compelled to accede to the conditions imposed'. On 5 June 1837 'J Dibbs' is named as having embarked on the *Catherine* for England.¹³

⁶ IOR L/MIL/5/423 1835-1838 Coll 390 Pt I (reverse of folio 53) letter numbered 428

⁷ He married Ann Hyslop on 24 March 1810 at Fort William, Calcutta.

⁸ SD Sharma, *Mental Health: an Indian Perspective*, (1990)

⁹ IOR L/MIL/5/423 1835-1838 Coll 390 Pt I folio 54

¹⁰ IOR L/MIL/5/423 1835-1838 COLL 390 Pt I folio 54

¹¹ Mitchell Library, Dibbs Papers

¹² Letter dated 19 May 1837

¹³ IOR L/MIL/5/423 1835-1838 COLL 390 Pt I Folio 62, letter number 2228

The casebook gives a vivid description of Captain Dibbs' mental condition, describing him as 'furious in the extreme, very violent abusive and troublesome...on one occasion obliged to put the straight jacket on him'. So it must have been a very difficult journey from Calcutta to London for all concerned.

The authorities had to decide who was to pay for all his care. If Dibbs recovered he would be expected to pay for his sea passage. His family would have been expected to pay his fees at the asylum. As it was, he was on his own, the family apparently ignorant of his situation. There is correspondence¹⁴ from East India House in August and September 1843 describing his arrival in London on the *Catherine* and his 'alleged' connection with a Trading Vessel and enquiring of a Dr Williams if there is any reason why John Dibbs should not be placed as a second class patient at the charge of the East India Company. This indeed is what was agreed. The fee was £40 a year in 1818.

There is no proof that John Dibbs was ever employed by the East India Company,¹⁵ but it would seem that the Company took a paternalistic responsibility for any European that strayed into their areas of influence in India. Finally Dibbs was admitted officially to Pembroke House on 25 November 1837. In the admissions book, he was described as a captain in the 'Merchant Service'.¹⁶ The columns requiring details of relatives and noting if they have been apprised are blank. So Captain John Dibbs 'disappeared' for the next 174 years, his fate unknown to his relatives despite his documented statement to the medical officer that he had family in both St Andrews, Scotland and in Sydney, Australia.

Dibbs spent the rest of his long life in the East India Company's care. As was required by law, his condition was reported and recorded annually. He was regularly described as without any alteration since the last report and enjoying good bodily health. After one year he was deemed incurable with a haughty and sullen character. He occupied his time with reading, walking and religious attendance. His personal keeper was one called Davey. Some patients took exercise outside the premises and some were employed in trades learnt in Pembroke House.

Also in the case book for 1846-1849 is a description of the diet for a 2nd class patient.¹⁷ For breakfast each day John would have had one pint of milk with five ounces of thick round bread. For dinner he would have had typically a meal such as that described for Mondays: half a pound of mutton, barley broth, rice pudding, one and a half pints of beer and five ounces of bread. The variants for each day of the week included salt beef, potatoes and batter pudding with carrots especially marked in for Thursdays. For tea he was offered one pint of tea and a thick round of bread and butter. As the last meal of the day, supper consisted of bread and cheese and beer for those who liked it.

¹⁴ IOR K/2/3 Folios 59, 60 and 61

¹⁵ For instance, he does not appear in Anthony Farrington's *A biographical index of East India Company maritime service officers: 1600-1834* (London: The British Library, 1999).

¹⁶ IOR K/2/34 p106

¹⁷ IOR K/2/35

This was what sustained Dibbs for 37 years until his death on 31 July 1872 at the age of 81 years. The records had been kept accurately, as this fits with the recorded birth of John Dibbs in St Andrews on 8 November 1790. He would have been 82 in November of 1872.¹⁸ According to his death certificate he died of 'dementia of 37 years, enlarged prostate and urania poisoning'. By this time the establishment had moved to the Royal India Asylum in Ealing. Pembroke House stood off Mare Street, between Lamb Lane and Warburton Road and the land was acquired by the Great Eastern Railway Company for the building of an embankment for its new line. The new Royal India Asylum in Ealing was built on the Elm Grove Estate, opening in 1870. The East India Company closed this asylum in 1892. Some 500 people with connections to the East India Company passed through the asylums.

John Dibbs was buried from St Mary's Church, Ealing, on 2 August 1872 in the consecrated ground in the municipal cemetery of Ealing and Old Brentford, where EIC patients from the asylum are buried, some with large headstones. His family in St Andrews, Scotland and his descendants in Sydney, Australia, apparently knew nothing about him from 1835 until the author of this article found him again in 2009. His Australian 3x great granddaughter and the author have recently paid their respects at his unmarked plot, 15 G C.

There are some gaps in the continuity of documentation, most especially concerning the mystery of who put Captain John Dibbs in the Calcutta Asylum? If anyone knows of records for the Bhowanipur Asylum in Calcutta, the author would be very interested.

Captain John Dibbs was the first member of the Dibbs family who qualifies as 'a family in India'. Later, his first cousin twice removed, Henry James Dibbs worked for the Bombay Bank¹⁹ and was in the Bombay Volunteer Rifles. Henry's son was born on 9 December 1918 in Bombay. Named Arthur Henry Alexander, he grew up to become Chief Executive of the National Westminster Bank, so, a banker like his Australian cousin, Sir Thomas Dibbs, the son of John.

About the author:

Captain John Dibbs was the younger brother of Sylvia's husband's 2x great grandfather, Thomas Dibbs. They were two of eight children born to John Dibbs and his first wife Elizabeth. The elder John was born 'in England', but settled in St Andrews, Scotland. His Dibbs descendants travelled to all parts of the world, but Sylvia's husband's grandfather got only as far as Truro, the only Dibbs in Cornwall.

¹⁸ John's dying days are described in IOR K/2/39 Case book 1870-1883 p129.

¹⁹ *Thacker's Directories* 1908-1922

A Northumberland Fusilier in India, 1886-1896.

Ruth Sear

My maternal grandfather George Hakin (1865-1945) served with the Northumberland Fusiliers in India, from 1886 for ten years. The family recall an amusing story about his impending marriage. In 1894 George decided it was time to marry, and wrote to his fiancée Ruth Common (1870-1934) requesting she sail to India as soon as possible (he had an impatient and imperious personality). George was distantly related to Ruth and both were from Northumberland. To help finance the trip Ruth took a temporary situation in Bombay, as a nanny with an army officer's family. George received a shock when he went to visit his betrothed, a short time after her arrival. Ruth met him at the house with a baby in her arms (the baby, of course, belonged to the officer's wife). George, who always jumped to hasty conclusions, immediately thought that Ruth had been unfaithful and the baby belonged to her – and he reacted furiously! The misunderstanding was soon explained, and the couple's marriage certificate states their wedding ceremony took place 'according to the rites of the Church of Scotland' in Bombay, on 6 October 1894.

Several years ago I researched George's army career in India. So how did I find out about it? I had his birth, marriage and death certificates from the GRO (as he was in the British Army, his marriage is in the Army Returns of Marriages). George was born in Northumberland in 1865, the sixth of nine children. His mother died when he was thirteen and on his 1894 marriage certificate both George and Ruth's fathers are described as butchers.



Trays and a matchbox holder of Benares brass, given by George's army comrades in 1894 as wedding gifts.

In 2003 I found out from Google that the Fusiliers Museum of Northumberland was situated at Abbot's Tower in Alnwick Castle. I live in Surrey so Alnwick isn't very handy! I contacted the Curator at the Museum who told me that the majority of service records for the time in question were lost to enemy bombing in 1940. If records of my grandfather survived they would be at what is now The National Archives (TNA). In 2007, TNA sent me a copy of my grandfather's First World War medal card¹ and copies of the full army service records² for George Hakin, 1886 to 1917. Below is a synopsis of the records that show the kind of information that these records give about a soldier's time in India. Note how much travelling and movement of troops there was:

¹ WWI Medal Index Cards can now be downloaded, for a fee, from TNA's DocumentsOnline.

² These records are now digitized. As George served in WWI his papers are on ancestry.co.uk.

1886 Apr: George was a coal miner before enlisting as a private in the Northumberland Fusiliers, at Newcastle Upon Tyne, for three years active service and nine years reserve service. His medical history gives his physical condition. Sept: passed Army 3 rd Class Education Certificate. ³ Sept: embarked on <i>HMS Serapis</i> to India. ⁴ Nov to Apr 1887: at Meean Meer, the military cantonment outside Lahore.	1890 Apr: to Ghazial, then Thobba [sic]. Nov: to Nowshera.
1887 March: passed 2 nd Class Education Certificate. Apr: to Dalhousie, India. July: passed 1 st Class Education Certificate. Oct: to Meean Meer. Dec: to Rawal Pindi	1891 June: to Cherat. Promoted to Corporal, 2 nd Batt. Oct: apptd Lance-Sergeant with 2 nd Battalion. Oct: to Nowshera.
1889 April: to Ghora Dhaka August: to Kasauli. December: appt unpaid Lance-Corporal, 2 nd Batt	1892 April: to Cherat. June: Promoted to Sergeant with 2 nd Battalion. Dec: to Peshawar.
	1893 Nov: extended active service period to 8 years.
	1894 January: to Jullundur. March: to Sitapur. October: George married Ruth in Bombay.
	1895 March: embarked on <i>SS Jumna</i> to Singapore.

In 1895 George and Ruth's first child was born in Singapore, a daughter, the first of eight children over thirteen years (one baby died). Sadly, theirs was not a happy marriage.

In 1897 the family returned to Northumberland and in 1900 George was posted to a garrison at Malta and awarded the Queen's South Africa medal with Mediterranean clasp. He returned to England a Colour Sergeant Instructor of Musketry. After 21 years service he was discharged from the army on 28 April 1907; the forms record him as 'a very good honest man, thoroughly reliable'. George spent the next seven years as a colliery policeman. He rejoined the regiment as a reservist at the start of WWI. Enlisting on 5 August 1914, at the age of 49, he must have been one of the first (and oldest) volunteers. A Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant, he was posted to France. In July 1917 sickness saw him declared 'unfit for duty' and given the Silver War Badge as proof.⁵ He was awarded the Star, Victory and British War medals. In October 1944, George wrote to my mother: 'I'm expecting a 25% rise in my army pension...I should therefore get £3 2s a week.' George died three months later, so didn't live long enough to enjoy his extra income.

³ Many hopeful recruits found the 3rd Class Certificate too difficult to pass, so there was a 4th Class Certificate until it was abolished in 1888. After that the Army Certificate of Education comprised three levels, each used for promotion. The 1st Class was the most difficult, involving complicated mathematics, British history and geography (source: <http://www.reubique.com/educatn.htm>).

⁴ *HMS Serapis* was launched in Sept 1866 from the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company at Blackwall, London. Commissioned to transport troops to and from India, in Sept 1875 she carried the Prince of Wales to India to celebrate Queen Victoria's appointment as Empress. In April 1886 the troopship became part of the Indian training squadron. She was scrapped in 1895.

⁵ TNA WO 329 Roll of Individuals Entitled to the War Badge – images available on ancestry.co.uk

Yet more on noses

You will recall that in J26 and J27 we had cause to consider the practice of plastic surgery performed on severed noses. FIBIS member Hilary Shaw read the episodes with interest as she recalled her grandfather's experience in India:

My Grandfather, Dr JO Summerhayes, went out to India as a medical missionary with the Church Missionary Society, before 1900, staying some ten years. He worked in Dera Ghazi Khan and in Quetta, where the CMS had a hospital. For young, newly qualified doctors the mission field can be an exciting experience, since they have to cope with medical emergencies that they would not be allowed to handle in a big London hospital.

Dr Summerhayes said little about professional concerns, but one of his stories was about a Pathan tribesman who came down from the hills, leading his wife with one hand, and holding her nose with the other. He said 'I cut off my wife's nose because I thought she was unfaithful, but now I know that I made a mistake. I want you to put her nose on again.'

We were not told what became of the lady, but the accounts by FIBIS members suggest that she may have indeed been able to go home all in one piece.

Cutting off your enemy's nose was a popular punishment in the Middle East, the Persian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and no doubt the Mughal Empire. Even in the Byzantine Empire, the deposed Emperor Justinian had his nose cut off, but on regaining power he had a silver nose made for him to wear.

***Tracing Your British Indian Ancestors: A guide for Family Historians* by Emma Jolly (Pen & Sword, 2012), 184pp, illustrated. ISBN 978-1-84884-573-2. £14.99**

The publication of this survey of all the major record sources available for India-related genealogical research, and an inexpensive one at that, is certainly a notable event for FIBIS members. Its scope, moreover, is very wide covering not only the India Office Records but also sources in some other repositories such as The National Archives, and very usefully giving links to a large number of relevant websites. In addition the book offers a short history of the British connection with India, and it is equipped with a Glossary, a Chronological Table (one or two omissions here, e.g. the First Afghan War and both Sikh Wars), a list of Governors-General and Viceroys of India, a Bibliography usefully divided by topic, and not least a list of the India Office Records series. This last is particularly welcome by indicating the overall scope of the IOR which it is easy to lose sight of when focussing perhaps too narrowly on purely genealogical sources.

This reviewer, however, must express some reservations. Firstly, the historical chapters: in such a brief survey omission and simplification are unavoidable, but sometimes the simplification goes too far. To take just one example, on page 55, in a discussion on imperial expansion in Africa, we are told that 'the wealth that paid for Britain's exploration, the materials that help to manufacture weapons and feed troops, came largely from India'. Really? Britain's wealth came from its worldwide trade, not just its trade with India, and was India a significant exporter of food, iron and steel to Britain? There are also errors of detail: Madras was not successfully held by the British in 1747 (it was lost to the French in 1746 and not recovered until 1749); Warren Hastings was not 'recalled' but resigned of his own volition, and *Hobson-Jobson* is not a patois used by Anglo-Indians in the sense of Eurasians but a Dictionary of terms in common usage among the British in India. i.e. 'Anglo-Indians' in the older nineteenth century sense of the term. These are not isolated examples. A lesser criticism, indeed perhaps not a criticism at all, is that the tone of the historical chapters seems somewhat anti-British, but the role of the British in India is inevitably controversial and no doubt others will feel the author's standpoint is fully justified; and Jolly does indicate that the vast majority of 'ordinary' British in India bore little responsibility for British political and military policies. But despite all these reservations it can be said that Jolly has at least provided a rough and ready account of British-Indian history which will be very handy for someone coming new to the subject, as must often be the case for many family history researchers who discover an ancestor who lived or served there.

In any case, for the genealogist it is the remaining two thirds of the book, focussing on where to find sources for India-related family history, that will be of prime importance, and this survey will, I think, be valuable to newcomers as an introduction to the field, and perhaps also useful to old hands to remind them of material they might be in danger of forgetting. A chapter each is devoted to five broad categories: military (the East India Company's Armies, the Indian Army, the British Army in India and Royal Indian Air Force); merchants and ships; religion, cemeteries and schools; railways; and probate records. It may be useful to compare this part of the book with *Baxter's Guide to Biographical Sources in the India Office Records* (FIBIS, 3rd edn, 2004, repr 2010). As regards coverage of the India Office Records the two books are probably equally thorough, at least that is my impression after a few random checks seemed to show the same IOR sources cited in both. Occasionally there may be omissions, for example Jolly omits L/MAR/C/652-666 containing 'Descriptions of commanders and officers 1771-1833, giving details of previous service, with indexes' mentioned by Baxter. As regards accuracy Baxter wins hands down. In the thirty years since it was first published no more than two or three mistakes have ever been detected, whereas even a cursory inspection of Jolly has revealed quite a number of errors albeit mostly fairly minor. For example, on page 5 she states that where civil registrations of marriage exist they appear in the main from the 1920s, when in fact the N/11 series covers 1852-1911; on page 66 a reference to IOR: L/Mil/11/104 muddles Embarkation Lists and Soldiers Records in a generally rather confusing paragraph; and on page 70 Jolly correctly notes that after the Indian Mutiny the Company's 'European

Regments became Regiments of the Line, and the Company's Artillery and Engineers became part of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers', but then states 'together these units comprised the British Army in India' when in fact the British Army in India deployed far more units than these, especially infantry and cavalry. Many of the references on pages 139-42 to probate and estate papers omit the part numbers, and Jolly gives no warning that some are departmental administrative files in which individual testators appear only haphazardly. Jolly and Baxter differ in their style of presentation. Jolly's approach is much more conversational than Baxter's, giving snippets of historical or sociological information on the occupational groups whose records she is discussing – they may be no more than snippets but will be useful to the beginner nonetheless. She also provides occasional case studies of actual individuals to show the kind of information which the records may yield. This discursive style is more readable than Baxter's but may sometimes make it more difficult for the reader to get an immediate grasp on the full list of sources on a particular topic and their date range. Baxter's brevity, simply listing the sources, may enable users to home in more rapidly on the files relevant to their purpose, a process which is also assisted by his detailed index of occupations.

So has Jolly superseded Baxter? No. Is Jolly worth getting? Yes, but careful family history researchers will still find Baxter indispensable to check references or to clarify matters where they find Jolly confusing. Jolly's greatest strength is that she does two things which Baxter does not: she looks at non-IOR sources (beyond Baxter's remit), and gives numerous references to online resources available on the Web (non-existent in 1979 when Baxter's guide was written). Not only does this mean that Jolly provides additional information on occupational groups included by Baxter, but she also deals with some groups not covered by Baxter at all, for example British merchant seamen and Royal Naval personnel. For the beginner, at least, these two advantages alone must surely make her Guide worthwhile.

David Blake

P&O A History by Ruth Artmonsky (Shire Publications 2012) pp64, paperback, profusely illustrated, bibliography. Available from the FIBIS Bookshop <http://shop.fibis.org> £6.99, ISBN 9780747811701

Most readers will be familiar with Shire Publications' series of illustrated booklets on historical and heritage topics. This one on the Peninsula and Oriental Navigation Company has an unexpected bonus. There is indeed a brief but serviceable history of the company from its foundation in 1837 through to today including also its role in mail delivery and in several wars not least of which was the career of the *Canberra* during the Falklands War. There is much that is new to me, such as that the peninsula in question was not the Indian one, but the Iberian one – hence the quadripartite flag with blue and white for the House of Bragança and red and gold for the house of Borbón. The description of travel conditions is excellent too.

But the major theme of the book is artistic. Both the décor of the ships and the publicity material put out by the company were highly innovative. The Art Deco style never gained a strong foothold in Britain. TV period dramas such as *Poirot* give the impression that everyone in 1930s England was mad about it. Quite the contrary: the only substantial Art Deco house in England was Eltham Palace designed for the exotic Courtauld family. So it must have been no surprise to well-heeled P&O travellers in the 1920s that the First Class Smoking Room of the *Viceroy of India* was in the Scottish Baronial style, designed by the daughter of the Chairman, Lord Inchcape, The Hon Elsie Mackay, with much heavy oak and leather, and weaponry on the panelled walls. But in the decade that followed – possibly I suspect driven by American tourists who were receptive to Art Deco – all that changed and in its promotional literature the company was unrelenting in its pursuit of the modernism we prize today.

This is an excellent little book and all who want to know how their ancestors travelled to India in the later 19th and 20th centuries will want a copy.

Richard Morgan

Schreyvogel's Mission: Lindau to Trichinopoly, Walford Pears (2011) pp140, illustrated, bibliography, ISBN 9781467966375, Kindle £2.66, Paperback £6.36

Rev Daniel Schreyvogel (1777 – 1840) was a dedicated, formidable, German missionary sent to Tranquebar by the Danish Lutheran Mission in 1804. Familiar to me as the man who baptised my 3x great grandmother's sister in Trichinopoly in 1833, I was keen to read this biography by his 4x great grandson, which draws on sources including the Reverend's letters and diaries to illustrate not only Schreyvogel's life, but also the struggles faced by the missions and Anglican Church in early 19th century India. Schreyvogel arrived at Fort Dansborg in 1804 where the Danish mission was supported by the SPG, SPCK, CMS and other Anglican societies, who weren't permitted to send missionaries to India prior to 1813. In fact his brother-in-law Rev Schnarre was one of the first two CMS missionaries in India.

Walford Pears provides much background history and details important figures in the Church. Although there were instances I felt the details could have been footnoted, on the whole these give much colour to Schreyvogel's world. One such character is the Bishop of Calcutta, Reginald Heber, who accepted Schreyvogel's transferral to the SPCK in 1826 and planned to install him at the ailing mission church in Trichinopoly. The pair travelled to that city together and tragically Heber suffered a seizure and was found dead in his bath just hours after confirming Schreyvogel in post. His large funeral is described in the book and his legacy lives on in the city today, in Bishop Heber College.

Ministering to the lively Indian populace was certainly never dull. During one service at Schreyvogel's church, the ex-Nawab of Kurnool was stabbed to death by an angry Muslim opponent. The complex nature of Indian society was key in what was probably the most important aspect of Schreyvogel's career. He was strongly opposed to the caste system and the book explores this crucial issue for the church at length. Schreyvogel was long

upset by the conflicting principles of caste and Christianity that he witnessed and Pears indicates that he strongly influenced Bishop Wilson's 1833 decision to prohibit the practice amongst Indian converts.

This is certainly an enjoyable book for anyone with an interest in the history of the churches in India or indeed with an ancestor who worked as a missionary in those early days. It suffers a little from a lack of detailed in-text references as this prevents the reader following up issues of interest. Sadly, the illustrations were rendered useless in my Kindle copy.

Sarah Bilton

New: FIBIS Guide 2 now available

Richard Morgan's

An Introduction to

British Ships in Indian Waters: their owners, crew and passengers

Member's price: £3.60 Non-member's price: £5.95

Morgan's new 72-page book provides extensive advice for those researching the lives of seafaring ancestors and their families. Sources for tracing a man's career and retirement are carefully detailed. Records for passengers are also well covered.

The five sections of the book take in: the HEIC Maritime Service; Country Ships (Free Mariners); 'Interlopers'; the HEIC Marine Service; and Independent commercial shipping (steam ships).

With historical background and numerous examples from original sources woven into the text, this new Guide is useful for researching any ancestor whose life connected with the sea. Considerable reference is made to the India Office Records as well as those at other archives and in books and online resources.

Purchase online through the FIBIS Shop – shop.fibis.org