

# **The Journal of the FAMILIES IN BRITISH INDIA SOCIETY**

**Number 29**

**Spring 2013**

## **Contents**

Editorial.....	2
The Clark Brothers – Life in the Bengal Army .....	3
Charles Gordon Clark	
Distant Relations Discovered – A Bencoolen Family Reunited .....	15
James Trelawny Day	
From Agra Fort - George Collett's letters to Mountstuart Elphinstone .....	19
By Valmay S Young	
Assistant Surgeon RLW Beveridge, Indian Medical Department.....	27
Allan Stanistreet	
The British Indian Civil Service .....	29
Peter Bailey	
A Parsonage in Madras: Elizabeth Sharp's letters .....	37
Diana Bousfield Wells	
Sir Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe - Director of the HEIC.....	48
George Buxton	
Review .....	51

## **Contributions:**

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

Material should be sent via email to [fibis-editor@fibis.org](mailto:fibis-editor@fibis.org) or to 80 Brighton Road, Watford, Herts, WD24 5HW

© Families in British India Society and the individual authors, 2013

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

*Where personal opinions are expressed, the opinion reflects that of the author and not those of the Trustees of FIBIS or of the organisation.*

***Some images have been removed from this pdf version for copyright reasons.***

## Editorial

Editing this edition of the *FIBIS Journal* has given me the opportunity to read a number of family letters as several articles are based on them. In my family, we have scarcely any personal papers from before the First World War (except photographs) so I cannot help but flush a little green at those of you who have a wealth of such documents. Of course, my mild jealousy is outweighed by my gratitude to those who find a way to share their treasures with the rest of us, be that by putting them online, writing articles or books, placing them in archives or by the simple kindness of sharing their contents with a correspondent met online or perhaps through our members' interest list.

The unique nature of life in India renders even ordinary lives just a little bit more interesting and exciting for the researcher than many a quiet life lived in Britain. Letters were often written against the backdrop of momentous events. Those held by Charles Gordon Clark from his 19th century military ancestors, which he has used as the basis for an article tracing their fascinating lives in India (p3), are simply letters amongst siblings. Yet, thanks to the fact these men are stationed in India at times of significant military action their usefulness for general and family historians is great. Anyone with officer ancestors of the period cannot fail to draw something of their own relatives' lives from the detail the Clarks provide of theirs.

Likewise the letters uncovered by Valmay Young, from her ancestor George Smith Collett to the former Governor of Bombay (p19). Although their subject is a personal family matter, they are interesting in their entirety for anyone with civilian ancestors caught up on the edges of the Mutiny as they illustrate the mindset these circumstances instilled. Not in any immediate danger, George's thoughts are of the future and yet he is acutely aware of movements in the surrounding countryside. I know that a number of FIBIS members (including me) also had ancestors in Agra Fort and although George's letters are a little difficult for the modern reader, as they are dense with information, I found the insight they gave of my own ancestors' lives very useful.

Domestic life is just as important for those of us trying to understand our ancestor's time in India and it is an area not often detailed in more formal sources. Letters are therefore an excellent resource for home-life and from p38 Diana Bousfield Wells tells us of the collection she inherited. Written by a newly-wed young woman experiencing life as the head of her household in Madras, Elizabeth Smith's letters to her family in England are accompanied by precious photographs of the interior of the house she describes.

Finally, sharing your family papers is not only beneficial for those of us who can then read and enjoy them. As a result of publishing his family's early 19th century letters James Day received a letter of a very modern kind, an email from someone researching the same family. The resulting contact solved mysteries for them both (p15). Sharing information is the most important way a family historian can help other researchers. It can only have positive outcomes for all of us.

Sarah Bilton

## The Clark Brothers – Life in the Bengal Army

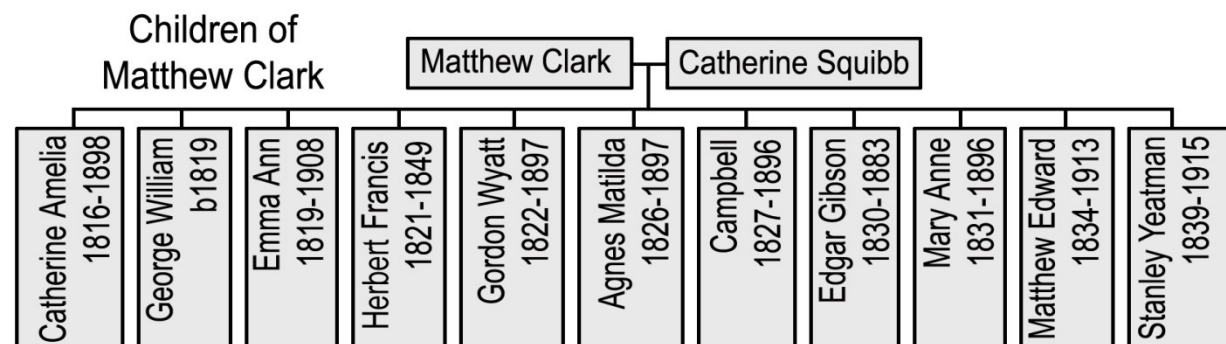
Charles Gordon Clark

In the previous article (*FIBIS Journal* 28), we saw that 18 year old Edward Squibb went to Bengal in 1818 with the East India Company's army and died there aged just 23. His letters, still in the family, tell a story of boredom whilst the young cadet waited for promotion. Squibb's nephews, the Clark brothers, would follow in his footsteps, travelling to India as young military men. Their letters home, written during the Sikh Wars and the Indian Mutiny tell of a quite different side to military life.

Edward Squibb's sister Catherine was married to Matthew Clark and the first of their sons to serve in India was Gordon Wyatt Clark, who went to Bengal in 1842, aged 20. Gordon's education had probably prepared him for Bengal better than Edward Squibb's had. Those who were to work in India, even in the military, increasingly needed technical skills and Gordon studied engineering at the new King's College in London.

'John Company' officers were appointed by the East India Company's Court of Directors in England, and held a commission from the Commander-in-Chief, India, which gave them authority in the British Army – but only east of the Cape of Good Hope. This was one of the things that made for constant friction between the Company's officers and those of the regular British Army. Gordon received a nomination to the Bengal Establishment from John Masterman, an MP for the City of London.<sup>1</sup> HEIC directors like Masterman, a banker of Lombard Street, had a fixed quota of these essential nominations. Cadets were 'recommended' to them by a friend or acquaintance. After nomination the cadet had to forward to East India House his formal application, a certificate of age, and relevant testimonials, and then appear before a committee.

The journal Gordon wrote on the boat to India has survived; the most interesting thing being the great uncertainty as to how long the voyage would take – the passengers ran a sweepstake on it! After a week's seasickness he wrote pretty cheerfully about the voyage. A month into the journey Gordon discovered that a Colonel Benson was giving lessons in Hindustani to some of the cadets – but there were so many sons of Benson's old friends, including those of a general, two colonels, and three majors, that he did not think he would be able to join. However a Captain Taynton kindly gave him instruction in 'Perspective' – he had not had the advantage of the 'military drawing' classes at Addiscombe.

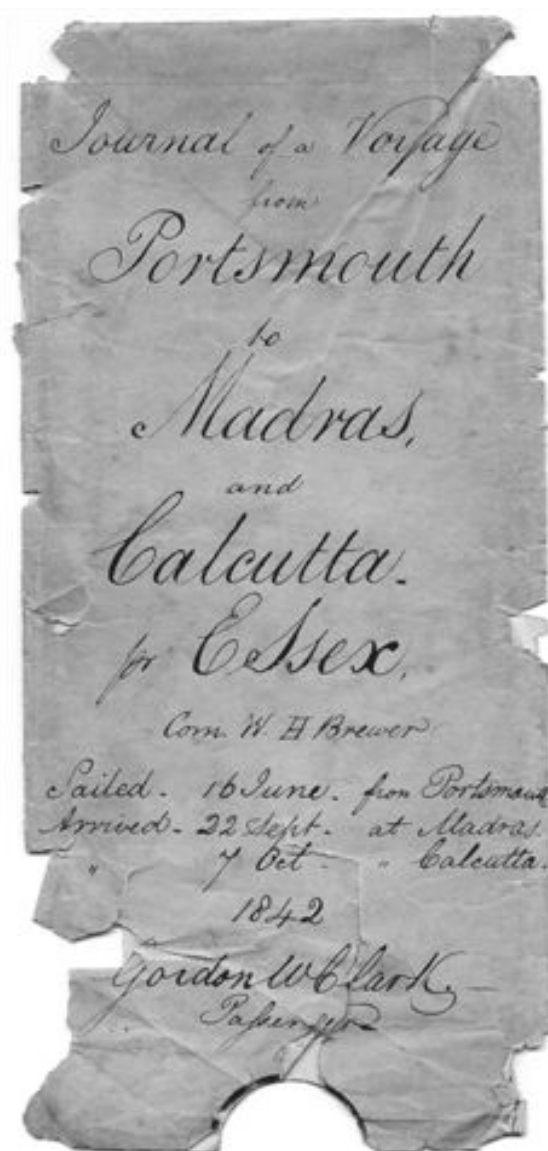


<sup>1</sup> IOR L/MIL/9/200/466-71 Cadet papers 1841-2

Although inventions in marine engineering were 20 years old, Gordon still travelled out on a sailing vessel.<sup>2</sup> Once steam vessels became the norm, communications within the British Empire were revolutionised. Edward Squibb's letters in the early 1820s had taken on average over six months to get home; the Clarks' letters of the late 1840s could take as little as six weeks. They mostly travelled to Suez, overland on the isthmus to Port Said, and on by steamer to Marseille.

Gordon went first, like his uncle Edward Squibb, to the training battalion at Dinapore and was then posted to the 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry (BNI), joining them at Jumalpoore. He only served three years in India, before being called back to London to assist his father in the family business. Gordon hated coming back to 'the drudgery of a city life' after 'the delights of "John Company's" service'. He once told his son Harry that 'during the first year [home] he was sorely tempted to throw it up, enlist and return to India as a private soldier.'

Over the next few years, two of Gordon's brothers would join the Company army and they sent home many letters to their ex-Bengal brother in London.



The front page of Gordon Wyatt Clark's journal of his voyage to India.

### Campbell Clark – an Addiscombe cadet

Campbell Clark, the next brother down from Gordon, was sent to Addiscombe, the East India Company's military academy (or 'seminary') near Croydon.<sup>3</sup> Here the cadets, who entered between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, took a two-year course costing £30 a year in military subjects (fortification and military drawing), Hindustani and other oriental

<sup>2</sup> In fact Gordon must have been one of the last to *sail* to India; in that same year of 1842 an MP gloated in the House of Commons: 'A most powerful steam flotilla has been created...They have made the communications between India and England regular and quick – they have opened the Indus to British commerce – they have displayed the British flag, for the first time in history, on the Tigris and Euphrates.' Hansard HC Deb 23 June 1842 vol 64 cc492-493

<sup>3</sup> IOR L/MIL/9/202/537-42 Cadet Papers 1842-1843

languages, mathematics and mechanics. There was also the opportunity to study classics, French, geology and chemistry.

Campbell went out to India in 1845 aged barely eighteen, just after Gordon came home. He would not come back to England for eleven years; some of his letters to Gordon can sound a bit homesick, but from the first two it is clear that he was in his element in India. By December 1845 he was with the 2nd Bengal (European) Light Infantry, stationed at Sukkur, on the Indus River in Sindh. This province had only recently come under British rule, conquered by the elderly General Napier in 1843, who had considerably exceeded his instructions: *Punch* printed a cartoon of him labelled *Peccavi* (I have sinned), a witty pun suggested by a 17 year old girl.

Campbell's first letter to his big brother Gordon gives a charming picture of his attitude:

I think I have most certainly got among as gentlemanly a set of fellows as I could find anywhere with but one fault and that is that I think they are inclined to keep up the honour of the Corps rather too extravagantly, that is to say they do not care how high the mess bills are nor how much they are in debt as long as their creditors do not bother them..., all of which is very well for those that afford the thing...but for myself as you know it won't do and though I join the Mess yet I am out of debt and intend to be so, but it is hard work I can assure you for as you know certain things must be subscribed for and certain things kept up for such a Corps which it would be difficult to name but which one falls into just as one falls into companionship. I do not mind these things as long as I can keep within my pay but I...entertain a dread of getting at all into debt ... What hangs upon my mind is that I have got to buy a Tent & a horse for marching and where on earth I am to raise the money I know not. I was obliged to shoot my horse on the March from Kurrachee [Karachi] to Katree [?] and in consequence to buy a Bazaar tat for 25 Rupees which I am sure will some day break my neck as he stumbles at every third pace and during the march over rough ground in the nights it is not exactly comfortable.<sup>4</sup>

His money worries had been solved by the time he wrote to Gordon six months later: 'My Father's kindness in remitting me the £50 was as you may suppose most heartfully felt by me.'

One decision was made early by Campbell:

Don't trouble yourself about my getting married. I have one instance of a Captain Naylor<sup>5</sup> of ours who has eight uneducated children growing up around him now - Entre nous, he drowns unpleasant thoughts in company with Bacchus and as they must be ever present so Bacchus is never very far absent. Don't let this slip out any-where as he is in his heart as good a soul as ever lived and was more so 20 years ago, so I should not like any-one to hear any-thing about the matter. However tis a fact and wife & children are alike all pitied by the Corps.

We may smile at such a decision made aged 18, but from it Campbell never wavered. Perhaps Naylor's death at 50 helped his resolve.

---

<sup>4</sup> Written 31 December 1845, Sukkur. Campbell was 18 and a half.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Henry Naylor was the most junior (tenth) captain when the 2nd European Regt was reformed in 1839 (*Asiatic Journal* 1840). He was born 1804, married Maria Gowan 1830 in Delhi and died a major in 1854.

To Campbell's disappointment, the 'Corps' was not going to the Punjab, to take part in the Sikh War. In his second letter<sup>6</sup> to Gordon he wrote:

You cannot imagine the rage and disappointment of our Officers and men when we found ourselves balked of all opportunity to distinguish ourselves. Certainly our Corps was not raised for fighting but merely to see what amount of bodily fatigue and exertion could be borne by European troops.

They had to wait another two years to see a battlefield, and then took part in the campaign of 1848-9 known as the Second Sikh War. They fought at the battles of Chillianwallah, where the Sikh forces resisted, and Gujrat, where Gough finally defeated them. The regiment suffered severely at Gujrat, and in 1850 received the distinction of being called a Fusilier regiment as a reward. There were ructions in the regiment though; a captain had accused a major of cowardice and was court-martialled for the accusation. Campbell took the traditional army line; impugning the honour of the regiment was unforgiveable. One is reminded of how in *War and Peace* Denisov and all the senior officers wished to hush up the theft of the purse, when the callow young Rostov thought the thief should be exposed. However, such problems all brought promotion nearer, 'except that if it takes place that I shall have to pay pretty nearly all my Batta for it'. Batta was one of the benefits of the East India Company's system, a rather complex special allowance of extra pay which might be '12 months' or '6 months'. In fact, Campbell had become a lieutenant when he was 20 in August 1847 and he would not be promoted to captain until November 1859.

After the war Campbell's regiment was stationed near Lahore, and he wrote<sup>7</sup> to Gordon that

Lahore being now one of those stations where a large body of Troops is collected, there is as you may suppose a great deal of duty, insomuch so that I am hardly ever free from duty of some kind such as District Regimental Courts Martial, Courts of Inquiry Committees, Regimental duties &c &c. I am of course speaking generally as I do not mean to say that I never have a day to myself, and although the duty is heavy yet I would just as soon do it as long as I am in good health.

He was looking forward to moving on to Agra 'as we shall have everything comparatively cheap and as it is no longer a large station for Troops we shall be able to live quietly and shall I hope remain there for three years', as they indeed did.

### Edgar arrives

Meanwhile another Clark brother, Matthew's fifth son Edgar Gibson Clark, had also come out to Bengal, still seventeen when he got a cadetship in November 1847.<sup>8</sup> Campbell, nearly three years older, had ideas of going to Calcutta to meet him, 'although I fear not as it will be an expensive pleasure.' Edgar went not to Dinapore, but to Benares. The adjutant there was Donald Stewart, whose memoirs give an amusing account of his difficulties in

---

<sup>6</sup> Written 22 May 1846, Subathar

<sup>7</sup> Written 5 November 1849, Andakulee [Anarkulee, now Anarkali], Lahore.

<sup>8</sup> IOR L/MIL/9/216/627-32 Cadet papers 1846-1847

dealing with the 'rawness and high spirits' of these 'young gentlemen [who] were forwarded in batches from Calcutta... schoolboys, easily amused, and delighted with any form of diversion which presented itself... They had to be drilled, morning and evening, and to be generally looked after at mess, and at all other times.'<sup>9</sup>

Edgar's first letter<sup>10</sup> is certainly very schoolboyish. He speaks of lying around all day in those odd clothes, pyjamas, when not on duty, and of being caught in a sudden 'dust storm' when out riding. It was too expensive to join the mess of the 9th Native Infantry, he could live more cheaply 'at home' (a bungalow). He had 'Silver Spoons & forks [and] crested knives', not to mention the crested signet ring with which he sealed his letters (still up to 1849 without envelopes). Matthew Clark's sons overseas must have been quite an expense to him! By his second letter three months later,<sup>11</sup> Edgar had got into the debt that Campbell had been so keen to avoid, but he said nine out of ten 'griffs'<sup>12</sup> in the regiments at Benares were in the same position.

Edgar was posted to the military cantonment of Bandah, south of Cawnpore, with the 21<sup>st</sup> Native Infantry. This was to have the distinction of being the only Bengal native infantry regiment that did not rebel in the Mutiny of 1857. He found himself serving under his cousin, Colonel Henry Cox (as mentioned in Part I, *Journal* 28), who invited him to stay in his own house. This Edgar did until Cox went to recuperate at the newly founded hill station of Naini Tal, in the foothills of the Himalayas. 'Since the Colonel's departure I have been living with two of my Brother Officers by names Wild[e] and Webster two of the nicest fellows in the Corps'; Wilde, nephew to the Lord Chief Justice and future Lord Chancellor Thomas Wilde, had been at Addiscombe with Campbell, who it seems Edgar was



*Campbell Clark, while an ensign in the Bengal Fusiliers, 1845, when he was 18.*

---

<sup>9</sup> Later Field-Marshal Sir Donald Stewart, he was the Commander-in-Chief of the Army in India for five years in the 1880s. Stewart's life is detailed in *Sir Donald Stewart: an account of his life, in mainly his own words* by GR Elsmie (1903).

<sup>10</sup> Written 17 May 1848, Benares.

<sup>11</sup> Written 23 August 1848, Benares.

<sup>12</sup> 'Griffin' was slang for a newly arrived European in India.



fairly regularly in touch with. Like Campbell and Edward Squibb before him, Edgar was busily reckoning on promotions, noting 'steps' he had already advanced, and saying hopefully that there was 'every chance of promotion, if the officers will but buy out the Captains'. Purchase of commissions was to outlast the East India Company by 20 years.

In his 1849 letter Campbell wrote that 'Edgar's Regt goes to azeerabad [Wazirabad] one of the new Punjaub Stations – I am sorry for this as he will have to build a House in all probability. At all events he must buy if he does not build, but the present site of the Cantonments is I believe to be changed to a place about 40 miles off in which case he must of course build.' This is an unexpected sidelight on the living conditions of very young East India Company army officers. The cantonment at Wazirabad was removed to Sialkot in 1855 on account of the unhealthiness of the place.

No more letters from Campbell or Edgar survive from before the Indian Mutiny, but we know that Campbell served in the Second Burmese War of 1852, which ended with the British annexing the province of Pegu. Edgar and Campbell never met up in India before the Mutiny, although they corresponded – a rather telling feature about life in that huge country.

Edgar stayed with the 21st Regiment of BNI. In early 1855, when a lieutenant of not quite 25, he married Elizabeth Parker at Roorkee, a cantonment town north of Delhi. Elizabeth was the eldest daughter of a major in the 58th Regiment of BNI.<sup>13</sup> Nine months later, in November 1855, Elizabeth had a son, Edgar Matthew Clark and she was pregnant again before the end of 1856. She and the children were to suffer an awful fate.

### **The Indian Mutiny**

Although there was no widespread movement for national independence – there was no conception of an Indian nation – there were grievances which grew during the 1850s, partly from the effects of what the government hoped were reforms. Reorganisation of land tenure, remarriage of Hindu widows, threats to the caste system, and above all the activities of Christian missionaries, all caused resentment. One of the most resentful sectors of Indian society were the sepoys, many of whom were Brahmins, the highest caste, who felt their superiority threatened. In 1857 the grievances focused on the fact that some cartridges were smeared with animal fats. Grease had to be used for the new Enfield rifles, and cattle were sacred to Hindus, pork prohibited for Muslims. In the Bengal Presidency, along the valley of the Ganges, where the holiest places for Hindus were, the sepoys rose in mutiny. Campbell and Edgar Clark were both stationed in the area and it affected them deeply.

When the Mutiny broke out, Edgar was working in the Oudh civilian administration, stationed at Gonda, about 60 miles from Lucknow. There were only ten Europeans in the

---

<sup>13</sup> IOR N/1/87/153 19 Feb 1855. Elizabeth's father was Major Neville Anburey Parker who had recently died at a hill station where he had gone with lung problems



whole station, and the women lived what Elizabeth Clark's new friend Katharine Bartrum<sup>14</sup> described as 'the peaceful and retired life of an Indian officer's family in an up-country station.' Mrs Bartrum's diary<sup>15</sup> gives a poignant account of Elizabeth Clark's experience during the Mutiny. By 29 May, the men 'talked of sending Mrs. Clark and myself, with our children, down the river in a native boat to Calcutta, which we strongly opposed; for it would be better to die with our husbands than leave them alone; but our precautions would have been unnecessary for God has disposed the hearts of this people to be favourable towards us, and now we do not feel so much cause for alarm.' But a week later the alarm increased and Edgar and Elizabeth Clark spent their last night together in the Bartrums' bungalow. On 7 June, explained Mrs Bartrum,

'at 4pm a messenger arrived from Secrora, saying that Sir Henry Lawrence had desired that the ladies and children from the out-stations should be sent into Lucknow immediately for better security. ...the ladies would start from [Secrora] at eight the same evening, and advised our joining them, that we might proceed together into Lucknow... At six in the evening, Mrs. Clark, myself, and our two children started on elephants; Mr. Clark and my husband accompanying us as far as Secrora, sixteen miles distant, where we were to join the other ladies, and proceed together to Lucknow. We took a circuitous route in order to avoid coming in contact with the Sowars [mounted soldiers], who had been turned out of the station that morning. A native went before to show us the way, and great was my fear lest he should lead us into some village where we might be surrounded by mutinous sepoys. We reached Secrora at 11 p.m., and found to our dismay that the party had left the station two hours previously, so that our only chance was to journey on until we overtook them. We stayed for half-an-hour at Mr. Wingfield's, where we had some tea and milk for the children, and then bid farewell to our husbands. They put us on our elephants.

When they arrived at Lucknow Elizabeth and her small son Edgar Matthew stayed first at the Residency, but on 20 June joined Katharine Bartrum at a house called the Begum-Khotie, as Elizabeth's baby was expected soon. Mrs Bartrum noted 'she would rather be with me than any one else, though she has had many more comforts where she has been than she can have in our crowded room. Her little boy is beginning to look very sickly; he was always an extremely delicate child; and this intense heat, the crowded room, and want of fresh air, are felt even by the strongest.' There were already fifteen people sharing the room when Elizabeth joined them.

Lucknow was soon besieged and, as at Cawnpore nearby, conditions became terrible. Edgar had gone through the jungle to join a force of Gurkhas who were marching to the relief of Lucknow. On 15 September he wrote a long letter to Gordon from Jaunpore (north of Benares). He told him about the cartridge issue, but that he was convinced that the 'Mussulmans' (Muslims) were more behind it at first than the Hindus. He wrote of the trials of 'poor Wheeler', the elderly general in command at Cawnpore where dreadful massacres

---

<sup>14</sup> Katharine Mary Bartrum was married to Assistant Surgeon Robert Henry Bartrum who had joined the station eight months before.

<sup>15</sup> *A Widow's Reminiscences of the Siege of Lucknow*, published in 1858.

had taken place, who had been deceived into thinking that Nana Sahib would be loyal. Eventually he wrote heartrendingly of his own personal fears.

At Lucknow the garrison holds its own bravely and though not consisting of above 600 fighting men (even if so many) yet the enemy, though they amount to 14 or 15 thousand, can make no impression on the fortification, but the same accounts also say that proper food for Ladies and children is scarce. What old fellow can I expect? I may not expect a miracle! And yet without the most marked and most merciful interposition of Providence how can I expect to see my dear, dear Wife and child again. Put yourself in my position in imagination and when we think that if not already in heaven my wife must be daily harass[ed] with anxiety, trials and hardships & that in all probability she is seeing her first and only child become thinner and thinner every day and may be rapidly sinking to his grave & when one thinks of this what must his feelings be. If you can imagine them you have some slight idea of my feelings now.

...For my poor child I always had gloomy forebodings but of my wife I should have none were it not that I know she expected her confinement the latter end of last month or beginning of this & how can I with any reason expect that when she is in this state with the great anxiety on her mind about her poor child and with the roaring of guns, the rattling of musketry & the howling nay yelling of thousands of infernal drums almost daily taking place that she will survive everything. No! I cannot expect it!! But still dear Gordon I sometimes fancy I hear a sort of still small voice saying hope! hope! to the last and trust in Providence! God grant that my fancy may not err or that the fancy may not be a suggestion of the "Evil-one" - Daily expectation and daily anxiety is now what alone occupy my thoughts. I myself am helpless but I know a brave and good General is doing his best to reach the place where my heart's treasure is and that he expects to be there by the 20 or 24 of this month. Only a few days!! Yet I dread the result of these few days & at the same time cannot help having some hope.

Edgar's fears were realised; his son, newly born daughter and wife all died in Lucknow and had been dead more than six weeks when he poured his heart out to Gordon. Mrs Bartrum wrote of their deaths:

July 20 - Mrs. Clark was confined today; what a scene does our room present: nine of us in it, and poor Mrs. C. so ill that she ought to be kept perfectly quiet...

July 29 - Mrs. Clark seemed easier this morning: we fancied she was better, but it was not really so. She told me she wanted to sit up, and asked me to bring her boxes and pack them up as she was going on a long journey and must have everything prepared. I did what she wished, sorted her things and put them back in the boxes. 'Thank you,' she said, 'now I am quite ready: the doolie is here, but the bearers have not come.' Yes, she was ready to depart and the angels were waiting to carry her to her bright home above. I gave her some arrowroot, and from that time she never spoke again, but seemed to be quietly dosing all day. In the evening we saw that she was rapidly sinking: Mr. Harris came and read some of the Visitation prayers and baptized the little babe; there was no one to ask what it should be named, and we called it after its mother. Oh! it was a mournful scene: that poor young thing and her child dying far away from all she loved. She was one of those gentle beings who could not struggle through hardships and trials such as we then had to endure... She was unconscious for some hours before she died, and about midnight her spirit gently passed away to 'that land where the inhabitant shall no more say I am sick.' Now we have two motherless children left to our care.

July 31 - My poor friend has been carried to her last abode this morning. The infant is sinking: it is strange it has lived so long...

Baby Elizabeth died two days later and young Edgar followed within a fortnight.

It is not surprising to find Edgar Clark sympathised with the desire for revenge: 'The European soldiers are fearfully enraged at the mutiny and they vowed a dreadful fearful and full revenge and I sincerely trust they will take it...were I with a European Corps I would rather urge them to revenge than do otherwise'. The British indeed did take a fearful revenge. A friend who went to Lucknow in 2007 wrote to me: 'The British left what remained of the Residency buildings as a lasting memorial. Shell marks on all the buildings and most of them nothing but shells themselves. All very poignant and it gives a different picture of what the Raj meant to the various participants, since to the Indians, the Sepoys are now considered freedom fighters and worthy of memorialization themselves.'



*The ruins of the Residency, Lucknow, in 2007.  
Photo © Robert Freidus.*

As for Mrs Bartrum, she heard that her husband was killed at the end of September,<sup>16</sup> was able to leave Lucknow at the relief in mid November, had more privations on the journey to safety, and sailed for England in February. Her son died just before she sailed.<sup>17</sup>

### **A war trophy**

Edgar very much hoped to see Campbell for the first time in thirteen years because Campbell had been on home leave at last, and returned when the Mutiny broke out in July. Whether they did meet in 1857 I don't know. Campbell was unable to join his own regiment which was before Delhi, and was attached to the 88<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot. At some point he was ambushed and 'took a war trophy from a Sepoy'. The 88<sup>th</sup> had recently gone out to India and were before Cawnpore on 25 November. Campbell was unimpressed with the

---

<sup>16</sup> Asst Surgeon Bartrum was killed during the first Relief of Lucknow, on 26 Sept 1857.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Spilsbury Bartrum, born 17 Feb 1856 (baptised Dinapore 3 Mar 1856), died 11 Feb 1858, Calcutta. He had been unwell since the siege.

Regiment's quality. Of the 27 November, Campbell told Gordon, 'we were quite beaten... and it was my first experience of a defeat which I did not find by any means so pleasant as victory to which I have been accustomed';<sup>18</sup> he was shot in the stomach at point blank range in a sortie from Cawnpore. At first thought mortally wounded, he made a partial recovery that he largely attributed to Deputy Collector J Power who removed him and another officer from the 'general hospital' on 7 December and gave them his own bedroom.<sup>19</sup> From there survive three letters Campbell wrote to Gordon between 4 January and 16 February 1858. From one of these we learn that when wounded Campbell had been wearing a flannel shirt, merino under-waistcoat, dyed blue trousers, and a red flannel uniform jacket. The jacket has survived in the family, complete with bullet hole, and was recently deposited in the National Army Museum.

Campbell wrote that he hoped to 'regain sufficient strength [and] dâk down to Benares,<sup>20</sup> so that Ted and I may have a meeting, as I do not see why we should not see each other before we get shot...It must be a sad thing for him to find himself suddenly without wife and child'. But in the third letter, written just before Campbell left for Calcutta, he says that Edgar is still with the Gurkhas and so he would not be able to see him. Campbell had hoped to have recuperative leave at a hill station, but when the doctors recommended he return to England, he gradually accepted the seriousness of his condition – 'I try hard not to complain even to myself but every now and then the thought will come uppermost that I am crippled for life... I want very much to get an opinion on my wound from two or three first rate men at Home which will enable me to decide in my own mind whether I am to be a useless piece of lumber for the rest of my life or not'. What could his service future be? The doctors were inclined to think that 'Staff Employ' would be the most he could hope for. He was 30, and committed to a career with the infantry.

### **Life after the Mutiny**

In a splendidly resilient way Campbell decided to return to London via Trieste 'as it seems to me in this life if one ever puts off doing a thing when opportunity offers, it does not occur again'.<sup>21</sup> That meant taking only a portmanteau on from Alexandria while the rest of his baggage went by sea to Southampton, where he was resigned to having to pay duty on 1500 to 2000 cheroots!<sup>22</sup> He also paid Deputy Collector Power back for his kindness by taking home for him a box of Indian finery – cashmere shawls and gold-embroidered

---

<sup>18</sup> Letter written 4 January 1858, Cawnpore.

<sup>19</sup> This was a J. Power, son of a retired Major General.

<sup>20</sup> That is, travel by relays of bearers or horses.

<sup>21</sup> By now the general route to and from India was to go up the Red Sea, cross the Suez isthmus, the Suez Canal not yet built, take a steamer for Marseille or some other southern European port, and continue by railway to the French or Belgian coast.

<sup>22</sup> Indian cigars

'Kincarb stuff'<sup>23</sup> – but he emphatically did not want to be landed with paying the duty on these and left Gordon the job of getting someone to contact Power's father.

While still in Cawnpore, Campbell had suspected that there might be fragments of his gold watch chain or of his uniform still in the wound. He was proved right. Back home in London a scroll of lead adhering to a link in his watch chain came away from the exit wound and he finally recovered his health. In 1859 he was promoted captain and by the end of 1860 he was back in India, Gordon and his wife having accompanied him as far as Marseille. He had a rough passage of the Mediterranean and then an overcrowded journey on from Suez in a Cunard steamship, which like so many India-bound vessels had problems at Sand Heads, just short of Calcutta. In Calcutta he found 'every body waiting for [the post-Mutiny amalgamation of the European regiments of the East India Company's armies with the British Army], many officers who have done and are doing no duty whatever'.<sup>24</sup> He was able to rejoin his regiment, which became the 104<sup>th</sup> Bengal Fusiliers in the British Army in 1862.

During a home posting from 1865-9, Campbell was promoted to major. He returned to India for the last time in 1871, and served until 1879 when he retired as a Colonel.<sup>25</sup> In retirement Campbell rented houses in Norfolk and then Staffordshire for the shooting, and finally settled at Ufford, near Woodbridge in Suffolk, in 1887. His



*Gordon Wyatt Clark when a young man.*

---

<sup>23</sup> Kinkhwab - silk brocade.

<sup>24</sup> Written 22 November 1860, Spence's Hotel, Calcutta. On Clive Street, the hotel opened in 1830 and only closed in 1962.

<sup>25</sup> He had been made Lieutenant Colonel in 1877 but may have had the brevet rank as early as 1869 when he was commanding one wing of the regiment stationed at Peshawar. During this time there was a serious cholera outbreak. His wing was ordered to camp outside the cantonment, and another portion of the regiment went some distance to Cherat. With them, the only woman, was Mrs Webber Harris, the wife of the commanding officer. She behaved with such gallantry, organising the nursing and life of the camp, that afterwards the officers of the regiment, no doubt led by Campbell, had a replica Victoria Cross made in gold for her. This is also now in the National Army Museum.

nephew, Harry Gordon Clark, recorded in his family notes that he 'died of cancer in the stomach, set up by his old wound' in March 1896, adding: 'He was a splendid type of soldier and man, whose watchword throughout his life was duty, and he was one of the very best of uncles and beloved by all his family and neighbours. His tombstone bears the appropriate text: *Fear God: Honour the King.*'<sup>26</sup>

Edgar, like many of the officers of the Bengal Native Infantry, joined the new Bengal Staff Corps on its foundation in November 1862. His captaincy dated from February 1861, so he was catching Campbell up, and in fact became a major in 1867, a year before his brother. He retired in 1881 as a Major-General. Edgar had remarried in 1869, to Edith Elizabeth Taylor, in Lucknow, the city where his wife had died. The couple had five daughters but Edgar never had another son.

Gordon died in 1897. He had run the City firm of Matthew Clark and sons, wine and spirit importers, until 1887, with the assistance of yet another younger brother, Matthew Edward Clark, and also a nephew, Herbert Wynne.<sup>27</sup> In fact, Herbert's younger brother Trevredyn Rashleigh Wynne (1853-1942), was the most successful family member to serve in India. He was Chief Engineer and later Managing Director of the Bengal Nagpur Railway, Chairman of the Indian Government Railway Board, member of the Imperial Legislative Council and received more than one knighthood.<sup>28</sup>

Many other family members spent a period of their life in India. Stanley Yeatman Clark, the eighth and youngest son of Matthew and Catherine Clark, also had a military career, but as he was in the 17<sup>th</sup> Lancers he only had a short service period in India, after the Mutiny. He too retired as a Colonel. Gordon Wyatt's second son, Craufurd, was a professional soldier with the King's Royal Rifle Corps and served in India as a young man, taking part in the Manipur Expedition of 1890 and one of Gordon's sons-in-law was also in the Indian Army and eventually commanded the Queen's Own Madras Sappers.

The Clark family are thus a typical example of the opportunities that the empire in India provided for the prolific and energetic middle class of Victorian and Edwardian Britain. Sadly, they are also an example of the frequent high cost of that service.

*As with the first of Charles Gordon Clark's articles, the transcribed letters of the Clark brothers have, with Charles's kind permission, been placed in the FIBIS database.*

---

<sup>26</sup> The text quoted is from 1 Pet 2:17.

<sup>27</sup> The eldest of the Clark sisters, Catherine Amelia married Llewelyn Wynne in 1845.

<sup>28</sup> Two of Matthew Edward Clark's sons and one grandson also worked on the Bengal Nagpur Railway.

## **Distant Relations Discovered – A Bencoolen Family Reunited**

*James Trelawny Day*

Last May I was contacted by a Mr Paul Boogaard of New York who claimed to be a descendant of William Grant Day, a distant relation of mine who died in Sumatra in 1831. This surprised me because although I knew that William had had a daughter, Ellen Grant Day, born in 1824, I thought she had died childless in India in 1846. In this I was proved wrong.

This story begins way back in 1794. In that year, Charles Day, aged 22, my 2x great grandfather, was sent out by the East India Company to Bencoolen (Fort Marlborough), half way down the west coast of Sumatra.<sup>1</sup> Charles Day's father<sup>2</sup> had been employed by the HEIC Civil Service in Bombay and Surat, which is where Charles was born. His grandfather<sup>3</sup> had been employed in the home service at East India House, Leadenhall Street, in the City so Charles was no stranger to the ways of the Company.

Bencoolen had been founded in 1685 by the English to counter a Dutch stranglehold on the spice trade. It was a small outpost of Empire with a reputation for ill health and a high death rate from a multitude of diseases (malaria, smallpox, cholera, typhus), but with the opportunity, if you survived, of getting rich in the spice trade. Somehow Charles Day managed to avoid the fate of many of his contemporaries, possibly because he had been born in India and had therefore acquired a level of immunity to tropical diseases. Over the years he managed to survive and prosper by trading in spices and possibly opium, in addition to working for the HEIC in his official capacity as Assistant to the Commissioner as Cash Keeper, Treasurer and Civil Paymaster all rolled into one. By the time he left Sumatra he had acquired a spice plantation and a half share in another.

---

<sup>1</sup> Charles Day (1772-1849) [Fort Marlborough Establishment]; Born 15 July 1772, probably Surat, India, eldest son of Thomas and Rebecca. 1786-1787 Merchant Taylors School; 1789 Gentleman Pensioner, Trinity College, Cambridge; 1792-1794 at Banking House of Staple & Co, of Cornhill; 1794 Appointed Writer for Fort Marlborough, (Writers Petitions 1794 no. 19); 1800 Assistant at Allas; 1804 Assistant to Commissioner (Walter Ewer); Nov 1804 Fourth Head Assistant at Fort Marlborough, Cashier at Bank and Assistant to Commissioner as Cash Keeper, Treasurer and Civil Paymaster; 1806 Fifth Assistant to Resident and Assistant Cash Keeper; 1807 Transferred to Madras; 1811 At Home; 1816 Out of the Service. [Source: career details from India Office Library]

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Day (1738-93) [Bombay Civil Service]; Bapt 3 Aug 1738 St Andrew Undershaft (City of London) son of Robert and Elizabeth Day; Appointed Writer (Writers Petitions 1754 no. 6); 1768 Senior Merchant and Resident at Calicut; 1771 Fifth in Council at Surat; 1776 Third in Council at Surat; 1780 Member of Council of Governor; 1791 At Home; 1792 Out of Service [Bombay Civilians]. [Source: India Office Library]

<sup>3</sup> Robert Day (c1709-67) [Home Civil Service]; May 1723 Petition to join Accounts Office; March 1724 Accounts Office; 1728 Petition for Gratuity for five year's service and Salary for future; 1732 Assistant to Company's Husband; 1757 On account of ill health, James Finlay appointed Joint Husband and Warehouse Keeper at Botolph Wharf; 1767 Deceased; [Source: East India Company Court Minutes]



Charles returned home to Southampton, England in 1811 and retired from the Company's service in 1816 at the early age of 44, a wealthy 'nabob'. Whilst in Bencoolen he had fathered two Eurasian sons by a Malay lady, Incie Janin. William Grant Day, the younger son, had been born in 1804, and his elder brother Thomas Skottowe Day a year earlier. When Charles returned to England he had brought these two sons with him to give them an education. In 1812, he married an English lady, Frances Mary Perreau, the daughter of an old Bencoolen friend, Robert Perreau, and by her had thirteen more children.

In early 1821, Charles sent Thomas and William, then aged eighteen and seventeen respectively, back to Sumatra to look after his spice plantations and obtain employment with the East India Company. The journey in those days via St Helena and Cape Town could take anything from four to six months, that is if one survived pirates, shipwreck or disease on the journey out. This was the era of Sir Stamford Raffles's Lieutenant Governorship of Bencoolen. In his long letters home William Day writes of his day to day life in the fever-ridden settlement of the Company's station at Fort Marlborough; of the slaves working the plantation; of the opium trade; of the bickering and morals in the small European community; of death and disease and duelling; of Sir Stamford Raffles, the founder of Singapore; of loneliness and boredom and Dutch intolerance; and through it all



*Charles and Frances Day with their children in Southampton in 1820. Picture courtesy of JCL Day.*

the insecurity of life and the humdrum business of running a spice plantation.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps also we can read between the lines a little and feel what it must have been like to have been an educated Eurasian in an outpost of Empire.

Within two years of the brothers' arrival in Bencoolen, Thomas had died, probably from malaria. On the 29 November 1823, William wrote home to his father of this event:

Poor Tom died on Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> October at a quarter before one o'clock in the afternoon; before his death Mr Drummond, just arrived here by the *Borneo*, died after an illness of two days; since my poor brother we have lost poor Halhed and since poor Halhed we have lost poor old Captain Salmond, all of them snatched away within a month. Fancy then my dear Father what our feelings here must be in so small a community whose turn it may be next God alone knows, the mortality is really intimidating. But these are not the whole of our list, we have also lost young Anderson whose father I believe you are acquainted with, and my poor brother's former master, Mr Lewis, is also gone to his long home, which makes our number just to half a dozen since I last wrote to you. But I am wavering from the painful subject of my letter, therefore to return to it....

After describing his brother's death in some detail, he ends his letter, 'Thus died the best of brothers for such to me he always was, I really did not know the value of a brother until I lost him.'

William continued to write home and in a letter dated 19 February 1825 he informed his father that he now had a daughter:

I must make you acquainted of my having a child, A Girl, now upwards of twelve months old - for whom I have left a subsistence, as well as for the mother...

I know not how it was in your time, but the feeling of the present day with regard to illegitimate children are these - Did any Gentleman discover [ie reveal] his children by native women, he would immediately be discarded from all society. I hope you will see that I am actuated from the best of motives by acting as I have done... I was induced to keep a girl - further the want of society banished as it were in the jungles of Sumatra, without a soul to converse with or any one to attach my self to, being left at times for nearly a month together by myself - and no one to look after my clothes etc., prepare a comfortable return after a boiling hot days work, and the fear of getting deceased by going with women of the town, who were the greater part of them not very sound.

This daughter was Ellen Grant Day, born on 12 February 1824.<sup>5</sup> In 1825 Bencoolen was handed over to the Dutch as part of a deal after the Napoleonic wars whereby the UK established its right to Singapore and retained some former Dutch possessions. William Day writes bitterly of the Dutch administration at this time, but he did not have to suffer it for long because he died in 1831. Ellen would then have been seven years old.

---

<sup>4</sup> The letters were kept and handed down to Mrs Peter Barker (*née* Day), one of Charles's 2x great grandchildren. Now in the keeping of the Southampton Archives, they are collected in the book *Letters from Bencoolen 1823-1828 during the Lieut Governorship of Sir Stamford Raffles* by Thomas and William Day with an introduction by James Trelawny Day.

<sup>5</sup> IOR N/7/1/307 Baptisms, Fort Marlborough. This gives Ellen's mother as Genoon, *nativewoman*.

I wrote to the Dutch Genealogical Society to try and find out what had happened to Ellen Grant Day but they were unable to help because the records of the Dutch East India Company (the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, or VOC) either didn't exist centrally or were not accessible. However, I found a death of an Ellen Day in Bombay in 1846 and assumed that this might have been her. I was therefore surprised and excited to receive the following email in May 2012, from Paul Boogaard, who had been able to research his ancestry via Dutch and German records:

Dear Mr Day: In researching my great grandfather – Edward Wilhelm Carl Peltzer – born in Padang [on Sumatra] in 1876, I came across a German publication from 1901 which I was able to acquire and it noted that his grandmother was 'Ellen Grant Day' (*Geschichte U. Genealogie der Familien Peltzer*, by H.F. Maco, Aachen, 1901, p.164). Given this name I soon came across your book which also noted a family 'Day' in the area of Padang in the early part of the Nineteenth Century. Upon receipt of your book I quickly read the prologue which stated that William Grant Day had a daughter born 12 February 1824 named Ellen and that she had married a Private in the Indian Army and died in Bombay on 12 September 1846. Obviously there could have been two Ellen Days but to me it did not seem likely so I researched further.

In 1935 a Dutch genealogist by the name of PC Bloys Van Treslong Prins published a book entitled, *Genealogische en heraldische gedenwaardigheden betreffende Europeanen op Java*. Because genealogical records were not properly maintained in the colonial period Mr Prins apparently went from cemetery to cemetery in Java and recorded the information on the gravestones. On p96 of this publication the following is noted for Tanah-Abang Cemetery in Weltevreden (Batavia) on Java (Section III): '*Wij hadden hen in leen, Zij bleven Gods eigendom, Nu gaan ze van ons heen, Wij geven hen bedroefd weerom. Ellen Grant DAY, geb. te Benkoelen 12 Febr. 1824, overleden den 30 April 1903*'. which basically translates, 'We had her on loan, she remains God's property, now she leaves us, and we sadly give her back again, Ellen Grant Day, born Benkoelen 12 February 1824, died April 30 1903'.

Given this information, I believe that the Ellen Grant Day who is my Great Great Great Grandmother is the same as the one noted in your book as the daughter of William Grant Day.

I cannot but agree with Mr Boogaard's findings. Because of his family's deep colonial ties with the Dutch East Indies he has been able to access the Dutch records and prove his descent from Ellen Grant Day through his mother, Ellen Maria de la Rambelge, a 2x great granddaughter of Ellen Grant Day.<sup>6</sup>

Thus a descendant of a young girl made fatherless at the age of seven, 182 years ago, has managed to make contact with her English family and all the result of a handful of letters written by her father, William, many years ago which were somehow preserved and survived down the ages to be published by a distant relation.

*About the author:*

*James Trelawny Day has a degree in Engineering from Cambridge University, where he first became interested in genealogy. He has been researching his family history for over 50 years and is a member of the SOG, the Hampshire Genealogical Society, BACSA, the Emms Valley U3A FH Group and of course FIBIS. He has written various articles for these societies over the years.*

---

<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the Ellen Day who died in Bombay in 1846 was not the Ellen Day born in Bencoolen.

## From Agra Fort - George Collett's letters to Mountstuart Elphinstone

By Valmay S Young

George Smith Collett is my 4x Great Grandfather. George was the eldest son of Lewis Andrew Collett and Mary Regina and was born in Surat, India on 7 August 1810.<sup>1</sup> Until last summer George was probably the ancestor I found most disappointing. His father Lewis had gone out to India aged sixteen as a private in the 1st Battalion of Bombay European Infantry and worked his way up through the ranks to Garrison Sergeant-Major, before setting up his own business as a carriage builder in Girgaum Back Road, Bombay where he made his fortune. James Douglas says in his book *Glimpses of old Bombay and western India*: 'In 1824 Mr Lewis Collett advertises that he will continue the coach-making business of Mr John Mitchell, and soon Collett's equipages were in the language of the day "all the go"'.<sup>2</sup>

At first all I knew about George was what I could find in the ecclesiastical returns and directories at the British Library. George was a clerk when he married Ann Ursula Hackney on 22 February 1836,<sup>3</sup> but by 1841 the *Bombay Calendar and Almanac* lists George as a 'Bookseller and Librarian'.<sup>4</sup> Either the book selling business in Bombay wasn't very good or George was rather like the character of Bernard Black from the Channel 4 sitcom *Black Books* and wouldn't part with any of his stock, as shortly after his mother died on 17 October 1847<sup>5</sup> he petitioned to become insolvent on 4 September 1848.<sup>6</sup> George's father had died in 1843<sup>7</sup> leaving him a watch and some shares,<sup>8</sup> but when Mary Regina died she left many riches to various family members and even servants, but all she left her son George was a snuff box.<sup>9</sup> I guess that she realised he might have to file for insolvency soon, so intentionally left him very little.

By 1851 George is listed in the *Bombay Calendar and Almanac* as a Vakeel,<sup>10</sup> so things may have been looking up. However, on 29 September 1854 his wife Ann died<sup>11</sup> whilst giving birth to my 3x Great Grandfather Robert Benjamin Collett.<sup>12</sup> George was now a widower with eleven children to raise alone and he never remarried.

---

<sup>1</sup> India Office Records (IOR) N3/4/431

<sup>2</sup> James Douglas *Glimpses of old Bombay and western India, with other papers* (1900) p47

<sup>3</sup> IOR N/3/12/267 Marriage record

<sup>4</sup> *Bombay Calendar and Almanac* 1841, Part III, p64

<sup>5</sup> IOR N/3/21/293 Burial record, Mary Regina Collett

<sup>6</sup> The National Archives, Kew (TNA), Court of Chancery records, J 4/5847 affidavit no. 1312

<sup>7</sup> IOR N/3/17/347 Burial record for Lewis A. Collett, 10 Nov 1843, Bombay.

<sup>8</sup> TNA, Court of Chancery records, J 4/5850 affidavit no. 2224

<sup>9</sup> IOR, Bombay wills and administrations, L/AG/34/29/350

<sup>10</sup> An attorney; an authorised representative.

<sup>11</sup> IOR N/3/28/406 Burial record, Ann Collett

<sup>12</sup> IOR N/1/101/500 Baptism record of Robert Collett, born 29 Sep 1854, bapt 4 May 1862, Agra.

For years I had no fresh information about George. His siblings had been left most of the family fortune and they all married into wealthy families and did very well for themselves for several generations. George and his line became the poor relations, mainly working on the railways. I often wondered how different things might have been if George hadn't wanted to sell books and had been more like his younger brother Arnold who worked at the Bombay Mint<sup>13</sup> before taking over the family carriage making business.<sup>14</sup>

I had no fresh leads until a couple of years ago when Sarah Bilton, the Editor of this fine journal, got in touch with me. Sarah had been viewing the directory of people living inside the Fort in Agra during the Indian Mutiny.<sup>15</sup> The list had been drawn up by the Asst Surgeon there and gave the names of those taking shelter and what part of the Fort they were staying in. Sarah remembered one of my family surnames was Collett and noticed some Colletts on the list. Sure enough it was my George and family.<sup>16</sup> Now I knew where he was during the Mutiny, but he was still a bit boring and a bit of a disappointment to me having lost out on inheriting the family fortune or business, even though I'm a bit of a book lover myself.

Last summer I mentioned to Beverly Hallam, FIBIS Research Coordinator, that I was going to the British Library with my mother to do a bit of research and she advised me to check the 'Search our Catalogue Archives and Manuscripts'<sup>17</sup> page on the British Library website. To my surprise, I found a few entries for letters written during the latter part of 1857, between George Collett and Mountstuart Elphinstone, the former Governor of Bombay.<sup>18</sup> They were sent during the Indian Mutiny when George and his family were in the Fort.

I couldn't wait to get to the British Library to check them out and when I did they changed my opinion of George completely. There were two letters from George to Mountstuart Elphinstone and one reply, all of which I reproduce below.

---

<sup>13</sup> *Bombay Calendar and Almanac for 1841*, Part III, p64

<sup>14</sup> *Bombay Almanac and Directory for 1850*, p270

<sup>15</sup> *Agra Fort Directory according to the Census taken on the 27th July 1857 by Asst Surgeon JP Walker MD*, Mofussilite Press, 1857. This small booklet contains several thousand names and is being transcribed for the FIBIS database.

<sup>16</sup> The *Fort Directory* p9 records: Collett GS (with nine children) and Collett GS Jun, all staying in F block (probably the Dewan-i-Khas).

<sup>17</sup> <http://searcharchives.bl.uk/> (or bl.uk, then Catalogues, then Archives & manuscripts)

<sup>18</sup> Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779 – 1859) was Governor of Bombay from 1819 to 1827. He was in his late 70s when George wrote to him.

## Letter from George Collett at Agra Fort, to Mountstuart Elphinstone<sup>19</sup>

Agra Fort, 2nd October, 1857

Sir,

It is highly probable that you have no recollection of me, therefore to go back to scenes of which upwards of 30 years have gone by and remind you of a lad (then a volunteer in the Bombay Marine now Indian Navy) who waited on you at the Govt House, Parrell<sup>20</sup> with a [unclear] then borne by dromedaries across the desert to Cairo and Alexandria. What passed at the interview cannot possibly have retained a place in your memory, but the whole had made a lasting impression on my mind, the kindness which the then Governor of Bombay told me to put on my hat lest the afternoon sun injure me, though he himself was uncovered, and the interest he kindly evinced in a lad who had just entered into active scenes of life, added to the encouraging abject with which you had desired me to call on you should I ever want a friend, often formed the subject of conversation between myself and the mother of my children now no more, and though for ourselves we did not think it proper to intrude on your notice we often thought that on behalf of our offsprings you would not be displeased if we sought your patronage. It pleased the Almighty to bless us with 13 children, 11 of whom the mother reared when in His providence He pleased to take her to Himself.

Just prior to the sad event which rendered my children motherless, our eldest son [George Smith Collett Jr<sup>21</sup>] returned from Home [ie the UK] where he received his education.<sup>22</sup> We intended him for the army, but he preferred the church and was just preparing for [the University of] St Andrews when he fell ill and as his medical attendant anticipated that his lungs would be affected, he returned to India at once advised. However much I may have been disposed to leave the issue to Him alone, his dear mother's intreaties [sic] prevailed and I sent out for him; a few months after his return the heavy hand of God fell on us in the death of the mother we were crushed to the dust. Other events, afflicting and distressing in the extreme followed with which it were unnecessary to distress you and as all around me was but a memorial of the past, I resolved to leave Bombay and was induced to select the NW Provinces, in which I arrived with my children only a few weeks before the Mutiny at Meerut and Delhi; my eldest son who held a Govt appointment at Bombay also accompanied me giving up his situation and it is on his behalf that I now seek your kind patronage.

On the breaking out of the Mutiny at Meerut a similar tragic scene was expected here [at Agra] and my son placed his services at the disposal of Govt for the defence of the community and has ever since served as a volunteer, at first in the Volunteer Corps, and now in the militia.<sup>23</sup> In justice to him I will add that he has submitted to many privations and some injustice arising from a want of consideration on the part of others to maintain harmony in the body and render it the more

---

<sup>19</sup> India Office Private Papers (British Library), Mss Eur F88/179/16 – punctuation edited slightly.

<sup>20</sup> Parel, one of the original seven islands of Bombay, was the neighbourhood housing the Governor of Bombay's official residence.

<sup>21</sup> IOR N/3/13/90 Born 05 Mar 1837 and baptised a month later at Bycullah, Bombay.

<sup>22</sup> The 1851 census for Scotland records George Jr as a scholar in Lauder in what is now the Scottish Borders. (Ancestry.com. 1851 Scotland Census, Parish: Lauder; ED: 1; Page: 29; Line: 3; Roll: CSSCT1851\_197; Year: 1851)

<sup>23</sup> The *Agra Fort Directory* p9 notes that George Jr was in the militia infantry.

effectual. I have applied for memorandums of [his] services in the Volunteer Corps and the militia, and should I receive them in time for the evening post I will send them herewith, but I do not expect to receive them from Major Montgomery of the Volunteer Corps, as he is with a party of the 3rd Europeans & the Militia about 10 miles from here, at Karowlee,<sup>24</sup> to which he had retreated on [meeting] Bareilly mutineers and other fugitives from Delhi marching in a strong body towards Muttra<sup>25</sup> with the news [they are] to cross over to Hattras and thence proceed to Lucknow. I am sure however to get the papers in time for the next overland mail.

Meanwhile I may mention that my son was present at the out works without the Fort on the occasion of the approach of the Neemuch mutineers on the 5th July, the object was to protect the retreat of our troops which had gone to meet the mutineers; that on 2 or 3 occasions he accompanied parties sent out for the punishment of villagers etc in our vicinity. On Govt inviting volunteers for the militia he unhesitatingly volunteered himself and did his utmost to obtain my assent, which I at first withheld since the authorities requested each to bind themselves by the oath to serve for a fixed period 16 months (which I thought uncalled for in the case of these who like my son had from the first volunteered by offer[ing] their services and had submitted to many grievances rather than add to the discontent which at one time was prevalent among a large portion of the body principally in consequence of the domineering demeanour of some of the officers in the army who persisted in treating the militia men as they would privates in the Army because they have that denomination in the militia) and when Govt about a month ago offered the monthly pay of Rs11 and some Annas the pay of a private less some deductions to each militia man without exception, my son merely contented himself with declining to receive the amount, which in a private letter to the cant[onment] authorities he asked me to state that we had decided objections to receive any pecuniary return whatever the amount for those services which we considered a privilege. I refer to these matters merely to put you in possession of the past acts by my son and not with any sense of reproof, for individually my son has been treated with every consideration both by Govt and the Civil as well as the military authorities. He now belongs to the rifle company of the militia. The company was formed in reality to separate the respectable portion of the body from the rest among whom there are necessarily men of very low repute.

Now Sir if you can in compliance with a father's appeal in behalf of his son, get the latter a commission in the Bengal Army either Cavalry or Infantry you will not only confer on us an obligation not only forgotten, but under a sorrowing and a bereaved man, as far as earthly blessings can do, some consolation amidst the wreck of his earthly happiness by the necessities of life during the brief remaining portion of his days on earth, for I feel that I am fast hastening to the grave. My son has two cousins of Officers in the Bombay Army, one in the 17th NI, and the other in the 29th, the son of Mr Atkinson 1st Assistant Master Attendant who is married to my sister and another cousin an officer in the Indian Navy; my connections, as you are probably aware, are highly respectable. If you will kindly interest yourself in behalf of my son, I have no doubt that his age (he will be 21 on the 5th of March next) will be no barrier to his entering the Indian Army, in consideration of his services in the militia. I have reason to believe that many young Gentlemen here, who like my son have served in the Militia, will receive commissions but they have friends to assure their interests with the Governor General while we are perfect

---

<sup>24</sup> To the west of Agra; now Kiraoli.

<sup>25</sup> To the north west of Agra, about 30 miles upstream on the Yamuna, it is now Mathura, with Hattras (now Hathras) to its west, across the river.



strangers here, and it is not likely that those who have their own friends to serve would advance my son's claims to the detriment of those they wished to serve, let this Sir be my apology for trespassing on you, naming us friends here, I seek the aid of one who was kind once when I was myself a lad of 14.

My son was educated by Mr A Patterson of Lauder Scotland,<sup>26</sup> to whom as also the Reverend Mr Waters of the place I can refer you with confidence for their high opinion they entertained of the moral character of my son. There are many at Home who would I am sure speak favourably of the high character I have borne whilst in business in Bombay as bookseller and agents, and among others I may name General Barr, Colonel Griffith of the Artillery, LR Reid Esq CS, the memorable Mr Orly Bishop of Bombay. I have not written to these Gentlemen and indeed I do not know their address, but I doubt not you will easily find them out.

We are all still in the Fort of Agra and though our brave troops have possession of Delhi, a very large body of the mutineers are still in arms [and in] these provinces most of them are making for Lucknow where we hope that General Havelock is by this time reinforced by the troops under General Outram from Allahabad, though no official intelligence has been received of this, but as General Havelock was only miles from Lucknow when we last heard from his Camp some 3 days ago, we cannot doubt that long ere this he has relieved the small heroic garrison there. The mutineers are on the move from Dolepore,<sup>27</sup> where they were for the last 3 or 4 weeks, for Lucknow. The Jhansie mutineers with several other fugitives from Delhi were near Boulinashupur<sup>28</sup> on the Meerut road the other day. They were met by one of our pursuing columns from Delhi under Colonel Greathed on the 28th of last month and from their position they fled, leaving 2 guns with which a quantity of ammunition we have taken possession of, as also the miscreant Nana Sahib of Bittoor, he who massacred our friends at Cawnpore.

The Bareilly mutineers with a large body of other mutineers, all of whom have left Delhi when we obtained part possession of the place, were at Muttra the other day preparing to cross over to either Allyghur or Hattrass on the Meerut road. We now hear that they have crossed over and [are] supposed to be on the move to Lucknow. From these movements of our enemies you will see that though Delhi has fallen, our troops have still a hard struggle in Upper Provinces and cannot now be spared to our support and indeed we do not need it as far as our safety is considered, though some 500 Cavalry and 3 or 4 companies of Infantry in addition to what we have here would prove of great service in keeping order in our neighbourhood and securing our Postal arrangement. I have no time to give you the few items of the latest movements here as I am under the impression that our funds at home will not accrue therefore any other quarter here, since the latest date for overland letter was yesterday and the overland summaries from hence left by yesterday's date.

There is Native report here, which cannot be believed, that Punjaub is up. The report is [unclear word] current though it is generally disbelieved. This however has nothing to do with our new levies, the Punjaubees, they have acted nobly and their loyalty is not suspected. Apologies for the length of this and again soliciting your kind patronage on behalf of my son.

I have the honour Sir

---

<sup>26</sup> Alexander Paterson, listed as the head of the household where George is living on the 1851 Scotland Census. Paterson had also taught and had a strong spiritual influence on John Wilson (1804-75) the Church of Scotland missionary who founded Wilson College in Bombay.

<sup>27</sup> Now Dholpur

<sup>28</sup> Possibly Bulandshahr, south east of Delhi.

Your most hon servant, Geo Collett  
Pray excuse the paper I cannot get better here.

**Letter from George Collett at Agra Fort, to Mountstuart Elphinstone, with enclosures<sup>29</sup>**

Agra Fort, 17 October 1857

Sir,

In continuation of the letter I mentioned to address you by the last Overland Mail on behalf of my son, I have now much pleasure to enclose herewith two certificates. One from Major Montgomery and the other from Major Hennessy, the latter commanding the Militia. I feel that in this trespassing on your attention I take a liberty which your kind notice of me when a lad does not justify; Still I trust to the kindness hitherto shown to my father's family to excuse me. It is the father Sir soliciting your influence on behalf of his Son and I am convinced you will not lightly neglect the solicitation. My son was educated at the Seminary conducted by Mr A Paterson, Jamesfield Lauder Scotland.

The Punjaub I am happy to say is all quiet. The Indian Mhow mutineers who had encamped for the last month at Dolepore crossed the River about 10 miles hence and on the morning of the 10th instant attacked the camp of our Moveable Column from Delhi under Colonel Greathed. This column had only reached Agra that morning and the Moveable column, at least such of them as were on the spot, consisting of detachments of the 9th Lancers, HM's 8th and 75th Foot, some Sikh Cavalry & Infantry and European Horse Artillery, followed up the retreating enemy to their camp on the side of the river about 10 miles from our camp. Near the river the enemy made a stand, but our artillery which played in beautiful style on them, soon turned the retreat into a flight. 13 brass Guns, all the enemy had, fell into our possession. Of them 8, I think, were our own, and the other belonged, it is supposed, to Holkar.<sup>30</sup> They were drawn by bullocks. One of these Guns is an enormous piece of ordnance. Besides the Guns all the enemy's Camp fell in our possession. Great was the slaughter among them, while the casualties among us were not much considering the disadvantage of the [position?].

It is said here that the portion of the Gwalior contingent, which left Moorar<sup>31</sup> consisting of about 2000 men, have taken service with the Ranee of Jhansi, to whom they sold the siege train they had with them. The Ranee, as you are no doubt aware, has openly declared against us.<sup>32</sup> [I have] taken the liberty to add the PS to make my intelligence a little more complete than it was at first.

Yours ? GS Collett

---

<sup>29</sup> Mss Eur F88/179/16

<sup>30</sup> Holkar, the Maharajah of Indore. He was loyal to the British during the Mutiny, but sepoys in his army did join the rebels.

<sup>31</sup> Morar, a cantonment town on the edge of Gwalior.

<sup>32</sup> This was Rani Lakshmibai, who died at Gwalior on 18 June 1857 in a battle between her troops and the British forces. See back cover for a painting of the Rani.

## **Enclosure 1**

I certify that Mr George S Collett junior volunteered for the Agra Infantry Militia which he joined on the organisation, that he was subsequently selected for the Rifle Company and is now serving in it; and further that during the whole period he performed his duties cheerfully and conducted himself in a proper manner.

Fort Agra, 15 October 1857

Hennessy, Major, Commanding Agra Militia, Horatio W Noble, Lieut, Adjutant Agra Militia

## **Enclosure 2**

I have much pleasure in certifying that Mr George S Collett junior volunteered for a body of Volunteers raised for the protection of the Residents in the Cantonment of Agra on the breaking out of the Mutiny at Meerut and Delhi; and that from that time until he joined the Agra Militia he served with this small body of volunteers to my entire satisfaction.

Agra Fort, 17 October 1857

N P Montgomery, Major, Major of Brigade

## **Draft of letter from Mountstuart Elphinstone at Hookwood, Limpsfield, to George Collett<sup>33</sup>**

Hookwood, Limpsfield

by Godstone

Decr 5th 1857

Sir,

I was favoured with your letters of the 2nd & 17th of October at the same time, and too late to allow my answering them by the Mail which left London yesterday. I was much gratified by your favourable recollection after so long an interval and should have been very happy if it had been in my power to promote your wishes in any way, but I have never been in a situation that connected me with India since I left the service and have as much as possible avoided trespassing in any way on the patronage of such of my friends as were otherwise situated, so that there is no way in which I can hope to be of the least assistance to you.

I was much obliged for the articles of intelligence that were given in your letters, especially the second. All information of the sort is received with intense interest in this Country and you may suppose to what extent the feeling is carried by those who have spent a great part of their lives in India.

Believe me

Dear Sir

Yours very faithfully

M. Elphinstone

These letters, to me, were priceless. They contained information I would never have known had George not written them. I would never have known that George had been a volunteer in the Bombay Marine when he was about fifteen years old. I would never have known he

---

<sup>33</sup> Mss Eur F88/179/49

had travelled by camel from Cairo to Alexandria with Mountstuart Elphinstone. What an adventure that must have been! I wouldn't have known where his eldest son was educated, why they moved from Bombay to Agra or that they had two more children than those I knew of, that died at birth.

I also saw George in a different light. Instead of seeing him as a bit of a disappointment and failure, I now saw a very loving and caring father and husband who had had his share of adventure before settling down with a wife he cared so deeply for that when she died he had to leave Bombay as everything around him reminded him of her. It was just so typical of George's luck that he chose to leave for the NW Provinces just as the Indian Mutiny broke out. If he had stayed in Bombay the family would have been safe as the Mutiny never reached there.

On 8 January 1858, whilst George Snr and his children were sheltering at Agra Fort, his 18 year old daughter Ann Regina died.<sup>34</sup> After the Mutiny George Smith Collett Snr went to live in Bycullah. What brought him there I am not sure. I do know that this is where his Mother-in-law lived, but I'm not sure if she was still alive at the time. He would have had several young children to look after and probably went there in the hope that his mother-in-law, or sister-in-law might help with looking after them. He eventually died 8 Feb 1862 leaving at least six children under the age of eighteen and is buried at Agra.<sup>35</sup>

George Smith Collett Jnr went on to work for the Customs Department and married a Scottish girl named Christina Hewat on 30 May 1862 at Kiddepore three months after his father's death. He must have met her when he was at school in Lauder, Scotland as she is listed there in the 1851 Census.<sup>36</sup> Christina's father, Richard Hewat, was a retired Army Surgeon who died on 16 Dec 1861<sup>37</sup> just five months before George and Christina married.

George must have been so disappointed when he received Mountstuart Elphinstone's reply. He must have felt he'd wasted his time, but he hadn't. If he hadn't written these letters then his 5x Great Granddaughter would have continued to think of him as her most disappointing ancestor instead of the favourite one he has now become.

*About the author:*

*Valmay Young is a FIBIS trustee and the FIBIS webmaster. Alongside her work for the society and caring for her family, Valmay works at the Suffolk Record Office. She has been researching her family history since 1999 and has recently begun using DNA to further explore her worldwide connections.*

**FIBIS Journal Binders**

The FIBIS shop has a new supply of A5 Journal binders, now in red with gold FIBIS logo. Each can store 12 editions of the FIBIS Journal. Buy online or at meetings and shows.

Non-members: £5.90    Members: £4.90

**[shop.fibis.org](http://shop.fibis.org)**

## **Assistant Surgeon RLW Beveridge, Indian Medical Department**

*Allan Stanistreet*

Three years ago, at a medal fair in Bristol, my attention was drawn to a single India General Service Medal 1908-1935 with the bar *Afghanistan N.W.F. 1919* named to 'Assistant Surgeon R.L.W. Beveridge' of the Indian Medical Department (IMD). Since I did not have an example of this medal to the IMD, I decided to purchase it, knowing that I would be able to discover at least something of this man's career from the Indian Army Lists (IAL).

As researchers of military matters will know, the Indian Army Lists contain salient details of all officers and warrant officers first class who served in the army and it is possible to glean information such as their date of birth, date of initial appointment and current rank held, together with decorations awarded and certain civilian qualifications.

Robert Laird Wilson Beveridge was born in Allahabad on 24 March 1888, the son of William Wilson and RJ Beveridge. He was clearly among the more intelligent and educated of the Anglo-Indian community for after completing his education he trained as a doctor, probably in India. He was appointed Sub-Conductor (Warrant Officer Class One) and Assistant Surgeon 4<sup>th</sup> Grade in the Indian Subordinate Medical Department on 18 April 1910.

Throughout the latter part of British rule in India, the ruling class was extremely ambivalent about the position of the Anglo-Indian community. Indeed, they tended to be looked down upon by both the British and Indian population. Because of their aspiration to be regarded as part of the British community, their loyalties lay principally towards the British, hence they were useful in running the various government departments, though never above junior management level.

This applied as much to the Indian Medical Department as anywhere else, so even if they acquired British medical qualifications, they never achieved the same status of those in the Indian Medical Service, which contained doctors, both British and Indian, who had qualified in the United Kingdom. Until about 1910, the highest position they could attain, after 20 or more years service, was that of Assistant Surgeon 1<sup>st</sup> Class, with the rank of Warrant Officer Class One (Conductor). Around 1910, the appointment of Senior Assistant Surgeon was created, enabling suitable Warrant Officers to be promoted to Lieutenant and subsequently Captain and Major. These were all honorary ranks and equated with Viceroy's Commissioned Officers. Even the most senior Major was subordinate to the most junior British officer.

Robert Beveridge was promoted to Assistant Surgeon 3<sup>rd</sup> Class on 18 April 1917 and 1<sup>st</sup> Class on 18 April 1927. He spent his career in various hospitals, including Poona (Pune), Secunderabad, Maymyo and Mingaladon. Many of the Assistant Surgeons were employed in such posts as Pharmacies and X-Ray Departments.

It is quite clear that Mr Beveridge earned far more medals than the solitary India General Service Medal in my possession. Twelve years ago, an article in the *Journal of the Orders and Medals Research Society* included his name with nineteen others who had been

awarded the Naval General Service Medal with bar *Persian Gulf 1909-1914* for service in the Royal Indian Marine aboard RIMS *Minto*.<sup>1</sup> This is a rare award to the IMD. It should be noted that the IMD were widely deployed, not only with the army but also with the Royal Indian Marine and civilian hospitals, since there were more personnel than were required for operations in India at any given time.

Mr Beveridge also served abroad during World War One and was awarded the British War and Victory Medals for his service. These and his Naval General Service Medal were apparently advertised on eBay some time ago. No doubt he would also, in common with the majority of the IMD warrant officers, have been awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal after eighteen years' service.

*The London Gazette* dated 14 November 1941, page 6580, announced that Robert Laird Wilson Beveridge was to be appointed Lieutenant (Senior Assistant Surgeon) from 16 July 1941. This must have been a great moment in his career, since by no means all IMD Warrant Officers were commissioned.

Sadly, Lieutenant Beveridge was not to enjoy his newly enhanced status very long, for on 6 June 1942, he died in the British Military Hospital at Barrackpore, aged only 54, leaving a wife, Mrs Violet Gladys Beveridge and two sons. His name appears on the Delhi/Karachi War Memorial. Interestingly, his nationality is given as Indian.

But this is not the end of the story. On 18 November 1942, a Committee of Adjustment was convened at Barrackpore for the purpose of adjusting the estate of the late Lieutenant RLW Beveridge, IMD, as he died intestate.<sup>2</sup> The officers forming the committee were Major JWF Church, Royal Signals (President), Captain SB Browning RAMC and Lieutenant Galbraith, Royal Signals (Members). They were to determine the deceased's assets and apportion them accordingly. The upshot of it all was a payment to the widow of Rs. 2517.5.9. Mrs Beveridge's address was given as 16 Clive Road, Allahabad and her sons were noted as being adults. Two copies of the various forms comprising the proceedings were forwarded to the Accountant General's Department, India Office, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, on 13 May 1943 by R. Sen Gupta, Assistant Secretary to the Government of India.

Mr Beveridge may have been entitled to a number of medals for his Second World War service, though it is impossible to establish which ones at this distance in time. It also seems to me to be well within the bounds of possibility that he still has direct descendants, possibly in India but knowing how wide the Anglo-Indian diaspora now is, perhaps in either Britain or one of the countries of the Commonwealth. I would dearly like to reunite his medal group but I realise this may be a forlorn hope! I would be pleased to have any further information on Robert Laird Wilson Beveridge should anyone be able to supply it.

*About the author:*

*Allan Stanistreet is an author, medal collector and researcher.*

---

<sup>1</sup> RIMS = Royal Indian Marine Ship

<sup>2</sup> India Office Records L/AG

## **The British Indian Civil Service**

*Peter Bailey*

It is an interesting statistic that, at the time of death of Queen Victoria in 1901, the Indian Empire was run by an Indian Civil Service (ICS) of a little more than 1000 Covenanted Civil Servants. They successfully administered directly (British India) and indirectly (the Princely States) some 300 million subjects covering today's India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. They did however have an army of subordinate staff to help them. A brief history and description of the service may be useful to those researching civil servant ancestors.<sup>1</sup>

### **The early days**

As the East India Company gained territory as a result of its political and military adventures, it came to realize that it had also gained responsibility for their civil administration. In particular, this included the collection of taxes, expenditure, the administration of law and order and the dispensation of justice. Naturally, the population had been familiar with the systems instituted by the Mogul Emperors who relied on their local control by the Nawabs, their regional governors, who had overseen the sizeable territories into which the country had been divided.

Each Nawab held two great offices of state, in theory conferred on him by the Emperor:

1. the Diwani - responsibility for the collection of revenues, control of expenditure and for the administration of civil justice. Subordinate to the Diwan were the Zemindars, each responsible within his area (zemindari) for the collection of its revenues.
2. the Nizamat – responsibility for the control of the military, police and criminal matters.

Administration of justice for each function was regulated by Adalats, courts of justice administering Hindu and Islamic law. There were traditionally three types of court:

1. Diwani Adalat, in effect the 'Civil Court'
2. Nizamat Adalat, a 'Criminal Court', but generally not used in Madras and Bombay in favour of:
3. Faujdari Adalat, which was a 'Police Court'

A fourth court, a 'Sadr Adalat' was introduced as a Chief Court of Appeal by the British in India in 1793. Further Courts instituted for appeal of rulings established by the above courts were:

5. Sadr Diwani Adalat
6. Sadr Nizamat Adalat (in the Bengal Presidency)
7. Sadr Faujdari Adalat (in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies)

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note that the non-English terminology may be found in original sources with a variety of phonetic-based spellings, ie Sadr/Sudder, Divani/Dewanny, Adalat/Adawlut.



In 1862, the Sadr Adalats of all three presidencies were amalgamated with the newly established Supreme Courts to form High Courts.

From its early constitution, the Company's Directors had insisted, often in vain, upon the non-involvement of its servants in political or local government matters, but with the acquisition of large territories in the mid eighteenth century the Company was obliged to accept at least some responsibility for administering the territories which it now controlled, all the more so when in 1765, in the Treaty of Allahabad, Clive secured from the Mogul Emperor a formal grant to the Company of the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Initially, however, it lacked the manpower to administer them directly. Clive's solution to this problem was his 'dual system' under which the Company took and distributed the revenue receipts while the Nawab of Bengal and his native officers remained largely responsible in most districts for its collection. For the moment the Nizamat remained under the control of the Nawab.

Clive's system did nothing to solve the problem of corruption among Indian officials. To improve matters his successor Harry Verelst appointed European 'Supervisors' but they soon proved just as corrupt. Eventually, the Directors concluded that the Company, as the real power behind the puppet Nawab, must accept greater responsibility for the administration and 'stand forth as Diwan'. To implement this policy, in 1772, they appointed Warren Hastings as the new Governor of Bengal.<sup>2</sup> Hastings was fully in agreement with the decision to take direct charge of revenue collection. Indeed he went further and also took control of the Nizamat. But while assuming central control of both revenue collection and the administration of justice, he did not wish to impose European officials at the local level and eventually managed to withdraw Verelst's Supervisors. However, Hastings found that the administration was too unwieldy to be directed solely from Calcutta and therefore placed the Indian officials under six Provincial Councils, and as time went on the system of European district officials gradually evolved with a 'Collector' responsible for revenue and a Civil Judge and Magistrate in charge of judicial matters.<sup>3</sup>

### **From Hastings to the Mutiny**

In the earlier days of the Company in India, its employees were essentially all traders whose career pattern was:

Writer – Factor – Senior Factor – Junior Merchant – Senior Merchant and then Council Member and even President, or Governor

As the Company's activities changed from trading to Administration, the traders became Civil Servants. The principal functions of the early Civil Service of the East India Company

---

<sup>2</sup> The title of Governor-General was used from 1774.

<sup>3</sup> In the older Provinces the position of 'Collector' lasted until Independence in 1947, though the duties were by then far more varied than they had been in the eighteenth century.

were those of Revenue Collection, Civil Justice, Criminal Justice, Trade Control, and Financial and Civil Administration.

The ranks of Civil Servants' career progression always commenced with Writer. They then progressed to the rank of an Assistant, usually to a District Official (such as a Collector or Magistrate) located in one of the districts, or became an Assistant working in a Department at the Presidency, such as Revenue, Judicial or Board of Trade.

Some individuals would be given (or would seek) a variety of postings throughout their career to gain wide experience, hoping ultimately to qualify for high administrative office. Others, less ambitious or less fortunate, would have a career limited to one or two districts or departments. For example, a typical career path in the Diwani could be:

Writer – Assistant to a Principal Collector – Head Assistant to a Principal Collector – Additional Sub-Collector – Sub-Collector – Sub-Collector and Joint Magistrate – Judge & Criminal Judge – Civil & Sessions Judge.

Writer – Assistant to the Accountant General – Register to a Provincial Court – Sheriff of Madras – Acting Senior Deputy Register of the Sadr Court – District Judge – Provincial Judge.

Writer – Assistant to the Secretary in the Revenue and Judicial Department – Examiner in the Office of the Register of the Sadr and Faujdarry Adawlut.

Other terms commonly found in relation to the administration of British India are:

- Ameen - An official of the court charged with the investigation of accounts. A type of Bailiff
- Sudder Ameen - A 'second class' of native judge. Subsidiary in rank to a Principal Sudder Ameen.
- Moonsif - The third rank of native judge, subsidiary to an Ameen
- Vakeel - An attorney at law.
- Mooktear - Criminal court attorney
- Daftardar - Head native revenue officer (Bombay Presidency)
- Register - An official appointed to record the proceedings of the court

## **Training**

Until the end of the eighteenth century, writers were sent directly to India to train there. This was usually at the age of fifteen or sixteen. However, in 1804 the Directors of the Company came to realize that this was too young for them to be subjected to the rigours of life in India and agreed that they should receive a higher education in England for three years and then be sent to India. So in 1806 they established a seminary for the young writers. Initially, this was at Hertford Castle, but in 1809, it moved to a new purpose-built

college at Haileybury, also in Hertfordshire. From 1809 until the college was closed in 1858 under the India Act of that year, all writers were trained at Haileybury.

From the earliest times, applications for positions as writers had to be supported by recommendations by directors of the East India Company who were granted an annual quota, depending upon their seniority. From even before Clive's time, writers had to sign a 'Covenant' of good behaviour and an undertaking that they would work only for the Company and not work for themselves. Hence, they were known as 'Covenanted Civil Servants'. After over 200 years, in 1853, a system of competitive examinations was introduced. This led to the new breed of civil servants being given the colloquial name 'Competition Wallahs' as opposed to the former 'Haileybury Men'. A later term used for these privileged Covenanted Civil Servants was to be the 'Heaven Born'.

From 1855 to 1859, most of the candidates for the ICS exams were required to have obtained a degree from one of the major British universities. However, this led to an increase in the age of those proceeding to India and, after some years of indecision on this matter, it was agreed that the ICS Entrance Exam would be taken at the age of 17 to 19. This would be followed by two years at university, without the necessity to obtain a degree, and the individual would then proceed to India at the age of 20 or 21. This arrangement lasted from 1879 until 1892 when a university degree was again considered appropriate and the ICS accepted that their new entrants would, indeed, be aged 23 or 24.

### **The British Raj – The Mutiny to Independence.**

The India Act of 1858, provoked by the Indian Mutiny, placed control of the Government of India in the hands of the Government in London and the Governor-General was given the honorific title of Viceroy. The system of Civil Servants used by the Company was broadly retained, but a new system of High Courts in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Allahabad was introduced for the administration of justice for the increasing numbers of European residents. The three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay were retained. New provinces beyond the Presidency borders had already been established in the Company period and this process continued as new territories were conquered or annexed, and also as a result of the subdivision of the Bengal Presidency.

The duties and functions of the Indian Civil Service generally remained the same under the Raj as they had been under the Company. Naturally, they developed and became more sophisticated with the passage of time as the social and political needs demanded. A major change was instituted with the separation of Burma as a different country in 1937. However, the new Burmese Civil Service was run on very similar lines and structure to the Indian Civil Service.

### **The 'Provincial' system**

Although British India had traditionally been divided into the three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, even in the late Company era, fresh administrative districts were

established under the control of a President (P), Governor (G), Lieutenant-Governor (LG), Chief Commissioner (CC) or Commissioner (C).

These provinces were:

Ajmer & Merwara	CC (1871-1947)	
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	CC (1872-1947)	Except Japanese Occupation 1942-47
Assam	C (1828-1874)	
	CC (1874-1905)	
	LG (1905-1912)	Linked with East Bengal
	CC (1912-1921)	
	G (1921-1947)	
Baluchistan	CC (1887-1947)	
Bengal	P (17th C –1854)	Although the Bengal Presidency was retained, the states of Bengal, Bihar & Orissa were grouped until 1912
	LG (1854-1912)	
	G (1912-1947)	
Bihar & Orissa	LG (1912-1920)	Bihar & Orissa were declared to be separate linked Provinces in 1920 and then separate Provinces 1936
	G (1920-1936)	
	G (1936-1947)	
Bombay	G (17th C-1947)	Presidency & Province
Central Provinces	CC (1854-1920)	Include Nagpur, Saugor & Nerbudda
	G (1920-1947)	United with Berar in 1936
Coorg & Mysore	CC (1834-1947)	
Delhi	CC (1912-1947)	1832-1858 part of NW Provinces, 1858-1912 part of Punjab Province
Madras	P (1684-1785)	
	G (1785-1947)	
Panth-Piploda	CC (1935-1947)	
Punjab	CC (1849-1859)	
	LG (1859-1921)	The Punjab lost its North West Frontier Province in 1901.
	G (1921-1947)	
North-West Frontier Province	CC (1901-1932)	
	G (1932-1947)	
Sind	C (1843-1936)	
	G (1936-1947)	
United Provinces	G (1834-1836)	Known as Presidency of Agra
	LG (1836-1877)	Known as North West Provinces. Ajmer, Merwara and Kalki were added in 1871.
	LG & C (1877-1902)	Oudh added to NWP
	LG (1902-1921)	Now named United Provinces of Agra & Oudh
	G (1921-1947)	Renamed United Provinces
Burma	CC (1862-1886)	Province of British Burma
	CC (1881-1897)	Province of Burma
	LG (1897-1937)	
	G (1937-1948)	

In 1901, the North-West Frontier Province was carved out of the Punjab; and in 1912, Bengal, which in 1854 had been separated under a Lieutenant-Governor from the direct responsibility of the Viceroy, recovered its historic status as a full Governorship like Madras and Bombay. Though their authority was not significantly different from that of the Governors of the other provinces, these three 'Presidency' Governorships did enjoy the right of direct correspondence with the Secretary of State, and they were normally filled by eminent public figures from England rather than members of the ICS.

### **Government of India civil functions**

The Government of India was directly responsible for the following departments:

Financial	Post Office	India Telegraphs	Mints
Railways	Foreign	Indo-European Telegraph	Political
Law	Forests	Geological Survey	Survey
Miscellaneous	Public Works	Botanical Survey	

### **Provincial functions**

Except for Madras, each province was divided into 'Divisions', run by Commissioners, which comprised 'Districts' or 'Zillahs' run by officers called Collectors in the older provinces or Deputy Commissioners. Both Collectors and Deputy Commissioners were also Magistrates in their districts. Deputy Commissioners did not control Collectors but were men of equivalent status working in the newer provinces.

Each Provincial Governor, Lieutenant-Governor or Chief Commissioner was responsible for:

- A Judicial Department - covering the activities of its High Courts (if any), the Courts of its Judicial Commissioners, District & Sessions Judges and the Judicial Branches of the Provincial Civil Service and Cantonment Magistrates.
- Land Revenue and General Administration - covering the Department of Land Revenue and Agriculture, Commissioners of Revenue and Circuit, Magistrates and Collectors and Deputy Commissioners.
- Plus the functions of the following departments, where locally required:

Public Works	Political	Educational	Ecclesiastical
Survey	Police	Forest	Medical
Financial	Jails	Post Office	Telegraphs
Customs	Salt	Opium	Excise
Income Tax	Stamps & Stationery	Mint	
Marine	Miscellaneous	Registration	

## Politicals and Civilians

The 'Civilians', the members of the Indian Civil Service, ran the majority of the functions described above. Although the term 'Civilians' was widely used to refer to all members of the Indian Civil Service, it was also used in contrast to those referred to as 'Politicals' whose function was largely to act as Residents or Agents appointed as types of ambassador to the rulers of the native states. Their function was to report to the Governors or to the Viceroy on the activities, behaviour and attitudes of these Indian Princes and even to recommend their replacement in the event of gross misbehaviour or of one not toeing the appropriate line.

## The records of Civil Servants

As already noted, the East India Company required the senior echelon of its Civil Service to sign covenants of good behaviour and this therefore became known as the 'Covenanted Civil Service'. But there was always a need for more staff in specialist or junior posts, and these employees, known as 'Uncovenanted Civil Servants', eventually far outnumbered their covenanted superiors. Some were recruited in England but most were engaged from the community of Europeans living in India, either the sons of Europeans or retired European servicemen, from Anglo-Indians and, increasingly, from native Indians.

Records available in the India Office Records at the British Library include:

### Records of Appointment:

<u>Years</u>	<u>IOR Record Series</u>	<u>Series Description</u>
1600 – 1697	B	Court Minutes
1670 – 1758	B	Correspondence with India
1749 – 1805	J	Writers' Petitions
1806 – 1856	J	Committee of College References
1855 – 1946	L/P&J	Recruitment to Indian Civil Service

### Service Records

Early Records	E & G	Factory Records & Consultations
1740 – 1858	O/6	Summary Careers
1794 – 1841	O/6	Personal Records
1840 – 1947	V13	Civil Establishment Lists
1875 – 1955	V12	Histories of Service

### Pension Records

1804 – 1885	L/AG	Bengal Civil Fund
1787 – 1882	L/AG	Madras Civil Fund
1804 – 1885	L/AG	Bombay Civil Fund
1881 – 1968	L/AG	ICS Family Pension Fund

Note that more precise details of these records are available from *Baxter's Guide – Biographical Sources in the India Office Records*, published by FIBIS. FIBIS Fact File 7

*Some major sources for Ancestors in the Indian Public Services* provides detailed information on the L/F/10 series, which is particularly rich for details of ancestors in the Uncovenanted Service, plus more general guidance on other sources for both the Covenanted and Uncovenanted Services.

### Sources

- David Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste – Imperial Lives in the Victorian Raj* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007)
- Penderel Moon, *The British Conquest and Dominion of India* (Duckworth, 1989)
- Penderel Moon, *Warren Hastings and British India* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1947)
- Indian directories

### About the author:

*Peter Bailey has nine ancestors, over four generations, who lived and served in British India. He is a founder member of the Families in British India Society and is currently its Chairman. He both lectures and writes books and articles on family history in British India.*



## A Parsonage in Madras: Elizabeth Sharp's letters

*Diana Bousfield Wells*

A few years ago my mother, Pamela Bousfield (née Smith), showed me a cigar box containing a pile of letters written on thin, blue paper. The box was in a suitcase full of the photographs and papers of my grandfather Calvert Smith's maternal family, the Sharps. I was immediately excited by the letters and reading them revealed a delightful and fascinating collection. Later, a further group of letters came to light relating to the paternal family of Calvert Smith. Together, the letters read much like a novel or a diary, and as I made the personal acquaintance of the various family letter writers, a vivid picture of their lives emerged.

The Sharps were a Paisley family who capitalised on the local textile boom. John Colin Sharp (1823-1872) was born in Paisley and as a civil engineer he found employment in 1855 with the East India Railway, during the earliest years of its existence. The family letters contain 24 written by John to his wife Ann during a year long separation as he travelled alone to Calcutta and started work in 1857. Married in 1853, John left Ann pregnant and with two small children and his letters include a long list of suggestions and advice for her own outward voyage, to be undertaken after the birth of their third child.<sup>1</sup> By October 1859, Ann had joined her husband and their next three children, Elizabeth, Frank and Nellie, were born in Bengal. The family returned to Britain in 1864 and in 1871 settled in Bristol, just prior to John's death aged 49.

John and Ann's fourth child was Elizabeth Margaret Sharp who was born on the 26 September 1859 and baptised on 17 November in Burdwan, north of Calcutta.<sup>2</sup> As a young woman, Elizabeth wrote many letters that have been preserved. They were written between 1876 and 1884 to several of her sisters and always signed 'Lizzie'. She wrote chiefly to her favourite sister Eveline, using the familiar 'Evelina' and other short forms, who was five years younger than herself and attending boarding school and later learning French in Le Havre. The letters show Elizabeth's lively and cheerful personality as she described the happenings in the family, among friends, at church and at the charity bazaars. They are full of teasing endearments, jokes, tales of amusing events and personal comments. There is something reminiscent of her namesake in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in Elizabeth's decisive and active opinions.

It is clear from her letters that Elizabeth had been educated in a convent and had learned French too in Le Havre, but her most prominent skill, apart from a lively and fluent writing style, was artistic. As a teenager she had studied at the Bristol School of Art and there are many references to decorating her room at home, to making craft objects for sale at bazaars, and later to her home-making in India.

---

<sup>1</sup> Suggestions such as: suitable clothing for hot climates; reassurance about travelling unescorted; advice on avoiding the theft of one's dirty washing; bringing an American cane chair for the cabin; buying Naples kid gloves at only 11 shillings in Valetta and pyjamas in Cairo.

<sup>2</sup> IOR N/1/96/193

A few of her paintings survive in the family today: there are some delightful water colours and small sketches amongst the family papers, which give a vivid idea of her style, as well as several wooden items decorated with flowers. It is also clear that she enjoyed sewing and embroidering, both in order to sell and to decorate her own room: 'I have just finished a most lovely sofa cushion of olive green plush and old gold embroidered in crewels with wild roses'.

Elizabeth spent a short time in Boston, America, as governess to Mary Gardiner.<sup>3</sup> Her letters include many references to Mary's older brother Edward (Neddie) Gardiner (1854-1907), who appears to have started a romance with the young governess that continued by correspondence through 1882. The relationship finally ended with the courtship of Thomas Smith, which Elizabeth discusses, comparing her two 'lovers' in some detail, although there is tantalisingly little about the end of the relationship with Edward.<sup>4</sup>



*Elizabeth Sharp in the late 1870s.*

Elizabeth described for Eveline their mother's attitude to Thomas Smith: 'I have got another real lover, think of that, but don't tell Mamma. He is a Mr Smith, the curate of Mr Barnett, and he is most attentive and has been to call on me and stayed once to dinner; Mamma does not care for him much though he is really a very nice young fellow and good enough looking even for her ideas. But alas, I am afraid he is not rich and that is an everlasting drawback in Mamma's sight, however she has no idea how rapidly he is advancing.'<sup>5</sup> The family version of the courtship of Thomas Smith and Elizabeth, as recounted by Pamela

---

<sup>3</sup> Family evidence points to a professional connection between the Sharps and Gardiners and the wealthy Gardiner family lived in the centre of Boston and owned another house in the Berkshire Hills to the west. Extensive research has been done on the Gardiner family, notably *The Gardiners of Narragansett, being a genealogy of the descendants of George Gardiner the colonist, 1638*, Caroline E. Robinson, 1919, Boston Public Library.

<sup>4</sup> Edward's career as an MIT-trained marine biologist went on to involve a lifetime of research at the Woods Hole Marine Research laboratory where he was one of the original trustees and Secretary of the Board of Trustees for many years. He did not marry until 1895 when he was wed to Jane Hooper.

<sup>5</sup> Sharp/Smith Collection, Letter 50, 28 October 1882

Bousfield, is that Elizabeth's mother Ann gradually withdrew her opposition to the suit of the poor young curate of St Marks Church, Easton (Bristol), perhaps in part due to the good reports of him there, borne out by the silver tea service given to him by his parishioners and a memorial pew installed on his departure. After Elizabeth's letter telling Eveline of her new 'lover', there is a gap in the letters during which the relationship with Edward ended and Elizabeth and Thomas presumably became engaged and prepared for their future together.

A letter to Thomas's mother from his uncle William Bunney, only a few weeks before the wedding, enclosed a cheque and hoped 'Tom will have a good voyage'.<sup>6</sup> Thomas must have set about demonstrating his ability to support a wife with his appointment with the SPCK., the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, to work in Madras, India. Certainly Elizabeth's account of his pursuit of her suggests determination and character, as do her later descriptions of his hard work in the orphanage and churches in Madras, and his own letters bear witness to his concern for his relations and friends in England and conscientious attention to work even when tired or ill.

Elizabeth and Thomas were married on 20 November 1883 at their local parish church of St Mary Magdalene, Stoke Bishop, no doubt in a similar ceremony to her friend Emily Taylor's wedding but - one hopes - without looking 'sheepish and ugly... with plain badly-fitting bridesmaids' dresses... and awful singing'! The ceremony was conducted by Rev David Wright, who had known Elizabeth nearly her whole life, buried her father and young sister, fostered her talents in playing the organ, singing and running Sunday school groups, and had been a frequent visitor at the Sharp house over the years.<sup>7</sup>

The happy couple departed on 27 November, only a week after the wedding, on the long voyage to India, and the first letter home that exists from Elizabeth was written in January from Mowbrays Road, Sullivan Gardens, Madras<sup>8</sup> where the couple were living in a small bungalow.<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth gave a detailed, colourful account of her new life:<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Sharp/Smith Collection, Letter 123, 30 October 1883

<sup>7</sup> His life (1817-1894) and 35-year tenure as vicar are fully and fascinatingly described in the booklet on St Mary Magdalene Church, Stoke Bishop, chapter 1; his grave is in the churchyard, not far from that of John Sharp.

<sup>8</sup> Sullivan Gardens is now the CIT Colony in the Mylapore area of Chennai, to the south of the city, and Mowbrays Road is now the TKK Road (which runs down to Mowbray's Cupola, the home of the Madras Club). Benjamin Sullivan was the 'originator' of the Madras Post Office, Attorney General in the 1780s and later a Judge. His house and the property on which it stood was acquired in 1840 for Rs 20,000 by the Madras Diocesan Committee of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts and converted into a kind of seminary, and in 1886 St Ebba's school was established for underprivileged girls.

<sup>9</sup> In Thomas's letter written in May 1884 he refers to this as the 'Bungalow at the Luz', that being the area around the Roman Catholic Luz Church, 'Our Lady of Light' (founded by the Portuguese in 1516). The Luz Church Road adjoins Mowbrays Road.

<sup>10</sup> Sharp/Smith Collection, Letter 56, first letter from India – Jan 1884 – to Evelina.

Well, here I am in my own house and I can't help smiling sometimes to think of my own importance, mistress of a house and 8 indoor servants besides a coachman, horsekeeper and gardener, doesn't it sound fine ? Not quite as fine as it sounds as Mamma would tell you. However I have a first-rate butler who really does and sees to everything and does not seem to cheat me more than a native must and my ayah<sup>11</sup> is a very nice quiet girl and likes serving so she does for me.

Perhaps if as you want to know everything I had better tell you their different offices and why so many are necessary. The cook of course has his work, we pay him Rs 7 and he has a cook's boy Rs 3 who carries home the basket from the market and pulls the punkas when wanted, water woman Rs 3 who washes up for the cook and fills the baths etc, sweeper woman who sweeps everywhere and attends to the carrying away of slops etc etc she has Rs 4 a month. Then there is a matey<sup>12</sup> who does the lamps, waits on table and does in fact all the work, he has only Rs 5 and does everything that the butler ought to do; he gets 10 for looking fine ordering everybody about seeing all the work done and answering the door. Answering the door means rushing to the front verandah as soon as a carriage turns into the drive with a plate if I am in and ready to receive for the cards, and ushering the visitor in; but with a box with "not at home" on it for the cards to be dropped into if I am out or have given orders so. Besides the butler there is Tom's own boy Pupn he is called, provided for him by the society, he attends to his clothes, runs his messages, sees to his papers and books and stands behind his chair at meals and then there is my Ayah who does much the same as a maid at home, attends to my clothes and room, sees to the washing etc etc. She gets Rs 7 and is more useful than anyone for she will help in anything.

My rooms look so nice already; we have a very large tiled verandah with plenty of ferns and flowers about it and two rattan chairs, and that leads into the drawing-room, such a beauty, so large, with pillars and half doors everywhere, the worst of it is it needs so much furniture but we have gone in for rattan work which is cheaper and cooler than stuffed seats, plenty of easy chairs and tables with all our things spread about make it look very home like. Tom went in for one extravagance, a glass bookcase but it looks so well and will keep the books from insects so nicely that I am getting reconciled to the expenditure which was a good deal. Then from the drawing room there are three screen doors to a smaller dining room. I can tell you its furniture easily, a good sized table, large meat safe, two wagons,<sup>13</sup> a writing table and six chairs. It does not look bad at all I can tell you though our furniture is of the plainest. On one side of that is our bedroom, dressing room and bathroom and that is all we have or intend to furnish as yet. But our whole belongings have not cost more than £35 so we can't have been very extravagant though we have everything we want and more for Tom has no idea of economy, unexpected little things are always coming in and as he does it for me I ought not to complain but I do want to be careful at first.

We have had such piles of visitors and such lots of invitations to dinner etc. One has come off last Thursday and the Tuesday before we were at a ball. I did not dance much as Tom did not

---

<sup>11</sup> Ayah: 'a native lady's maid or nurse-maid', given in Henry Yule and Arthur C Burnell, *Hobson Jobson* (first published in 1886).

<sup>12</sup> Matey: mate, maty, in Madras an under-servant whose business it is to clean crockery, knives etc, to attend to lamps and so forth. *Hobson Jobson's* entry echoes Elizabeth's description.

<sup>13</sup> Probably trolleys, cf. *dinner-wagon*. *OED* (1906).

like it but it was fun watching, everyone was so grand. We dined with the Morgans 14 of us and have another invitation for tomorrow. I don't remember when the next comes but everyone seems awfully kind to us and willing to help us in any way, though now we don't need it. I am getting my rooms crowded with painting, as usual everyone admires very much (sic). Last Sunday evening Tom preached in the Cathedral<sup>14</sup> and evidently pleased for today I see a column and a bit in the leading paper with great commendation and already he has promised for next Sunday evening and the following. I hope that will be all for he has such heaps to do, I should like him to rest after his duties on Sunday. He gives two services at the Orphanage<sup>15</sup> already. On Saturday we are to go to the fort<sup>16</sup> until Monday, the chaplain has invited us as it is easier for Tom as he preaches there in the evening. I don't want to leave our own house yet but I suppose we must.

The next letter is the first that exists from St Paul's Parsonage on Church Road in Vepery, Madras and was written by Elizabeth in February 1884.<sup>17</sup> Having not lately heard from her family, she wondered as to the cause:

There is only one thing that I can think of that you are in the agonies of house moving as we are. Though ours has not much agony about it, it is a very laughable matter to see the coolies filling their great baskets with every imaginable small thing higeldy pigeldy, brushes and ornaments, sheets and plates, knives and soaps, and beers and books all piling in everywhere while bullock carts are gradually, very gradually being piled with almeras<sup>18</sup> and tables, piano and beds, chairs and boxes. I expect them to leave half on the road but our head boy says with a wise shake of his head "All right sar" and so we trust, indeed last evening we found everything taken yesterday "All right" and arranged splendidly in the different rooms.

We find it warm when so much rushing about has to be done but we are learning to take things quietly, and trust in Providence and coolies.<sup>19</sup> Tom has done a very superior thing this week, bought a Victoria phaeton, such a nice one, nearly new and in thorough repair from Mayor Stuart now going home, also a dear Galloway horse, chestnut with a white nose and one foot, such a pretty and strong animal I am almost afraid of it, it is so spirited. The phaeton has a sun hood of course and a movable driver's seat, so that we can drive ourselves when we like. The whole set, carriage, horse, harness, and coachman and horsekeepers dress (dark green and old gold and red turbans and girdles) Rs 630, and the cost per mensem will be Rs 20 to 30. It seems a lot of money to me but Tom had it and determined not to have to buy again if possible and a good carriage will always sell here.

---

<sup>14</sup> Built as a church in 1815, it became St George's Cathedral in 1835.

<sup>15</sup> The orphanage at Vepery was for Eurasian girls and boys, one of several started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century for the children of European sailors and soldiers and Indian women, managed by SPCK missionaries (Frank Perry, *The Church in Madras*, 1904).

<sup>16</sup> Fort St George, the original base established in 1640 for the East India Company, until 1774 when the seat of control passed to Calcutta. The early 18<sup>th</sup> century classical-style buildings are today still the government offices of Tamilnadu state.

<sup>17</sup> Sharp/Smith Collection, Letter 59. Written the day before Ash Wednesday.

<sup>18</sup> A cupboard: almyra, Anglo-Indian word from Portuguese almaria, see *Hobson Jobson* and *OED*.

<sup>19</sup> Coolie: A labourer, especially for carrying heavy loads.





*The drawing room of St Paul's Parsonage, Madras. Elizabeth's decorative floral painting can be seen around the room.*

We have had to pay Rs 95 a month lately as we could not possibly as long as we were in this house do without two hands for day work, now Tom has only to use our turnout 3 times a week for the orphanage and of course it will be for the beach and the evenings. We have not got into any debt that is one blessing and the end of the month is close, still I don't like such outlays and I am afraid Tom begins to think me stingy. I know Mamma will be interested for all this and more still I hope in my housekeeping accounts. Servants cost us Rs 40 a month and my house keeping, bazaar, milk, bread, ice, provisions of all kinds, has each month been under Rs 70, this includes lights (lamps and candles and all firing expenses). Then our rent is 60 and Tom allows me and himself each Rs 40 for our own special wants so you can tell our expenditure almost as well as I can.

I am glad we have furnished and got a carriage and horse without getting short of money and now we must begin to save. We have everything we can possibly want, more than everything and we can do it well on Rs 300 a month so it is not so bad, it will be saving nearly half our income. We have been dining out a lot it is true and that is a saving but actual food costs nothing, we never eat a Rupee a day, not counting fruit and cakes and luxuries. Tom drinks claret or beer very moderately. I go in for lime water and very good I find it and we live like princes, on fruit, English and Indian vegetables, mutton, ducks and fowls – chickens, partridges, pigeons, puddings, eggs and as little English provisions such as bacon, ham, preserves, cheeses etc etc as possible for they are very dear.

This is a very business like letter but these things are beginning to interest me and Mamma will like to hear I know. I have had several white washing muslin dresses made and must have one

or two more. I can only wear one a day, I find, and coloured things to me are simply useless, one thing most of the things (coloured) I brought with me have become white so they are just as good as ever but I must have 8 washing dresses at least going. I get a tailor in and the whole cost, striped white muslin or lawn with lace or embroider trimming comes to Rs 9 and one can get excellent shoes for Rs 4 so it is only silk dresses and grand things I shall have to send home for and gloves, they are frightfully expensive, also hats and all trimmings, anything native is cheap but anything English is awful.

Tom was complaining of a sore throat this morning, I am anxious for him to come home. There is so much sickness about, cholera and fever and 54 children at the orphanage are in the hospital with measles, he was there yesterday so perhaps he has caught it, but I hope not indeed. Tomorrow Ash Wednesday we shall be settled I hope in our nice and jolly home. I wish you could see how nice it looks and what jolly rooms and verandahs we have. Jeanie writes to me the prices of Bombay, everything nearly the double of here, they spend far more than we do and she has no ayah and no horse and carriage. They don't even hire often so it is a blessing for us we came here and not to either of the other presidencies.

We are going to dine at General Stuart's tonight. Last night we were at Major Major's, isn't it funny that the wife and daughter knew the Viekes very well, such nice people. Miss Major is my favourite girl here, but now I can realize what Jeanie's position must be. Nobody here worth knowing will call on or associate with half castes,<sup>20</sup> they are outlawed entirely except as a



*The exterior of St Paul's Parsonage, Madras, with servants.*

---

<sup>20</sup> Hobson Jobson (1902) gives *mustee* from Portuguese *mestiz* for people of mixed European and Indian blood; *Eurasian* as a 'modern name devised as being more euphemistic than half-caste and more precise than East-Indian', and *Anglo-Indian* similarly. Until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century mixed marriages were not frowned on, although the children were seen as being in a difficult position (see the William Dalrymple, *White Mughals*, 2002) in both India and England.

society of their own, I never realized how strong the feeling was before. We never meet any by any chance at other people's houses and yet there are hundreds of them and very grand ones too with swell turnouts and houses. Poor old Jeanie, she must feel it, even the natives despise them and when we ask who are such people of the servants they just say, however grand they are, "East Indian sar, nobodies". Even in church they seem to divide themselves off. Jean said she did not care for military society but there is no other that is good for all levels, servants and Persons and Doctors and lawyers cling together, and one cannot know the one without the other.

My tiffin consisting of fricassee chicken, oranges, pineapples and jelly is waiting for me. I wish you were here to join, I always study Tamil when I am feeding alone and ask the boy behind me to tell me the pronunciation as I go on. Today however my book is mixed with the pillows and beer bottles.

In March 1884, Elizabeth's letter to Eveline included plan drawings of the rooms in the parsonage.<sup>21</sup> Arrangements were being made for Elizabeth's mother to visit and she was settling in to life in the country of her birth.

Tom has gone to his morning service and left his cassock and surplice behind so I don't know what he will do. He will certainly have to preach and pray without or be about three quarters of an hour late, as I have only just started his boy after him.

Tell Mamma I fully approve of her plan for coming in the Autumn,<sup>22</sup> she will find [V]epery quite



*A second view of the Parsonage drawing room.*

<sup>21</sup> Sharp/Smith Collection, Letter 60, 2 March 1884.

<sup>22</sup> Of course Ann might well have changed her plans from an autumn visit once she knew about the expected birth of Calvert in December.



fine enough. I think she must not imagine it a back slum, it is nothing of the kind, there are nice houses all round with large compounds and shady trees and almost facing is the People's Park where there is plenty of water and shade, the Cabins look so lovely from our rooms.

Perhaps you will wonder I have not gone with Tom to the 11 o'clock service, it is too hot for me in the middle of the day. It makes my head ache, I always go to the 6 o'clock when I feel well enough, but sometimes when I am lazy I only go to the early celebration at the Chapel and for a drive on the beach after six in the evening. Remember it is 90° in the shade and don't expect too much. But we are very comfortable. Tom continues to like the heat, never is too warm in fact, however much he tears about and this house is deliciously breezy and cool.

We are getting nicely settled, I forget whether I described the house to you, a gate and shady carriage drive, then the front door up three steps (Mamma will tell you not to imagine shut doors) that leading (sic) you from the verandah into a large square hall, with windows in every side (French windows leading on to verandahs) and this we have furnished entirely with pots, which in time are to be painted, palms and ferns and flowers fill it except for two indian rattan couches. On one side is a huge dining room, rather to the back, but my best way is to draw a plan so here goes. It is not quite correct but it is near enough so. To the front of the house is the carriage drive as I told you, the sides compound (trees and servants' go-downs<sup>23</sup>) back stables, coach house, harness room and store rooms, beyond the compound. So we are surrounded and so we live.

Elizabeth's next letter was sent in April 1884 and was full of their new life, displaying the pleasure of her own activities and pride in Thomas's work.<sup>24</sup> It includes a fascinating description of the house with its furnishings and her paintings, the various servants and their duties, their new social circle and Tom's success as a preacher in the Cathedral. The sepia photographs that survive of the room interiors bring to life Elizabeth's description and they show us her rattan furniture and floral print fabrics. Some of her paintings can be seen on the walls. The references Elizabeth made to fainting and sickness were no doubt due to her early pregnancy, as her son Calvert was born on 12 December 1884.

It is getting very hot now, I find it difficult to keep on my clothes until 2 o'clock and am always glad then of a bath and lie down but I have often been much hotter in America so I can't grumble and we have not begun day punkas as yet.

I wish you could see our drawing room, it is so pretty I think. I have painted round the windows clematis as well as on the dark green dado, also the screen doors and punka, and with the cool looking rattan work chairs and couches and no end of cushions we look cool and fresh, now I am having the venetians painted a lighter colour and the verandah ducks [decks?] dark green to keep out the light, we have several Indian rugs spread about and no end of pots of ferns and flowers.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Go-down: a warehouse or outbuilding for stores, sometimes a stone house (*Hobson Jobson*).

<sup>24</sup> Sharp/Smith Collection, Letter 62, 7 April 1884

<sup>25</sup> In a letter dated 7 May 1884, Thomas told his sister that 'Lizzie has not only painted all over the walls of the Drawing Room but she has now painted banners to hang on the walls of the Dining Room. Indian houses are so bare that it takes a lot of decoration to make them look decent. The walls are all white washed, very few are papered but I think our house looks just as nice now.'

Our butler and matey have very sore arms from vaccination so we are waited upon by peons<sup>26</sup> who make us go into fits of laughter through their politeness, so careful never to turn their backs and serving at a round table it is not so very easy for them. I have not been very well myself for a day or two past and yesterday actually fainted, I was quite proud of the feat, only Tom was so scared that I will try not to do it again. Ah my dear you do not know how soon your troubles begin after marriage!

I am going to spend the day with Mrs Macrae tomorrow and Tom is to fetch me in the evening, he is so busy all day that he has no time to miss me. I believe he hardly knows if I am here at tiffin though he declares it makes a great difference. He eats it in about 2 minutes, rather different to the Tom of the old days that Mamma was so disgusted with. He preaches at the Cathedral again tonight, the third time this Lent. I think people like him because his sermons are so short and pithy. He does not take long to get to his point and finish off.

The mail goes today and I have written little. However I cannot make up for it today as I feel so sick. It must go as it is. You must make Mamma let you come to us and cheer our fainting spirits. How I should love to have you.

Always very lovingly, Your sister, Lizzie

No further letters from Elizabeth to Eveline survive; surprising, as she was likely to have continued to write throughout her pregnancy. The gap is filled somewhat by Thomas's letters of this period, which detail the couple's life as they gradually made friends and acquaintances, and learned to manage the heat and the servants. In April 1884, Thomas sent a prescription for a pair of replacement glasses for Elizabeth. He noted that they would not be leaving for the hills (the Shevaroyes) that summer due to the expense and the unlikelihood that the heat would prostrate them. His next letter in May explained the pressing need for Elizabeth's glasses - she could not paint without them - and the following month he requested his mother and sister send out twelve 'looking glasses' (mirrors) for Elizabeth to paint, giving precise details of size, shape, quantity and quality, noting: 'they are only to paint on and can be of cheap looking glass'.

In late June 1884, with the pregnancy progressing, Thomas set off for Secunderabad for a few weeks and wrote home that Elizabeth would be staying with Mrs Donald, the Deputy Accountant General's wife.<sup>27</sup> The Smiths had suffered an accident the week before:



*One of Elizabeth Sharp's pencil sketches, 1870s.*

<sup>26</sup> Peon: a house servant or footman, cf. pawn (*Hobson Jobson*).

<sup>27</sup> Sharp/Smith Collection, Letter 66, 29 June 1884, Thomas Smith to his sister Julia.

...returning from the Cathedral in the evening, a bandy (carriage)<sup>28</sup> got in our way & we had a nasty collision. Neither of us were hurt but one of our carriage shafts was broken & the horse sustained a small injury on the leg. The carriage of course drove away. I have however traced it & am going to prosecute for negligent driving & damages. As there are only oil lamps in the streets it is fearfully dark except on moonlight nights & we have to depend on the carriage lamps. As everybody has a carriage, Europeans & East Indians alike & some have perhaps two or three carriages out at the same time, the traffic is large. It is the second collision I have had...

Thomas wrote to his family on 26 November, a day before the anniversary of his departure for Madras and with the baby soon due to arrive: 'I thought I might have some news for you this week but Lizzie is quite well at present'.<sup>29</sup> His family had clearly asked questions about telegrams that Thomas would send announcing the birth. However, two weeks later, Thomas's telegram to Elizabeth's brother did not deliver the happy news expected. On 15 December 1884, one day after giving birth to her son Calvert, Elizabeth had died.<sup>30</sup> The burial register recorded 'failure of the heart's action after child birth'.<sup>31</sup> The Bishop of Madras conducted Elizabeth's funeral and she was buried in the cemetery of St George's Cathedral.

One week later on 22 December, baby Calvert was baptised by his father in the same Cathedral.<sup>32</sup> He was named *Calvert* after Elizabeth's much-loved older brother; *Hawkins* after a 'friend in Canterbury known to Christabelle';<sup>33</sup> and *Evelyn* after Elizabeth's beloved younger sister Eveline.

*Part II of this article, in FIBIS Journal 30, will recount what happened to the motherless newborn Calvert and to his father the Reverend Thomas Smith.*

*About the author:*

*Diana's interest in history began with an upbringing at Eton College and a Classics degree, and she widened her awareness of ex-colonial politics when working in Laos during the Vietnam War. She taught English to foreign students in Hounslow and was involved in training to raise awareness of refugees' personal experiences among school staff. Her study, *Bilingual Learners and Secondary History*, stemmed from an understanding of the role played by language and cultural background in historical awareness and its importance in education. She grew up with her mother's stories of her large family and was fascinated by her memoir of her own mother's life and her work to keep the family trees updated. Diana is currently archivist of St Mary's Church, Twickenham and archivist of the Galpin Society for the Study of Musical Instruments.*

---

<sup>28</sup> A Tamil word not found in Bengal, for a carriage, buggy or rural bullock-cart (*Hobson Jobson's* earliest reference is 1791).

<sup>29</sup> Sharp/Smith Collection, Letter 69, 26 November 1884

<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth's brother, Calvert Sharp, had the news telegraphed to Thomas Smith's mother and this telegram is still in the family papers.

<sup>31</sup> IOR N/2/65/309

<sup>32</sup> IOR N/2/65/291

<sup>33</sup> According to Pamela Bousfield; probably Rev James BH Hawkins who is mentioned in the letters as a family friend.

## Sir Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe - Director of the HEIC

George Buxton

*Metcalfe is a well known name in the history of the East India Company. The Metcalfe Society has recently published a 64 page booklet entitled Metcalfes in India, part II. It outlines the British involvement in India with stories concerning the Metcalfe family and is available with Part I and a DVD listing hundreds of individuals. This article (which first appeared in the society's journal, the Mecca News) is a profile of just one of the famous Metcalfes the work details.<sup>1</sup>*

Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe (Tom Theo) was the only surviving son from the union of British Army officer Thomas Metcalfe and Margaret Williams and was born on 8 January 1745. He went to Bengal as a cadet in the East India Company's (EIC) military service in 1767; within a year he became a lieutenant, and by 1779 he was a captain. However he was in back in London in 1780 lobbying for the position of Military Storekeeper General of India. The position of Storekeeper General was eagerly sought after as it was possible to make an absolute fortune, but the job was promised to another. Nonetheless Tom Theo became the new post holder. He apparently courted the directors of the East India Company, especially a man called Dundas, and through his efforts he was granted the post. The position earned no remuneration whatsoever from the EIC, but Tom Theo lived well and prospered. Once back in India he married Selina Sophia Susanna Smith in 1782.

Selina was the widow of a Major Smith and the daughter of John Debonnair, who was thought to be a descendant of King Louis 14th of France by one of his illegitimate children. When Major Smith died, he left Selina absolutely destitute; she was unable to pay his funeral costs. A friend of her father took her in and treated her as his own daughter, paying for a new wardrobe, a holiday and clearing all her debts. She in turn promised to repay him if she was ever in a position to do so. Shortly after her marriage to Tom Theo a request was received for the promise to be honoured as her benefactor had fallen on hard times. The request was refused, so her benefactor took them to court, using the services of a William Hickey, who was a lawyer in Calcutta. Tom Theo and Selina lost.

During his time as Storekeeper General Tom Theo also operated a Bank with several other men which became so successful that their notes were accepted throughout the EIC area of influence. However, insufficient attention was paid to the running of the bank and it went into liquidation after a few years. Even that set-back did not stop Thomas Theophilus and his family from prospering.

Due to the way the EIC Board of Directors ran the Company (that is to say, looking after their own) the British Government installed over them a Board of Control and a copy of every document was to go to the Board. When news arrived in India of this stricture Tom Theo promptly resigned; presumably due to a guilty conscience and the concern some of his deals might be found out.

---

<sup>1</sup>The Metcalfe Society and online shop: [www.metcalfe.org.uk](http://www.metcalfe.org.uk) and [www.metcalfes-online.co.uk](http://www.metcalfes-online.co.uk)

On his return to England in 1789 Tom Theo purchased 49 Portland Place London, (now the Embassy of the People's Republic of China) and for a country estate purchased Fern Hill Park, Winkfield near Windsor. Not content to rest on his money, he used the adage 'attack is the best form of defence' and became a director of the EIC in the same year. He made an attempt to return to India in 1793 as civil governor but was passed over. Still, he had powerful friends in the Company including Lord Wellesley (brother to the future Duke of Wellington). This friendship was reflected in him placing his son Charles Theophilus Metcalfe [who had been born in Bengal in 1785] at the first EIC school in Calcutta run by Wellesley. This support for Wellesley was to be costly in the short term. Tom Theo was the only director of the EIC to support Lord Wellesley and this, coupled with his attendance at a dinner for Wellesley, probably cost him the deputy chairmanship. He raised a number of motions in support of his friend and felt that the directors were lacking in their support.

This set-back appears to have been short lived, as in 1796 Tom Theo appeared in the ministerial list of people looking for seats in parliament. He stood for Abingdon and, unopposed, was elected Member of Parliament for the seat for eleven years until 1807. He became spokesman in parliament for the EIC, rarely speaking on any other matter than India. He supported Pitt and Addington, and with their backing bought his baronetcy in 1802. In the election of 1804, even with the help of his fortune, Tom Theo only just survived sustained opposition from a local candidate. He lost his seat in the general election of 1807 to the same candidate who unfortunately died in 1809. However Thomas Theophilus was by then Sheriff of Berkshire so could not stand again for Abingdon.

Evidently because of his success, or more likely because of the way he had achieved it, Thomas Theophilus had his enemies. In 1810, William Hickey (the lawyer from India) described Tom Theo in his memoirs, *Tell All Friend*, as 'A Prodigious Great Man - Especially in his own opinion'.

In 1811 Tom Theo was made a member of the governors at Haileybury, the Staff College for the EIC. This was fortunate for his son, also called Thomas Theophilus, led a riot at the College in November 1811 for which he was expelled. However through his father's influence he was reinstated in early 1812. This was probably one of the last acts where he used his influence, as he died the following year. Irrespective of how he had achieved his success, Thomas Theophilus had laid the base for his sons Charles, Thomas and Theophilus Metcalfe to rise to even greater heights.

### Sources

- Records of the EIC (Dispatches to Bengal; Dispatches from East India House to India-indexed; Correspondence from India to East India House-not indexed).
- Hardcastle Family History. A private book written from 1926 to 1932.
- History of Parliament 1790 - 1820.

### About the author:

*George Buxton's research at the British Library over a 15 year period led to the Metcalfe in India publications. He became well versed in the IOR records and the DVD that accompanies the work contains findings drawn from the EIC records and track Metcalfes over a 350 year period.*

## Review

***The Fishing Fleet: husband hunting in the Raj* by Anne de Courcy (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2012), 335 pages (hbk); illustrated; £20. Available widely and online in different ebook formats.<sup>1</sup>**

Anne de Courcy may already be a familiar name to members as an author of popular social histories and biographies. As the biographer of Irene, Cynthia, and Alexandra Curzon in *The Viceroy's daughters: the lives of the Curzon sisters* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000), she is certainly no stranger to British India at the height of the Raj. In her latest work, *The Fishing Fleet*, she has wrought an excellent and entertaining account of the trials and tribulations of the (mainly) British women who ventured east in ever-increasing numbers during the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hoping to secure their futures by marrying an eligible British bachelor. De Courcy draws on a rich seam of unpublished material (journals, letters and photographs) to illustrate her narrative which cracks along at a sparkling rate. The scene is set with the first party of 20 unattached women sent out to Bombay by the Honourable East India Company in 1671 and continues through to the Second World War and the end of the Raj in 1947.

As one whose own tree contains several Fishing Fleet candidates, I found this an absorbing read: as one with no direct Indian experience to draw on, I was fascinated by the totally alien lifestyle that even those modestly employed by the Raj were able to enjoy within undivided India. I particularly enjoyed those passages which drew on accounts originally set down in the mid to late nineteenth century, perhaps because these were fewer in number as well as being less familiar than those penned during the inter-war period and more repetitive of the gilded lifestyles at the top of the Raj's pecking order.

There are some criticisms. The useful map of (undivided) India is let down by some strange omissions. The Bombay and Madras Presidencies are shown but there is no acknowledgment of the third and largest, that of Bengal. The River Ganges is shown but not the Brahmaputra or the Indus. Worst of all, while Burma is acknowledged, its frontiers are not; yet, as part of British India until 1937, it was an important destination and home for members of the Fishing Fleet as de Courcy's text relates!

There are brief footnotes throughout but none which link to source material. This is a serious omission in a book aspiring to be treated as a social history and which draws so heavily on unpublished papers. Although the latter are listed separately in the bibliography, there is no information as to their location or availability. However, it is nice to see several BACSA titles included in the bibliography and there is an index.

I was also irritated by that curse of the digital age, proof-reading by spell-checker, resulting in occasional sentences impeccably spelled but lacking sense. There seemed to be such a

---

<sup>1</sup> For example, in addition to hardback, Amazon lists the title as available as a paperback, as an audiobook, as an audio download and in Kindle format. Other online booksellers offer different ebook formats.

failing every chapter or so, disrupting the flow of reading and uncalled for in a book with a premium cover price.

There are also occasional lapses in the editing, the most serious of which results in a howler of schoolboyish magnitude. The three Delhi Durbars deemed the most important were the Proclamation Durbar of 1876 and the two Coronation Durbars of 1903 and 1911. The 1876 Durbar did not also celebrate Victoria's Golden Jubilee (as is averred) and her Diamond Jubilee did not take place 'ten years later' but 21 years later in 1897 (on 'Tuesday, 22 June 1897,' as de Courcy acknowledges at the end of the same sentence).

Do not, however, be deterred from reading this book and delighting in the detail which brings British India and the Raj to life from an entirely different perspective. Highly recommended.

*Hugh Wilding*

### **FIBIS Publications**

Available through the FIBIS website: [shop.fibis.org](http://shop.fibis.org)

The following guides and FIBIS Fact Files are available from the FIBIS shop:

		FIBIS member price
	Baxter's guide: Biographical sources in the India Office Records <i>Ian A Baxter</i>	£3.60
FIBIS Guide 1	Researching Ancestors in the East India Company Armies <i>Peter A Bailey</i>	£4.50
FIBIS Guide 2	An introduction to British Ships in Indian Waters: their owners crew and passengers <i>Richard Morgan</i>	£3.60
FFF1	Researching Anglo-Indian ancestry <i>Geraldine Charles</i>	£1.50
FFF2	Getting started with the India Office Records <i>Lawrie Butler &amp; Elaine McGregor</i>	£1.50
FFF3	Indian Directories <i>Richard Morgan</i>	£1.50
FFF4	Research sources for Indian Railways <i>Hugh Wilding</i>	£1.50
FFF5	Getting the best out of the FIBIS Website <i>Valmay S Young</i>	£1.50
FFF6	Graves in British India <i>Richard Morgan</i>	£1.50
FFF7	Some major sources for Ancestors in the Indian Public Services <i>Lawrie Butler</i>	£2.00