

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

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## **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)

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*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.*

## Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of the Journal.

The year since I joined FIBIS has been something of a baptism of fire, as within a short time I had been contacted by a previously-unknown cousin (FIBIS' very own Website and Social Media Manager, Valmay Young) who had undertaken meticulous research on our family history in India. To have striking details of our ancestors' lives revealed to me was an amateur genealogist's dream come true. Then, within the last few weeks, I have met for the first time long-lost cousins with a shared ancestor, DNA and passion for the history of British India!

This edition is a similar learning curve, with topics as diverse as the fate of French artisans in Tipu Sultan's court to the "good life" on an Assam tea plantation in the early twentieth century.

These stories confirm what we already know– that bygone India was a time of both delight and danger. In *Walter Williams – A Private Soldier in India* (Sylvia Murphy), the writer describes a spot in Karachi as, "...a splendid place for bathing and on a moonlight night...you may see at least twenty carriages drawn up in line on the sands to serve the purpose of bathing machines, and very often the band is ordered to play a programme on the beach...". He later tells us what happened to four men who went on a shooting expedition and included a few peafowl in their bag, "The natives got scent of the contents of their bag, and flocked in hundreds round them...the four men were soon overpowered and beaten cruelly, three of them managed to escape...the missing one had been bound and taken out into the forest by a party of men. When he was found, he was all but dead, as the natives had stripped him and tied him to a gum tree, after rubbing his body all over with sugar, so that the black ants might eat him".

But we also take away the humour and resilience of our ancestors in India. In her journey from Poona to Burma, Dora M. Fowle tells us, "Spent all this morning at some English letters in the midst of such mosquitoes as I have never seen anywhere before. I sent for oil of lavender and daubed my hands with it. They sat on it and seemed rather to enjoy it". It is these delightful touches that bring our forebears alive.

As well as stories of ancestors' lives, this edition also contains some more factual items – how to glean details of lives from directories (*Using Thacker's and Other Directories for Business in India* by Richard Morgan), or from a medal collection (*Inspector James Dwyer and the Thanks of the Bengal Government* by Kimberley Lindsay). I also pay tribute to Mabel Cantem, also known as Aunt Peggy, who tended the graves of British and natives in the Jhansi Cantonment Cemetery until her death earlier this year.

All that remains for me to say now is to sit back and enjoy your Journal – and keep your stories of daring and everyday life coming!

Emma Louise Oram

## **Diary of Dora M. Fowle During a Trip From Poona to Burma in 1905**

*Bill Hall*

*On going through some family records I came across the attached memoir written by my grandmother in respect of a journey from Poona to Burma made in 1905 which I had transcribed some years ago. My grandfather was an inspector of ordnance and was on a tour of inspection.*

*Wednesday, November 4th*

Left Poona at 2.17 this morning. It was a lovely moonlight night - or rather morning - when we started from the Connaught Hotel about 1.40 - the faithful Robello and his satellite the coolie having previously conveyed our baggage in the bullock cart to the station - 17 packages large and small and two bicycles being the sum total of our possessions. Some embarrassment was caused at the last moment by the reappearance of a tin contrivance for carrying soda water and ice which Mrs. Stauelbridge always lends Trenchard on these occasions and, which up to now, he has dutifully carried hundreds of miles and never used except once! On this occasion, having expressed my thanks to Mrs. S. in a note for kind thought, the situation was explained to Robello who smiled in his slow way and said he would entrust the tin to the coolie with directions to keep it carefully but not to let the Colonel sahib see it; so we set off with an easier mind.

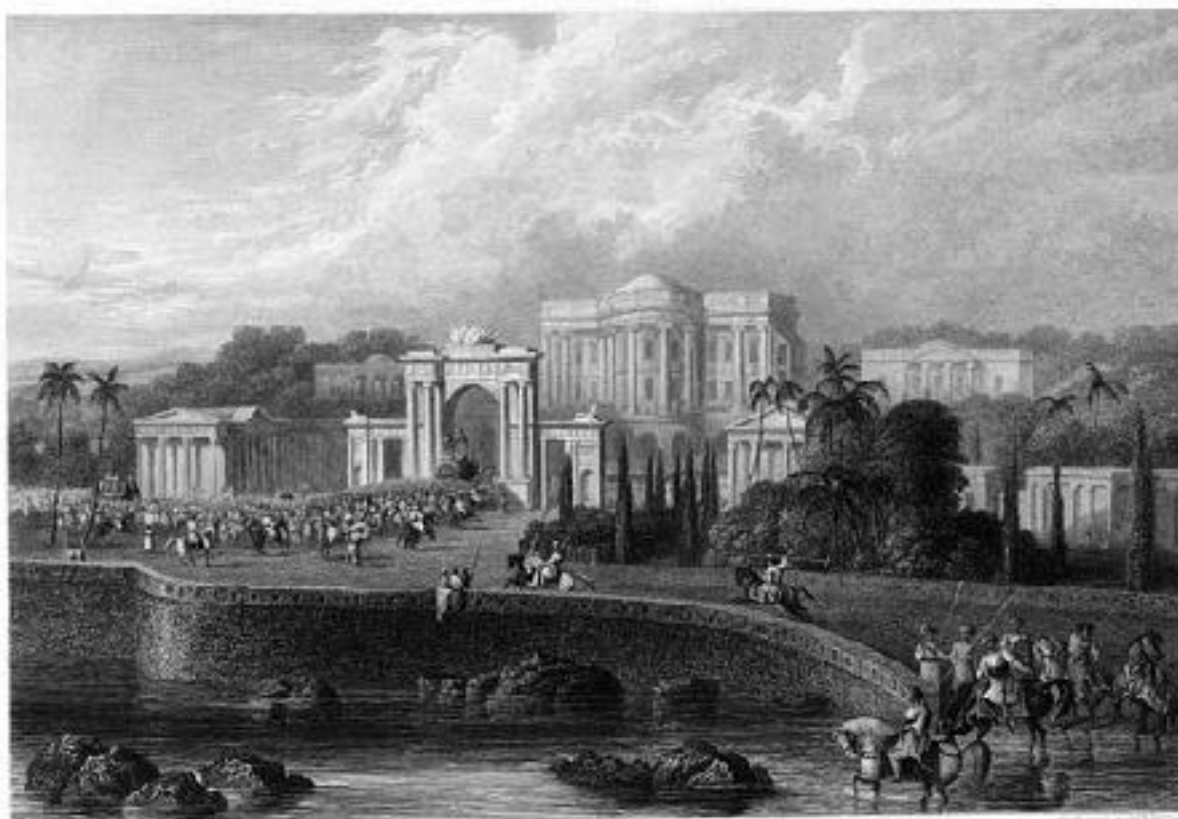
The train arrived in due time at Poona station and we found our coupé - a carriage with two berths reserved for us - had our beds made and went to bed and to sleep. Nothing to record about the journey. Reached Wadi where we changed trains and had breakfast at 12.30. The Secunderabad train was very full so I got into a ladies' carriage with an old Parsee lady with whom I conversed a little in Hindustani as she could speak no English. She prayed nearly all the time and during her prayers she refused to be interrupted by ticket collectors. When each course of prayer was ended she would talk a little, then pour water over her hands and face before beginning again. Biked from station at Secunderabad. Hotel fairly comfortable.

*Thursday, 5th November*

Trenchard went to Arsenal to call on Gen. P[?]. Came back to lunch. We biked to write our names in Lady P's book in the evening. Wrote letters all day.

*Friday, 6th November*

Before breakfast drove with Trenchard to the Residency at Hyderabad. He inspected a magazine. Young Saunders boy came to tea. Took a short drive in the evening.



THE BRITISH RESIDENCY AT HYDERABAD.

*The British Residency at Hyderabad, engraving by William Miller after Capt. Grindley. (Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.)*

*Saturday, 7th November*

Started at 8 a.m. to bike with Trenchard to the Arsenal but found my bike did not go well so turned back and sent it to be repaired. Very showery afternoon; did not go out at all. Went to amateur theatricals in the evening. The pantomime rehearsal very amusing.

*Sunday, 8th November*

Very showery day. Went to T[?] church in the evening. Very elaborate service for [?] of All Saints - procession and band instruments as well as the organ; six hymns; very good sermon and large congregation of Tommies [?].

*Monday, 9th November*

Got up at 5.30. Had both intended to bike to the station but as I had no front mudguard on my bike, I drove instead. Trenchard biked and found the roads very heavy [?]. I travelled in ladies carriage to Wadi with Miss James, head of Indian Nursing Sisters, and a most lovely Chow dog - her property. Changed at Wadi and got into our reserved carriage [?]. Raining all day and the whole country flooded. Heard rumours of a break on the railway line which were confirmed towards evening, though no one seemed to know exactly the extent of the break. However, at the station, where we had dinner, the

station master was able to tell us that we have to change trains at about 12.30 that night and we arranged with the guard to call us at the station before. It was a pouring wet night until just before we got to the break when it cleared a bit. The train came slowly to a halt in what looked like a great swamp by the light of a waning moon. The guard came along with a lantern and invited us to get out, so we clambered down the side of the train leaving Robello in charge of our possessions in the carriage. We clambered along a rough track with boards laid in places over the water and a perfect sea of mud everywhere. After about one hundred yards we came to a trolley and sat on that and were pushed a little way and then walked again; then trolley again; then walked to the end, about a mile altogether. All this time the rain was coming down in torrents. The wretched third class passengers carrying their bundles, and with their thin garments wet through, were staggering along the line. Some of the children crying but most of them quite cheerful. We thankfully clambered up the side of the waiting train and got into shelter, the rain soon after clearing. Trenchard went back to the train and conveyed Robello and the luggage we had in the carriage which was brought over on coolies' backs; after which we had some Burgundy and biscuits out of the tea basket, changed into dry clothes, made our beds and went to sleep.

*Tuesday, 10th November*

Were aroused by the train getting into [?] at 7.50, went to sleep again for a short time. Very pretty country, wooded hills and lakes in all directions. Got breakfast at about 9.30, then crawled on again. Stopped at a station called Perambur for 50 minutes while we were all examined for plague and had passports made out giving our names and address, duplicates of which were sent to the Health Officer at Madras so that if we did not turn up every day to be examined we would be traced and fined. Robello could not be got out of his carriage as no one had the key that would open it! So they kept asking us questions about him which made us very angry and I refused to answer. Then they sent a man to look at him who came back saying "looks about 30 years of age" and so on. In the meantime the train was waiting and we were getting later and later. I asked the ticket collector with what I meant for irony: "Shall we reach our destination today or tomorrow?". He replied calmly, "Madam, it depends upon where you wish to proceed to". I said, "Madras", to which he replied that it was quite near. I said, "I know that but I want to know if we are ever going to get there". It then dawned on him that a joke was intended and he began to smile. The train just then started and by the time we had got under way he had begun to laugh. We did reach Madras soon after that. Found Major Temple Cole and his little girl waiting for us on the platform. It was then found that none of our luggage that was in the van, nor our bicycles had come, which was rather a blow as we already had used up our change of raiment after our wetting in the night. Went out in the afternoon and bought a hat, having only my sun hat.

*Wednesday, 11th November*

Wrote letters and did some shopping in the morning. A good deal of rain and very gloomy muggy weather. Went for a drive with Mrs. Cole in the evening. Trenchard played golf with Major Cole. Asked at the station about our boxes - no sign of them.

*Thursday, 12th November*

Walked to the plague office to be inspected - an absolute farce - the man did not even glance at me. Very hot walking and no clothes to change into on our return. Writing letters again from breakfast till lunch. Boxes turned up in the evening. Took a stroll before dinner.

*Friday, 13th November*

Biked to plague office to be inspected again before breakfast and after breakfast drove to the steamer office to book our cabin for Rangoon. Left Trenchard at the Fort and drove back. Took a short drive in the evening and dined at the Coles at Fort St. George. Very nice quarters overlooking the sea. Two other guests were a chaplain and a Major Francis, R.A.

*Saturday, 14th November*

Discussed with Robello about his church-going tomorrow. He is very dejected and says all heathen people in this country...[?]. No one knows anything about church. However with the help of the local paper I found out hours of services for him at the R.C. Cathedral.

*Sunday, 15th November*

Rose with the lark and biked to the cathedral for the 7.30 service...about 15 minutes between that and Communion Service at 8.30 which we employed walking about the cemetery which is adjoining the cathedral - quite unusual for India. I have never seen it before.

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*Thursday, 19th November*

Up with the lark. Trenchard had to be at the Fort for his inspection parade at 8 am. I started with him at about 7.30 and after going a little way with him, turned back and went to the Cathedral for 8 o'clock service. Got home about 9.00. Spent the morning packing our goods. They went off with Robello and about six orderlies about 1 o'clock. Left the hotel at 3.00. It was about four miles to the wharf. We were inspected for plague as the first preliminary for the voyage. Major Cole was waiting at the plague office. Then we had to go along a very long pier along which there is a railway line for goods. Here we found a funny little carriage waiting, pushed by men along the rails, and we were propelled in this to the end of the pier. The little equipage is only kept for distinguished travellers like ourselves. The General had sent his boat to take us on board, still escorted by Maj. Cole who stayed with us till the ship was nearly due to start. Our cabin large, but a very small port(hole), and the saloon very stuffy. Nearly 2,000 coolies on board going to Burmah for the rice harvest. At 6.00 we were off. Just an hour later a decided roll, but beautifully cool - quite a gale through our cabin.

*Friday, 20th November*

A very cool day, inclined to be rough. The breeze we were so proud of last night has proved most disastrous. I had such bad neuralgia, I had to retire to bed after lunch and remain there with my head tied up with a hot bag.

*Saturday, 21st November*

Better and up for breakfast. Eyes still painful and unable to read or use them much. Spent the afternoon lying down in my cabin. The breeze on deck very strong and nowhere else to sit, but fellow passengers seem very nice. They are as follows: Col. & Mrs. Kay-Lees, he is also going to inspect in Burmah; a small tidy pair, she a very bad sailor and has not been at any meals today. Mrs. Kenny, a dark lady, who I have not [?]. Mr. Hewitt, a fat retired naval captain who has some post in the harbour at Rangoon. Mr. Lichfield [?], head of the Survey of India in these parts. Mr. Churchward, a banker in Rangoon, and Mr. Donegan [?], assistant to Mr. Lichfield. All except Mrs. Kenny very sociable and pleasant, and the Captain, Parsons by name, is a very genial man. I have the place of honour next him at meals which in some ways I find trying as the food is vile; and as I believe the Captain on these boats caters for the passengers I find it rather embarrassing when course after course of uneatable food appears and we reject it.

*Sunday, 22nd November*

A most un-Sunday-like day. The sea is calmer, wind less and my head better but could not manage English letters beyond a short scribble. The Captain says we ought to get in at 7.00 tomorrow, so we hope to catch the 12.30 train to Mandalay.

*Monday, 23rd November*

A stifling night, the wind dropped about midnight. About 5.30 in the morning we could stand it no longer and dressed and went on deck. We were then going up the river. Very uninteresting flat banks and nothing to be seen till about 7.00 when we came in sight of Rangoon and could see the golden dome of the big S[?] Pagoda towering through the haze. By 7.30 we had arrived opposite the town - nothing very interesting to be seen. The river was rather a busy scene with boats of every kind and shape plying up and down. The Captain still sanguine of our catching the 12.30 train. The doctor came on board to inspect the passengers and was at it hour after hour. At times a gang of un-inspected coolies would be introduced on our deck to be separated from the others and then it was most trying. Hour after hour passed and our hopes of catching the train faded to nothing. At last the inspection was over but not till just 1 o'clock did we slowly creep up to the wharf. We saw one officer in khaki on the wharf and he greeted us as the ship came close. For some moments neither of us had the least idea who he was, then Trenchard recognised him as Jim Longfield who had kindly come down to meet us. Major Cookson appeared just then. Trenchard knew him at once which was a mercy. We got off in a few minutes and I drove to the Strand Hotel with Jim and Major Cookson and in the funniest vehicle like a large very high box on wheels, with two seats inside facing each other, drawn by one tiny Burmese pony. I am assured they are enormously strong for their size but it certainly looks very cruel. Trenchard saw our luggage off the ship and joined us at the Strand and we all had lunch, after which we all went to Mr. Churchward's house - we had lunched at the Strand too - and rested. I had a [?] and went to sleep. We had tea about 4.30 then drove to the train in a similar vehicle to that we had before. In fact, unless on rare occasions when we secured a Victoria, we drove in these vehicles all the time we were in Burmah. Our train left at 6.00. It was pretty

crowded for the first hour. After that we had a carriage to ourselves the whole way to Mandalay. The night was not hot but very damp and there were hundreds of winged insects of every description in the railway carriage attracted by the lights. I spent all my time dragging them out of my hair at the back. I was rather apprehensive lest some of them should be flying cockroaches of which there is a kind in Burmah which, if it bites your hair, which it appears it is partial to doing, the hair never grows again in that place. So I had visions of bald spots as I abstracted beetles of sorts from my back hair. However my fears were groundless. We composed ourselves to sleep about 10 o'clock.

*Tuesday, 24th November*

Woke up in the train about 5.30 am to find we were passing through very pretty country. Hills on either side and woods near at hand. The stations we stopped at were very small - in some cases no platforms - just a few Burmese at each station. Stopped at a large station between 6 & 7 where some tea was handed in to us - some of the worst I have ever drank. The few sips I had of it made me feel quite ill. Between 8 & 9 we came to another station where tea was to be had, where we got Robello to get some boiling water and milk and made our own tea - very good. Country still pretty - pagodas of every size and shape on the hills and near the small villages. Got to Mandalay about 2.45 in the afternoon. Drove to the hotel in a similar equipage to the Rangoon one. Hotel in the town, or at least what is called the town, but the shops are very scattered, and there is no regular street. Old proprietress affable and anxious to please, but the place very tumble-down and surrounded by other houses, and arrangements very primitive. Not only in my bathroom was my own water emptied on the floor and allowed to meander through a hole in the wall, but mine, being in the centre of a row of bathrooms, the bath water of the other bathrooms also flowed through mine without any definite channel and lingered about in pools which was distinctly trying. We had a good tea and [?] on arrival and then went out in a phaeton belonging to the hotel and drove to the Irrawaddy Flotilla Co.'s office to engage a cabin for the downward voyage to Prome. It was a longish drive but everything very picturesque and pretty. After arranging about our passage we went to see the Queen's Monastery on our way back. A most beautiful building all carved and gilt. It was built by a former Queen of Burma for the priests to live in. A good many of the priests bivouac there now together with numbers of pariah dogs. All the inhabitants of Burma are Buddhists and part of the Buddhist religion is that all the male inhabitants become priests or novices for two years during which time they apparently wander round with begging bowls for rice all the morning and [?] for the rest of the time. They are only allowed one meal, and that of rice, to be eaten before noon every day. They wear yellow cotton garments just draped round them - nothing on their heads - but most of them carry a Burmese umbrella, also yellow. After seeing the monastery we returned to the hotel and rested till dinner.

*Wednesday, 26th November*

After a very hot night, woke to a very hot morning which gave us quite a shock, as when Trenchard was here two years ago at this very time, it was quite cold, so I had armed myself with warm garments (fortunately I had brought some thin ones too) and was very



near giving Robello some kit too. Spent all this morning at some English letters in the midst of such mosquitoes as I have never seen anywhere before. I sent for oil of lavender and daubed my hands with it. They sat on it and seemed rather to enjoy it. Trenchard went to the Arsenal for inspection parade. I drove with him and sat in the Palace gardens till he came back. We took a hurried stroll through the Palace [?].

## Notes

*The diary of the journey breaks off abruptly here. Perhaps Dora Fowle succumbed to the mosquitoes and got malaria? This is a pity because the story of their journey down the Irrawaddy to Prome, and subsequent return to Rangoon, would have been very interesting.*

*The asterisks after Sunday 15th indicate that a small portion of the diary has been omitted as it only described rather routine detail while awaiting ship in Madras.*

*Where a question mark in brackets appears it indicates that it has not been possible to read the original.*

*The change of trains at Wadi and journey to Secunderabad was because Col. Fowle had some inspection to carry out there. The signing of the names in Lady P's book was because General P was the senior officer and it was the custom for visiting officers and wives to sign their names in the Visitors Book of the senior officer in a station. This book was often at the drive gate or side entrance so that one did not have to make a formal approach to the house. If one were staying any length of time one might then receive an invitation to drinks. A newly arrived permanent resident might have to sign about four different books - the collector, the judge, the senior army officer and perhaps the senior commercial person.*

*The taking of bicycles to Madras I think was unusual. Most officers and wives would have probably relied on the horse drawn carriages. These were normally "Victorias" – four-wheeled carriages with folding hood for wet weather - in fact Dora Fowle mentions one in Burma. Presumably the bicycles were left in Madras for collection on the return journey.*

*The writing of "English" letters referred to letters for the weekly mail to England. From India this was a P&O liner from Bombay to Tilbury, with the latest times for posting advertised in the cities along the routes of the principal mail trains. These were the Frontier Mail, the Calcutta Mail and the Madras Mail. From Rangoon the Bibby Line ran a mail service to Liverpool.*

*The reference to the luggage in the "van" was because when people travelled with much more luggage than they do now, it was customary to take only light packages in the compartment. Heavy suitcases and trunks were labelled by the railway with their destination and put by porters in the guard's van, normally at the rear of the train, and removed on arrival. In India if one had a night on a train one always took a bed roll, or valise as they were called, which was normally a canvas cover containing a thin mattress, sheets and blanket.*

*The “long pier” at Madras must have been a boon to travellers as, at the time that Trenchard’s father arrived in India, the boats that took passengers out to the ship had to set off from the beach through the breaking rollers - a perilous journey. The ship which took Trenchard and Dora to Rangoon would have been a British India Line vessel - a pity that the food was so poor! Later, in the 1970s, the BI ship “Rajula”, 8,500 tons, operating this run, was the oldest passenger ship in the world. She had been built in 1928.*

*The delay in disembarkation at Rangoon was due to it being necessary to establish that no passengers at all had plague or other infectious disease before anyone was allowed ashore. If one single coolie had been found to have plague, the ship would have been put in quarantine and possibly no one, not even Col. & Mrs. Fowle, would have been allowed ashore. This was a routine precaution, but as it was known that there had been an outbreak of plague not far from Madras the authorities were being particularly careful.*

*Trenchard had been promoted to full Colonel on 1st October, just before the trip started, and consequently was accorded VIP status.*

## Walter Williams – A Private Soldier in India

1878 - 1888

As told by himself and Sylvia Murphy

### PART TWO

*Here Sylvia resumes the story started in Journal 35. We learnt that Walter John Williams joined the 37<sup>th</sup> Brigade in 1876, enjoying a 12-year career with them, most of his time being spent in India and Afghanistan. This extract comes from his account of 20,000 words which passed to his descendants now living in Australia. At this point in the story, Walter describes a journey from Rindly to Karachi.*

As is his habit, Walter takes some space providing a tourist's eye view of the city of Karachi and surrounds and makes passing reference to orphan schools attached to the church, from which there is a choir of 50 boys. Of particular interest though is the nearby seaside health resort:

*Near the sandy shore to the south of the city is a place called "Ghizree"<sup>1</sup> used by the Military authorities as a Sanitorium or health resort for sick soldiers. It is a splendid place for bathing and on a moonlight night (for it is too hot to strip or even wear a bathing dress in the day time) you may see at least twenty carriages drawn up in line on the sands to serve the purpose of bathing machines, and very often the band is ordered to play a programme on the beach, so when you see the party returning home at two a.m. you may guess they have enjoyed themselves.*

From Karachi, they move to Hyderabad<sup>2</sup> and in fact must have passed through here a few years previously en route to Sibi. Some historic graves are noted by Walter, in particular at a place he calls Meanie<sup>3</sup>, about 8 miles away, where there is a small graveyard under the walls of the fort. This was very neglected and becoming covered with briar and jungle grass. Walter remembers two memorials in particular:

*To the memory of 90 men of the x Regiment who fell from sunstroke during the march from Meanie to Hyderabad (a distance of eight miles only). Another (if my memory serves me well) is to the memory of 3 Officers, 8 Sergeants, 11 Corporals and 112 men of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment; and another to 5 Officers, 11 Sergeants, 13 Corporals, 201 men, 45 women and 106 children of an Highland Regiment who died during the months of Jan and Feb 1842.*

The heat in Sind is most remarkable, where *the sun pours down like streaks of molten brass from March to October*, and because of the heat, Walter says that 12 months was

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<sup>1</sup> Ghizree can be seen on the Karachi area map, bottom right

<sup>2</sup> Hyderabad - note: this is Hyderabad in Sind – not the Nizam's dominion. Spelled Haidarabad in Const. 1893 index map 26 Bc

<sup>3</sup> Meanie – this is probably Miani - Const 1893 map 26 Bc

the longest that a soldier was required to stay there. Artillery horses were never brought in, but local Arab-bred horses adapted to the climate were used. Although Walter survived his year in good health, a great many were lost from the regiment, due to fever and heat apoplexy. This may be the time in August 1883 when Walter was tried and imprisoned, for absence from his guard post without leave.<sup>4</sup> His description of the antidotes to heat is too good not to share:

*Day and night the Punkahs, or fans (which are large heavy curtains hanging over your bed and are swung to and fro by means of a rope which is pulled by a native) are wafted to create a mouthful of cool air. The doors are covered with screens of interwoven grass and on this from the outside there are men constantly throwing water over them. As the hot wind blows through this wet grass it cools a little, and it is a treat to see the fellows pushing to get a place near them, especially when they are taking any hot food. I always found it better to take hot food than cold as the temperature of the body has not to undergo so great a change ..... A cold drink will bring a rash all over your body in an instant, this is what we call "Prickly Heat" and a very good name for it indeed; for it is enough to make one tear himself to pieces. I have known men sleep in a bath of cold water all night, in fact you could always find a few men lying about the wet stones of the bath house, which was the only cool place in camp, but this proved to be a very dangerous practice and we lost many of our men through the same thing, as the heat of the day after laying in the water all night was too great a change and consequently brought on heat apoplexy.*

*The temperature of rooms are taken twice a day, that is at midday and at midnight, and published in Station Orders. The hottest day that summer was the 27<sup>th</sup> May 1884 and well do I remember it. There was no rest that day and to sleep at night was impossible. The thermometer read as follows*

<i>Midday in the sun</i>	<i>170F</i>
<i>Midday in the shade</i>	<i>119F</i>
<i>Midnight</i>	<i>114F</i>

*On this particular day I may remark we all felt as if we were stewing, and at night we got up a game in the bath house which is capable of allowing 100 men to swim at one time, here we amused ourselves like so many water rats diving in and out again, while some amused themselves by throwing water over each other with buckets and hand basins.*

*During these hot months if you travel by rail you are allowed 1lb of ice for every 50 miles you ride. The carriage windows are fitted out with screens, or a sort of venetian blind; over this water trickles from a large tank which is carried on top of the carriage. As the breeze which is created by the speed of the train rushes through this blind it becomes damp and cool, but the top of your compartment is like a*

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<sup>4</sup> See his Service Record WO97/4179/99

*bakers oven. A doctor must travel with each train and attend to any cases which may be caused during the journey.*

When it was a little cooler, the soldiers arranged other evening entertainment:

*In the evening we generally had a dance among ourselves, and about twice a month would give a Quadrille party, inviting all who dressed in English style whether black or white, our officers and ladies were as bad off for some amusement as ourselves so they patronized our little parties on all occasions.*

In September, there was an outbreak of cholera at Hyderabad. So, on the 20<sup>th</sup>, the regiment set off by train to Karachi, then boat to Bombay and thence to Poona<sup>5</sup> – a total distance of about 700 miles in four days. As usual, Walter provides a travelogue of the new location, Poona and its surrounds, which doesn't need to be shared here except for some comments about Kirkee<sup>6</sup>, which was also known as the *English Town*. He says:

*There are a great many European families in this quarter, and at early morn you can see them riding or driving out, some ladies are very fond of parading the walks and drives with a colony of dogs at their heels, ranging in size from like a cat tail to a mastiff.*

Walter now spends some time discussing his impression of caste and religion, being particularly interested in different forms of Catholicism, and from this he goes on to speak of the maintenance of schools and orphanages, whose inmates are mainly Goanese and native converts. Subsequently, he notes that there are very few soldiers' children in the schools, mainly those of men in civil employ. Although not stated, I suspect that that his comments refer to Catholic Orphan Schools, even though the contribution required by soldiers suggests otherwise:

*They receive some support from the Government but they chiefly depend on voluntary contributions, and needle and laundry work from ladies living in the district. They also receive a good sum from the soldiers, but this is compulsory, in fact it is a sort of Income Tax, for the man who gets the most Good Conduct Pay give most to the School. Thus: if a man receives 2/6 per month as Good Conduct Pay and the Rupee is worth 1/4 ½ there will be a fraction in the sum which is given towards the support of the schools according to Indian Regulations. Now another man may be in receipt of 5/-, 7/6, 10 and as much as 12/6 per month for good conduct according to the number of years he may have served without committing himself, so you see he pays this fraction on every 2/6; regardless of its amounting to whole numbers, and*

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<sup>5</sup> Poona - Const map 31 Bb, Note that this town has had many variant spellings Poonah, and now Pune. Also a b & w town and environs map, which includes Kirkee, here <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~poyntz/India/images/PoonaKirkee1924.jpg>.

<sup>6</sup> Kirkee – see Poona above, shown as Kirki in map index. It is the cantonment area outside Poona.

*this done by every soldier receiving a good conduct stripe, means a handsome sum at the years end; they average about 75 per cent throughout India.*

*The boys are taught some trade and receive a sort of Commercial Education while the girls are supposed to learn house work; but those of my acquaintance evidently know more about the etiquette of the Ballroom than the rules of the kitchen.*

It is known that many soldiers took young wives from amongst the girls ready to leave the orphan schools. Walter describes the practice:

*Having these qualifications<sup>7</sup> he goes to the School and acquaints the Lady Superior with his intentions; he is then shown all the marriageable girls and he may choose any one he likes, if both parties are willing to marry, they may see each other twice a week for one month, no courting outside the grounds or School gardens, and then under the eye of The Lady, or one of her assistants. After the expiration of the month, they may marry, but in the School Chapel. The girl on leaving receives sixty Rupees (5 pounds) and a good box of clothes. In case of a girl refusing an offer of marriage, she is put at the foot of the list of candidates and is not allowed to see another visitor until each of her companions have had an offer.*

There was clearly an ongoing concern that the troops at least try to avoid contracting Malaria:

*We used to get Quinine Parade every morning at 7 o'clock, when every man and boy whether sick or not, had to take his dose, we were formed up in line on the plain outside the Hospital, and it was handed round by a Staff of Doctors and Apothecaries.*

Nevertheless, fever had broken out amongst the regiment, which Walter attributes to having been brought from Hyderabad almost two years previously. Still, in February 1885, they left Poona for Ahmednagar<sup>8</sup>, some 110 miles away. For Ahmednagar, Walter provides a lengthy travelogue, with anecdotes about native pilgrim and worship practices<sup>9</sup>.

The dangers to Europeans of failing to respect native customs and taboos cannot be underestimated, as shown by the results of four men who went on a shooting expedition and included a few peafowl in their bag. Although there was a heavy penalty for shooting peacocks and peahens, the natives preferred to exact their own punishment.

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<sup>7</sup> For the pre-requisites see page 15 of the transcript, and for further acerbic comment on his impressions of the resulting marriages, read on after that excerpt. Unfortunately Walter is very critical of the women that he calls Eurasians or half-castes. His commentary on p.16 may be offensive to some, so it is not reproduced in this article. It must also be remembered that Walter did not intend his writing for public readership, but just to be shared with his sister.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmednagar - Spelled Ahmadnagar in Const 1893 map index. 31 Cb

<sup>9</sup> See p.18. Indeed he goes on to describe native funeral and marriage practices, snake charming, the hazards of scorpions etc.

*The natives got scent of the contents of their bag, and flocked in hundreds round them, this as a matter of course ended in a fight, the four men were soon overpowered and beaten cruelly, three of them managed to escape with their lives and on coming to camp related the story. A search party was sent out for the missing man and on arriving at one of the villages were informed that the missing one had been bound and taken out into the forest by a party of men. When he was found, he was all but dead, as the natives had stripped him and tied him to a gum tree, after rubbing his body all over with sugar, so that the black ants might eat him.*

Attempts to ward off cholera were somewhat feeble, and included an increase in consumption of rum and hard spirits, as “a drunken person is not so liable to take cramp in the bowels”.

*...the reason they took extra quantities of Rum, as Cholera is nothing more at first than cramp...despite the Doctors warning, they were drinking, singing and dancing, from dark to daylight. In each room was kept a large bottle of mixture to be taken in case of anyone finding the least disorder in the bowels, and in the centre of the floor, was a charcoal fire, with some sort of sulphur burning all night.*

*Dumree Musjid,  
Ahmednuggur. (Public  
domain via Wikimedia  
Commons.)*



After the end of the cholera epidemic, Walter was sent to Kirkee to do a Certificate in Army Signalling and Telegraphy, with the School of Engineers. He notes that Kirkee is the headquarters for the Artillery and Engineers. After completing the course in three months, he then returned to Ahmednagar, where he stayed until the end of 1887. He was again tried and imprisoned, in February 1886, for being drunk at his post, though he had had a trouble-free period since August 1883. Of course, he did not mention such events in the account for his sister.

Orders were received to proceed to Bombay early in the next year. The move came in February, 1888. Walter was not in Bombay for long, as he was one of six people then

sent on to Deolali<sup>10</sup>. By now, after eight years in India and Afghanistan, he was clearly homesick and looking forward to this last transfer. This is how he spent some leisure time before that move:

*I passed most of my spare time on the beach, picking winkles and buying the small fish, or else in the Garrison Library which overlooks the Harbour. It seemed a dream to me, to watch ship after ship loaded with soldiers and other English folks, steaming out. How I would watch them till dipped beyond the horizon, and wonder which of them was chartered to take me, as if I was of some consequence, however one fine day I was sent for, and told by the adjutant that there were six of us to proceed to Deolali next morning at 5.30am and I think if he said in five minutes time I should thought it a long time to wait.*

Deolali, which can hold 10,000 people, is the last military camp for British soldiers before leaving India; all debts and credits with the military authorities need to be settled and satisfied before the soldiers leave for England, to be discharged. Walter writes at length about the bureaucracy here, and the benefits accruing to certain NCOs, such as the quartermaster. As this time would be clearest in his memory at the time of writing, the facts, together with his acerbic commentary, make informative reading.

*Every man or woman leaving for England must go to this place for final settlement with the Indian Government, as they will not hold themselves responsible for any claims or mistake once you leave the country. Everything is settled, and pay drawn up to the day on which you sail...take care that your report does not cause you to be kept back till next season, as it generally takes these fellows in Government Offices half a year to investigate small matters concerning persons of no consequence.*

*I have actually heard some declare that their accounts were correct; knowing that they were wronged of a large sum at the same time. There is generally something missing when men come to settle up for good. This is the way they caution you:- "Any man whose accounts are not correct will attend the Office at 10am tomorrow; the ship sails in a few days' time so take care that none of you are left behind". All this is prearranged, for they know too well that a man would forfeit his Credit, rather than stay behind to investigate the matter; consequently all hands sign: Satisfied.*

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*I cannot fairly describe the canteen (Camp Public House) as any other than a drinking den, about the size of a Church; here you can get as much bad beer and fiery spirits as you choose to pay for. The profits of this place is something enormous. What a fine thing it is to keep up the Library, and other little places of recreation, or support some Institution for these thousands! So it would be if the profits were put to some such purpose; but they go into the pockets of these three men:- Quarter Master – 1 share; Sergeant Major 1/2 share; Sergeant Issuer 1/4 share;*

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<sup>10</sup> Deolali - In the district and just south of the town of Nasik, Bombay, Const 1893 map 31 Bb



*if equally shared, after paying all expenses, would mean something like Rs1000 per mensem, per man = £300 per month.*

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*All women and children for England are sent on one day before the men, so that they may be more comfortably quartered, and not pinched for room as some of the last arrivals are. If a soldier or his wife happen to be sent home for the benefit of their health, they must both proceed together; one never goes without the other, unless both parties are willing that one should remain.*

Apparently, some women are not so keen to return to England, and at the last minute, chose to stay in Bombay:

*You can see a great many English women in the Restaurants and smoking Divans in Bombay, who are nothing else than runaways from homeward bound vessels, or else they are women who have been turned out of the Regiment for misdemeanour...A great many of the well-to-do Indians have white wives. If a Government man should die, his wife is allowed to remain in the Country and draw her husband's salary for six months after his death; this is done to give her a chance of getting another, and remaining in the Indies, as the Government are desirous of planting as many white skins there as possible, and should any man desire to go to Australia instead of England, the Gov will grant him thirty £ for so doing.*

On the 30<sup>th</sup> March, 1888, the men were marched to the wharf and waited most of the day in a shed, eventually to be put on to a barge, one of a long string which was then towed by a steam tug over to the ship that would take them home to England. Here is Walter's reckoning of those on board:

*...such a box of dice you never saw: 29 convicts, 19 insane, 500 sick, 300 women and children, 200 going on leave, 400 for discharge, 302 Officers, Warrant Officers, and Ladies, and 260 of a Crew. Total 2010 and all mixed up together; but this is soon altered, for as soon as possible everyone has their own place pointed out to them. One would wonder how so many are fed, and kept clean, and how so many sick are attended to. First comes the crew; they have their own portion of the ship, set apart for both their comfort and workshops, which consist of sailors foredeck, Carpenters and Smiths shop, butchers stalls, bakehouse and brewery with a thousand other shops and stores. Next is the Cabins capable of accommodating 300 Ladies and Gentlemen, then the women and children's quarters, which on this occasion was over crowded, so that poor Tommy had to go anywhere to make room for them. The Warrant Officers also had a place to themselves, and I feel quite vexed when I say that 300 of our sick men were laying on the deck during the whole voyage, because these Warrant Officers and their families must have beds,*

Walter's sternest criticism is directed at the warrant officers, and his greatest sympathy for the sick soldiers as, although there was a doctor on board, he reasonably imagines the impracticality of 600 men waiting in turn to receive treatment on the crowded ship.

From March, for several months, homeward bound ships were crowded, as folk endeavoured to escape the heat and monsoon in India. Conversely, ships to India, from November through January, were also very crowded, as people escaped harsh winters at home for pleasant winter conditions in India.

Other criticism concerns the behaviour of some of the married men, particularly those who had married mixed race girls in India. Despite his earlier scathing comments about the attitudes of these women, he shows some sympathy to their predicament:

*I noticed during the voyage, a certain school of men who were stuck in a certain out of the way corner of the vessel, from daybreak till bedtime each day. This was a gambling school, and they were all married men; among them were the husbands of the six black women and I am sure they require some attention, for the other women would not acknowledge them in any way, in fact they lead the life of dogs aboard; the last word from any of their fellow passengers was sneering remarks about their colour.*

There were four deaths on the way home, including a major and a doctor. The ship arrived at Suez on 11<sup>th</sup> April, and in due course dropped anchor at the Spithead outside Portsmouth in the early hours of 26<sup>th</sup> April. The disembarkation procedures were ordered:

*First to land was the Convicts and insane, next sick, next, women and children, and then the liberty boys, who worked well at the tons of heavy baggage that had to be landed in a short time. Each person with his luggage is examined by the Customs, but only one or two were discovered with contraband goods, though a great quantity of raw silk was landed and represented as made up stuff. I saw some of the women during the voyage lining old cotton gowns with the richest of silks, for as long as it is tacked into another garment, and representing part of it, they are bound to let it pass.*

It took most of the day to get all the luggage ashore and to accommodate the women and children – all except for:

*...these poor black creatures who seemed afraid to push in among the remainder. They had gathered in a circle, with their children in the centre, there they sat on the cold flags, all that cold day, and not a soul to offer them a kind word, until we discovered that their luggage was still on the ship, and their husbands were off in town...*

Thankfully, despite his disapproval of them, Walter was clearly one of a group who helped bring their luggage ashore and got them some hot coffee and buns.

From the pier, all were dispersed by train to their destinations. As for the soldiers awaiting discharge, they were marched to Fort Brockhurst, two miles out of town. Walter's account of this march is quite amusing:

*...here comes about 600 of our foreign defenders with their backs up as if they were on the point of freezing, some in red coats, others in blue, some in top coats, and*

*some in their India white duck, and five out of every six is carrying a bird cage, or something of the sort; while more are finished off by the money tribe; in fact they have a complete collection of all animals that are small enough to carry. It was a job to keep them together while marching through the town, the men would keep dropping out to warm their insides at any Inn whose sign took their fancy, but the Officer in charge seemed to understand that the men were a little excited after just landing, so no one took the advantage of him...*

He also gives a useful description of the fort and its amenities:

*There is an outfitter in the Fort, whose Goods are equal to any in town, and a good Library, and Recreation Room, which is well lighted and warmed. There is also double allowance of coal and bedding supplied to those coming from India, so they have reason to caution men about acting Silly Billy in town, the punishment for which is to stay in the Fort ten days after the others have gone home...*

Eventually, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May at 8.00am, there was a final inspection before the discharged men were marched to the railway station, booked for Salisbury, where they separated for trains to their various destinations. Walter had five fellow passengers going through to Wales, including two in uniform. Walter can have the last word by telling how they managed to secure a compartment to themselves:

*...the work of a Genius who wrote the word 'Lunatics'; on a large sheet of paper and stuck it on the carriage window, there were two men in uniform with us, and on arriving at a station, one of these men would produce the railway warrant, which was all the Ticket Collector required; so we were left undisturbed.*

### **Post script**

Walter Williams went on to marry Eliza Exton, in 1889 in Newport, and had five children between 1890 and 1900. He died 20<sup>th</sup> May 1931, and left descendants in the UK, USA and Australia.

## **The Joy of Family History**

*Hilary Sheridan*

I have set pen to paper in the hopes that this will help others. I fell into family history really by accident. My dad had undertaken quite a lot of research on his side of the family and after suffering health issues, he decided to downsize accommodation. I requested his notes so that they would not be lost. It is still a family joke that I thought I would type them up, "one Sunday afternoon". Some nine years later I am nowhere near finished but have covered a lot of ground including my mother's side of the family. My mother was born in Shillong, Assam, the home of her maternal grandparents whilst her parents were living in Dibrugarh, Assam. My grandfather was a tea planter and my grandmother lived the good life.

After spending a considerable amount of time in the British Library compiling as much of my tree as possible, I eventually found the opportunity to go to India and visit Dibrugarh myself with my husband. By this time my interest was more intense than births, death and marriages as I had family photographs, family stories and in particular a video taken in 1932 of my grandmother playing tennis.

My grandmother, mother and aunt talked frequently about the tea plantation and the club where my grandmother played tennis, bridge, drank whisky and enjoyed dancing.

The British built a fort in the mid-1800s at Dibrugarh which was originally on the River Dibru. However, the area was subject to much riverbank erosion and after a huge earthquake in 1950 (Tibet-Assam earthquake) which devastated the area and severe flooding in 1955 a large part of the riverbank was swallowed up taking the church, masonic lodge, district club and many European dwellings. Dibrugarh is now on the Brahmaputra.

My grandfather was the manager at the Chowkidinghi tea estate and we were lucky enough to stay in the assistant's bungalow. Unfortunately, we could only see the manager's bungalow (my mum's home and garden) from the road. As I wanted to see where the church, masonic lodge and club may have been sited, we looked out from the river bank but had no map to aid us. There was a part map in the bungalow (dated 1913) at which we were staying and, together with notes posted on the Koi Hai website about the area from people who had lived there, we had some idea as to where the original bank had been situated.

Whilst in Dibrugarh we had been shown the new district club and the rebuilt church. The new church contains many plaques rescued from the old church before the floods of 1955 submerged it. On looking in the club house I was asked to sign the visitor's book where I spotted a name that I recognised from my family's photograph albums.

I have a relative in Australia who is the nephew of my grandfather the tea planter. I cheekily emailed and asked him to see if he could find these people in Sydney which was the only information in the visitor book. My relative is a resourceful gentleman and found the family through business connections within a very few days. As luck would

have it, they were visiting England in a few weeks and we managed to meet up. They had brought a huge array of old photos in India which I could not match but I showed him the video. “Oh!” he said, “That’s my grandmother playing tennis with your grandmother”. So now I knew who the opponent was. His grandfather had been the local solicitor who had administered several of my family’s affairs including the sale of my great-grandmother’s residence in Shillong after my great grandfather died. They appeared to be thrilled especially since he, like me, had been very close to his grandmother. I told them of my search to find the location of the club, church and masonic lodge as my grandparents were married in the church and my grandfather was an active mason. He told me that his aunt, who was born there, had visited Dibrugarh in 2008 and had come home with a map but had mislaid it.

Since this meeting I made further enquiries about local maps with little success. Those catalogued at the British Library appear to have been lost. Then a few weeks ago I had an email from Australia as they had found the aunt’s map. It is a composite map of Dibrugarh showing the extent of the bank erosion and the siting of the original buildings.

In addition I had another two addresses of family homes, one in Calcutta and one in Shillong. Our guide in Calcutta was very persistent about finding Portland Park in the Alipore district and with the help of my husband’s Google maps of the area eventually found the house which had changed little since the 1920s when my great grandparents were resident.



*European house, 2 Alipore Lane, Calcutta, 26 October 1868 (British Library Online Gallery, Asia, Pacifica & Africa Collections.)*

On looking through the gates out came a caretaker. Our guide spoke to him, the gates were unlocked and we looked around the house. The garden, which used to contain a tennis court, was completely recognisable from family photos as were many rooms

inside because very little had changed. Dark wood staircases and old fashioned plumbing. It was owned by a government minister who preferred to live elsewhere.

In Shillong we had great difficulty in finding the house, *Benmore*, in which my great grandparents lived after his retirement from Calcutta and where I guess my grandmother stayed after her confinement in the Welsh Hospital with my mother. From the internet the house now belonged to an MP but we could not find its location.

Our guide, Rocky, was very persistent and eventually went into government house to find out where this MP lived. On arrival at Benmore the MP was not at home but his nephew was. He was so taken with our old photos even remembering taking down the tree at the front to make way for the car that we were invited in for tea. We posed drinking tea as in the photo of my great grandparents in the 1930's. It was surreal.

I really hope this inspires others to take chances and not be put off by apparently daunting issues, for example an MP living in an ancestor's house. Oh and this was the house that David's grandfather acted as solicitor for its sale...

## Under Duress: The Tiger of Mysore and His Infidel Artisans

David Atkinson

### PART TWO

*We left the first part of this story with Citizen Debay, one of the detained French artisans of Tipu Sultan's court, now acting as interpreter for Tipu's envoys on Ile de France, getting ready to execute his own clandestine plan. On 25 February 1798 Debay wrote a letter to the directoire in Paris, pleading for permission to return to his native land. On receiving this appeal the Minister, decided to "await an opportunity" to effect this:*

*Paris, 29 July 1798*

Citizen Debay, watchmaker, one of the artisans who left with the Ambassadors of Tipu Sultan in 1788, claims in his name and in the names of three of his comrades, Pombart, dyer; Le Dal, carpenter; & Menaud, cutler, the mediation of the *Directoire Exécutif* with this Indian Prince to obtain permission to return to France.

Citizen Debay recalls that the appointments these artisans and craftsmen had undertaken, under the authority of the Government, were to be for only four years. He retraces the discomforts that he and his Comrades have suffered; always shut up in the workshops of the Fort. They were prevented from communicating with the French and other Europeans who came to the Court of Tipu Sultan. He had not given them permission to return at the expiration of their engagement.

This Prince having desired to send Ambassadors to Ile de France to form with us an Offensive and Defensive Alliance, has chosen Citizen Debay to serve as Interpreter, [but] he has been obliged [before departure] to promise to return to this Prince's states.

...Debay announces that he is to return to Tipu Sultan to fulfil his promise not to expose his Comrades to any new difficulties.

According to the terms of the Agreement made 28 September 1788...between the ambassadors of Tipu Sultan and the French artisans and craftsmen, they were to be engaged for only 4 years and soon 10 years will have passed since they left France.

It is right to foster the desire which they show to return to their country. In this regard we propose to engage the Administrators of Ile de France to seize opportunities to use their good offices with Tipu Sultan so that the 4 artisans & craftsmen, namely Debay, Pombart, Le Dal and Menaud can return to France, and that they are authorised to do so by the Agreement of 28 September 1788.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps Governor Malartic's proclamation, inviting a volunteer force from the population of Ile de France, with promised rights of freedom, had created one such opportunity – for Debay, at least. However, far from the tens of thousands of French troops desired by Tipu, only 100 men were willing to go.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://anom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/> : Debay, horloger, Pombart, teinturier, Le Dal, menuisier, et Menaud, coutelier, artistes et ouvriers ... demandent à être rapatriés an VI, op. cit.

The return to Mysore contained as much maritime adventure as anything during the preceding voyage. On 7<sup>th</sup> March 1798 they embarked with the soldiers on the 46-gun frigate *La Preneuse* (portentously meaning “The Catcher”) and picked up a few volunteers on Ile Bourbon. They went by way of the Laccadives and encountered a pattamar manned by men from Malabar who told the 31-year old Captain Marthe Adrien L’Hermitte that there were two English ships at Tellicherry.<sup>2</sup> The captain was baited. Despite the objections of the ambassadors he stated that he should be “highly culpable and deserve to be put to death” if he did not go after them! Therefore, on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1798 he brought the ship into the sea roads of Tellicherry but at the very moment he manoeuvred to carry out the attack “one of those terrible storms, so frequent in these waters unexpectedly broke.”<sup>3</sup> Lightning struck the main top gallant mast and fire took hold. One man was struck and killed and eight were injured. The storm passed and emergency repairs were made to the frigate then she fell on the two vessels and after about an hour’s combat, with exchanges of cannon fire, they surrendered by striking their colours.<sup>4</sup> Over 500 prisoners were taken and the two prizes were sent to Ile de France. Most of the prisoners were eventually left on shore and *La Preneuse* carried on her way to Mangalore, safely landing 26 April 1798.<sup>5,6</sup>

### **Back in the Fortress of Seringapatam**

One wonders what relationships with the people of Seringapatam the artisans and soldiers had formed after these long 10 years. Had any been allowed to take wives? Might have the many Mangalorean Catholics held captive, mutilated and severely oppressed in Tipu Sultan’s fort, aroused sympathies with their French co-religionists, sometimes served by priests from Goa?<sup>7</sup> This level of detail is out of reach but it prompts interesting questions for future enquiry.

By June 1798, Napoleon and his army had advanced into Egypt but word of this did not reach India until October with the additional news that Nelson had taken a naval victory against him in the Battle of the Nile. Despite this, Napoleon was able to consolidate his position in Cairo and on 26 January 1799, from his headquarters there, he wrote to “the

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<sup>2</sup> A *pattamar* is a coastal trader

<sup>3</sup> Mullié, Charles. *Biographie des célébrités militaires des armées de terre et de mer de 1789 à 1850*. Vol.2 (G-Wur), publ.1852, p.224

<sup>4</sup> The *Raymond*, Capt. Smedley & the *Woodcote*, Capt. Hannay. See: Grocott, Terence. *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary & Napoleonic Eras*, publ.1997, p.57

<sup>5</sup> *Official Documents, Relative to the Negotiations Carried on by Tippoo Sultaun, ...*, op.cit., pp. 51-52

<sup>6</sup> On 11 Dec 1799, in view of Ile de France, *La Preneuse* was engaged by the English ship *Adamant* and was destroyed by fire. See: Troude, O. *Batailles Navales de la France*, Tome 3, publ.1867-8, p.184

<sup>7</sup> Scurry, James. *The Captivity, Sufferings And Escape of James Scurry Who Was Detained a Prisoner During Ten Years in the Dominions of Hyder Ali and Tippu Saheb*, publ.1824, pp. 102–106

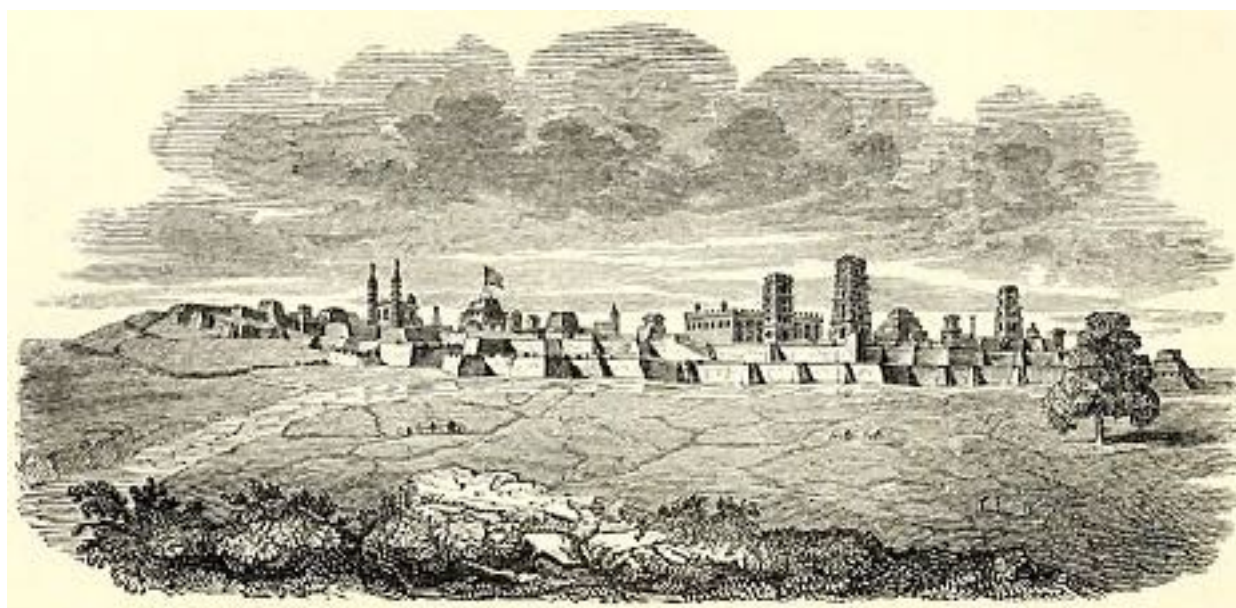


most magnificent Sultan, our great friend Tippoo Saib,” announcing his arrival “on the borders of the Red Sea, with an innumerable and invincible Army, full of the desire of delivering you from the Iron yoke of England”.

Richard Wellesley read the situation and planned the ultimate attack on Tipu’s fortress which would result in its destruction and Tipu’s death on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1799.

It was an ugly business. After the devastating assault on Seringapatam:

The city was exposed during the night to the brutal licentiousness of the soldiery, amounting to nearly 40,000 men, and composed of so many nations. Female innocence became the prey of the midnight ravisher; and the acquisition of a princely fortune was the labour of a moment.<sup>8</sup>



*Seringapatam* by James Welsh (1775–1861); engraver: Robert Havell Jr. (Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.)

### **French Prisoners**

About 300 men in the French corps, formerly belonging to Lally and his successors, the total including the recent arrivals from Ile de France, were put into custody at Seringapatam.

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<sup>8</sup> Clarke, Hewson. *The History of the War, from the Commencement of the French Revolution to the Present Time*, Vol.1, publ.1816, p.400

The officers arrived at Poonamallee 14 July 1799. They were granted a subsistence equal to that given to those officers captured at Pondicherry, which was the entry level pay of an HEICo officer. Their names were listed as:<sup>9</sup>

Chappuy, Chief of Brigade; Du Moulin, Chief of Line; Monvert, Wolfe, Vesseron & Rinar, Captains; Bourgeat, Captain of Cavalry; Mundane & Hilaire, Lieutenants; Delaye & Antoine, Lieutenants of Artillery; Saingeannet, Du Demaine & Simon, Lieutenants of Navy; Colin, Lieutenant & Secretary; Monneret, Lieutenant; Dubois, Surgeon; Questin, Commandant; Vreniere, Major; Colin, Capt of Artillery (these last three all ex Lally's brigade).

It appears that they were sent to Europe in several groups, with Bourgeat, Vreniere and others sailing aboard the *Dublin*, and additional prisoners aboard the *Sir Edward Hughes* at the end of 1799.<sup>10</sup>

General Dubuc followed a different path. He managed to leave India on a ship sailing under the Danish flag, called the *Odense*, which originated from Tranquebar on 7 February 1799, Captain Vamberg in command. Dubuc was to accompany two ambassadors destined for the *Directoire* in Paris, named Abdool Reheem (or Cheik Abouram Saib) and Mohamed Bismilla.<sup>11</sup> The vessel was joined by *La Surprise*, a 500-ton English prize that had been taken by the frigate *La Forte*. The two ships probably touched at Mangalore and then carried on to Port Nord-Ouest, Ile de France, arriving 7 April 1799.<sup>12</sup> On the second leg of the journey Dubuc and the ambassadors transferred to *La Surprise*, now described as a French corvette, but she struck severe weather and had to shelter at the Seychelles. It happened that the 40-gun HM frigate *Braave*, Captain Alexander, which we will encounter later, was in the vicinity and captured her on 20 September. The ambassadors and Dubuc watched the action from land. *La Surprise*, which was in a bad way, was commandeered and brought to Bombay with the three honourable gentlemen and her crew as prisoners of war. Their discovery had been a huge surprise to all concerned. On arrival, 11 November, the ambassadors were put on shore and given their liberty to stay at Nisbet's Lane, under a guard of honour, but not before the relinquishment of jewels that had been selected by the late Tipu as gifts for the *Directoire*.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> British Library, IOR/F/4/78/1699 : French officers taken prisoner at Seringapatam to be granted the same subsistence allowance as officers captured at Pondicherry

<sup>10</sup> *The London Chronicle*, 15-17 April 1800, p.362 : homeward bound East India ships at St Helena 9 Feb 1800

<sup>11</sup> Durup, Julien. Short Seafaring Adventures and Conflicts in the Indian Ocean 1405-1811: in chronological order with reference to the Seychelles and Mauritius capitulations. 2004. <http://henri.maurel.pagesperso-orange.fr/seafaring%202.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Archives of Mauritius, Gargantua database: Ref A-FF4, pp.181-182. Arrivals of *l'Odenzié* & *La Surprise*

<sup>13</sup> *Bombay Courier*, vol.8, issue 373, 16 Nov 1799 & *Observer* (London), 15 Jun 1800

Dubuc was somewhat luckier with his fortune. His family was left in India, most probably stationed at Tranquebar, and were in “great distress” over finances. Therefore he arranged for the Danish captain to convey 24,000 Francs from Ile de France to his young wife. However this ship was intercepted by an English man-o’-war, and one Captain Clarke finding out that this money happened to belong to a French officer claimed it as prize money for himself and crew. It might have ended there but the sad story told them about the circumstances of Dubuc’s poor family was enough to induce a change of heart, resulting in the release of the money and a very polite letter to Madame Dubuc offering “proof of his esteem and gratitude” for her husband who had “so frequently distinguished himself by his humanity towards the English prisoners of war.”<sup>14</sup>

On 9 October 1800 Chappuis, Dubuc and several more prisoners were readied to proceed from Bombay to England on the *Triton* and the *Queen*. Chappuis, who had been wounded at Seringapatam, eventually returned to France. His tales of adventure in Tipu’s court and his account of hearing the last sighs of the sultan were used by the French playwright Etienne Jouy who wrote *Tippô-Saëb*, a tragedy of five acts in verse, first performed 27<sup>th</sup> April 1813. Jouy modelled his fictional character, Raymond, on Chappuis himself who attended a performance of the play.<sup>15</sup> In contrast Dubuc’s fortunes finished with his return to the land of his birth. On 31 May 1805 he was sentenced to death for espionage against France and the following day he was executed by fusillade on the Plaine de Grenelle, Paris.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, up to 600 French prisoners who had been held at Black Town, Madras, and unconnected to the men of Seringapatam, had already departed for Europe on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1799 on an earlier sailing of the *Triton*, under convoy with the East India Company’s 18-gun armed ship *Cornwallis*.<sup>17,18</sup> They reached the Cape of Good Hope on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1799 but the

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<sup>14</sup> Jackson’s *Oxford Journal*, 8 May 1802

<sup>15</sup> Jouy spent his tender youth in India and claimed he was twice admitted into the presence of this prince and was given reports about his character from French officers in his service. Jouy served in the Luxembourg regiment in India, under orders of Colonel Raymond, chevalier (a different Raymond to the one serving under the Nizam of Hyderabad). His play is a work of burnished fiction. See: Mehta, Binita. *Widows, Pariahs, and Bayadères: India as Spectacle*, publ.2002, p.94. The real Raymond died of an acute illness a year before Tipu. Dompard died about the same time.

<sup>16</sup> Dubuc was aged 40. He hailed from St Malo and signed himself d’Ubuc. A companion, Jean Jacques Antoine Thomas Rossolin, shared the same fate, as did an accomplice, André Laa, 6 weeks later. One of Dubuc’s daughters, Françoise Rosalia, married Dirk Bronnekam, mariner at Pondicherry, 30 March 1807, by the Catholic curate at Notre Dame des Anges as well as by JC Holzberg, according to the Church of England rite. The widow, Madame Jeanne Dubuc (née Bouthé), was a witness. She died at Pondicherry in 1811, aged 36. Bronnekam became the Dutch resident at Palicol (Palakollu)

<sup>17</sup> *Bombay Courier*, vol.8, issue 336, 2 Mar 1799

<sup>18</sup> *Madras Gazette*, vol.5, issue 232, Sat, 8 Jun 1799

voyage had been a disaster. “When the *Triton* arrived at the Cape, she was in great distress from sickness among the prisoners, 175 of whom were landed and sent to an hospital at Simon’s Bay; and 54 died during the passage from Madras; – the remainder were to proceed on the *Triton* to England, with the convoy from St. Helena, to which place they had sailed from the Cape.”<sup>19</sup> The mood of the prisoners was “very riotous and mutinous...declaring, if ever they could by any means get away from the *Cornwallis*, they would murder every British subject on board, without mercy.”<sup>20</sup> At least one Frenchman was violently killed following an altercation.

Is it any wonder, then, that French prisoners, on a subsequent voyage of the *Cornwallis* (Lieut. Allan McAskill captain) now being used as an unarmed transport vessel, would mutiny and sail for Ile de France? <sup>21</sup> This time there was at least one Seringapatam man on board - Debay. The *Cornwallis* had been under repairs at Mazagon “superintended by certain of the French prisoners.”<sup>22</sup> She left Bombay 15 December 1801, in convoy with the *Braave*, and sailed for Anjengo where she joined 6 other East Indiamen. The only crew apart from the captain were two officers, one gunner, one ill carpenter, the surgeon and a “weakly” group of 40 lascars, their entire store of weapons being the captain’s fusée (or signal gun) and sword. The *Cornwallis* was overcrowded and slow, so that she was outrun by the escort. On the evening of 11 January 1802, when it was realised that the *Braave* was out of view, the prisoners took their opportunity. They created a diversion, raising a false alarm of man overboard and then others made out as if there was fire below. The captain raced down the companionway ladder to investigate and was confronted by 6 Frenchmen.

The crew were easily overcome by the far more numerous passengers. The vast majority of the mob had been captured as privateers belonging to the vessels *Clarisse* and *Apollo* originating from Ile de France, “all with a great dislike to go to England and the greatest desire to go to the Mauritius...where they all have not only Prize Money to receive from their former captures, but have their families and connections & c.” Even though the French officers technically carried rank on board they had little maritime experience and the

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<sup>19</sup> *Bombay Courier*, vol.8, issue 365, 21 Sep 1799

<sup>20</sup> *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, issue 177, Sun, 15 Sep 1799 & *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, issue 6521, 3-5 Oct 1799

<sup>21</sup> This *Cornwallis* should not be confused with the aged 774 ton Indiaman, the *Earl Cornwallis*, Captain James Tennant, which had become a convict ship and was used to transport “the whole of the French Prisoners, lately detained in Bengal” from Bengal to Ile de France, in June 1802, following the temporary peace afforded by the Treaty of Amiens signed 25 March 1802. See: *Bombay Courier*, vol.11, issue 506, 5 Jun 1802.

It arrived 13 Aug 1802 at Port Nord-Ouest with 25 French officers & 267 matelots, 3 of whom died on the passage, and one civilian, Citizen Dayot, fils. The ship was laden with cargo from Malacca. See: National Archives of Mauritius, Gargantua database: Ref A-FF4, p.323

<sup>22</sup> Bulley, Anne. *The Bombay Country Ships 1790-1833*, publ.2000, p.74

seamen took over in a “continual scene of confusion.” All stores were divided as common plunder. They steered their way to Port Nord-Ouest, under command of Citizen Pierre Gautier, arriving on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1802.<sup>23</sup> There had been 86 French mariners, 10 officers and an additional cohort of “11 poor sickly invalids”, some without legs, the rest without use of their arms, “sent on board by order of Capt. Alexander [of the *Braave*] at Goa...humanely put into...hospital, with the ship’s carpenter” on arrival at Ile de France.<sup>24,25,26</sup>

Among the few names available from the fragmented record is that of Charles Philibert Debay, now aged 37 years, who after his arrival on the *Cornwallis* was accommodated by Citizen Vautier of Rue de Nationale, Port Louis.<sup>27</sup> The Governor of Ile de France issued Captain McAskill a passport to India and he and his officers were paid a small allowance although the lascars received nothing.

*The Bombay Courier* of 10<sup>th</sup> April 1802 announced another mutiny, of French prisoners who were to be transported to Europe, which had taken place only two months before that of the *Cornwallis*, this time carried out by 47 officers “composed of those who had been in garrison at Pondicherry, and those taken in [the capture of the frigate] *La Chiffone*, and at Seringapatam; they were all on their parole on board the ship. There were besides about 380 embarked under the description of non Commissioned Officers and Privates, of the Land and Sea profession.”<sup>28</sup> The ship was the *Prince*, Capt. Patrick Scott, which had left Madras 18<sup>th</sup> October 1801, with *HMS Suffolk*. On 28<sup>th</sup> October the captain and crew were overpowered. Monsieur Pinaud, former captain of the privateer *Clarisse*, was appointed commander and a course made for Ile de France which they reached on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.<sup>29,30,31</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> National Archives of Mauritius, Gargantua database: Ref.A-FF4, p.131: 18 Pluviose, year 10, arrival of the *Petit Cornwallis*

<sup>24</sup> *The Asiatic Annual Register, for 1802* (publ.1803): Bengal Occurrences for February 1802, p.56

<sup>25</sup> *The Asiatic Annual Register, for 1803* (publ.1804): Bengal Occurrences for May 1802, p.1

<sup>26</sup> British Library, IOR/F/4/142/2481A : Papers regarding the capture of the armed transport ship *Cornwallis* off Anjengo by French prisoners

<sup>27</sup> National Archives of Mauritius, Gargantua database: Ref.A-FA32, pp.68-69: 3 cooks, all of Lorient are also named: Joseph Le Floche, aged 31; Jean Jacques Le Brun, (27); Cezar Cheramie, (27). The names of a 25 year old cook and a school teacher are obliterated

<sup>28</sup> *Bombay Courier*, vol.11, issue 498, 10 Apr 1802

<sup>29</sup> National Archives of Mauritius, Gargantua database: Ref.A-FA32, pp.68-69: passengers arrived at Port Louis: Pierre Pageot (46), cooper of Nantes; Bourgeois Barret (36), bourgeois of Karikal

<sup>30</sup> National Archives of Mauritius, Gargantua: Ref.A-FF30, p.349: 1 Frimaire, Year 10, arrival of the *Prince*

<sup>31</sup> Malleison, GB. *Final French Struggles in India and on the Indian Seas*, publ.1884, p.112

Thus a number of French detainees from Seringapatam had managed one way or another to land in friendly territories by extreme collective initiatives. What percentage were survivors of their original quota is not known. It is important to note that Debay's appeal to the *Directoire Exécutif* had referred to only four of the dozen or so earlier named *ouvriers*. And of these Le Dal cannot be further traced. Had the rest perished or, like Mouyset, found means of escape during the intervening time? Alternatively had they already been repatriated or did they refuse to leave? The likelihood of each seems to reside in their descending order.

### **What became of them?**

#### ***Pierre François Mouyset, founder***

We left Mouyset marrying in October 1792, at Ile de France. From this time onwards he was known as a mechanical engineer and was later employed by the government. He divorced his first wife in February 1798 (25 Pluviose VI) and she died 30<sup>th</sup> January 1803 at Port Louis.<sup>32</sup> He remarried at the age of 44 to Marie Louise Turnel, who was 22, at Flacq, 10<sup>th</sup> September 1809. They had one child, Héloïse, born 1<sup>st</sup> April 1810. Mouyset died soon after, evidenced by the fact that his will was deposited by Nicolas Petit, notary, on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1811. Sale of his property after decease was entered by Petit on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1811. The circumstances of his death are not well elucidated but there is a record which states that on the birthday of King George III, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1813, His Majesty granted pardons "to the blacks convicted of being accomplices in the crime of assassination committed on the person of M. Moyset."<sup>33</sup>

#### ***Charles Philibert Debay, watchmaker***

Debay was the son of Pierre Débay, mayor of Jeanménil, Vosges, born 1<sup>st</sup> March 1765, and orphaned as an infant. He married on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1802, at Port Louis, to Marie Jeanne Robert. In 1808 he was living at Rue de Calvados, and they had several children.<sup>34</sup> He was a signatory to an Oath of Allegiance, dated 28<sup>th</sup> December 1810, which stated (in French): "We swear faithfulness, obedience and submission to His Majesty George the Third King of Great Britain and Ireland and to the English Government in these Colonies. Port Louis, Ile de France."<sup>35</sup>

#### ***Nicolas Pombart, dyer***

On 18<sup>th</sup> July 1807 Pombart, his three children, the eldest aged 12, and his "femme de

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<sup>32</sup> Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer: Etat Civil numérisée: Ile de France, Flacq, 1798, pp.9-10

<sup>33</sup> Bonnefoy, T. *Table générale (alphabétique et analytique) pour servir aux recherches à faire au greffe de la Cour suprême de l'île Maurice ... (1722-1850)*, publ.1853, p.224 : Grace. Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique

<sup>34</sup> <http://henri.maurel.pagesperso-orange.fr/rct%20prof2.htm> : Census of Professionals, 1808, Port Napoleon

<sup>35</sup> National Archives of Mauritius, Gargantua database: HA3A, p.21: Oaths of Allegiance. Ile de France had capitulated to the British at 1am, 3 Dec 1810



couleur libre”, along with a diverse number of Frenchmen and their families arrived at Ile de France on the cartel ship the *Marquis of Wellesley*.<sup>36</sup> He was aged 49 and had been residing at Pondicherry for some years. The youngest of the children, Marie Therese, was born there on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1805.<sup>37</sup> By 1808 Pombart was living at Port Napoleon (the former Port Louis), on Rue de Moka. He took the Oath of Allegiance on the same day as Mouyset.<sup>38</sup> He had been born on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1757 at Reims (parish of St Etienne), son of Jean Baptiste Pombart. He died at Port Louis Ouest, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1846, probably the longest lived of all the artisans.<sup>39</sup>

### **Médard Balandreau, master blacksmith**

Médard Balandreau, was a native of Nevers, baptised at St Pierre Church 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1761, the son of Jean Balandreau, a master locksmith, and Magdeleine Chollet.<sup>40</sup> He was orphaned before the age of 13. According to the marriage entries of two daughters, Félicie (b. Jan 1805) and Marie Anne (b. 4<sup>th</sup> Mar 1806) he died at Chandernagore on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1814, which is where he raised his family. Respectively these daughters married Jacques Alexandre Millet and François Millet, two brothers in the indigo industry.<sup>41</sup> Balandreau's wife, Anne Sinan dit Classe, whom he married on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1803, was born at Chandernagore. Her name also appears in Pondicherry records in February 1816.<sup>42</sup> In later life she resided at Entally, Calcutta. Probate of her will was granted to her son Auguste Medard Balandreau in 1864.<sup>43</sup> This son, a retired merchant, died of cholera on 30 September 1877, aged 67. He was buried by P. Lafont, vicar, in the Roman Catholic portion of Lower Circular Road Cemetery.<sup>44</sup>

### **François Fidèle Ripaud de Montauvert, corsair**

After his disappearance at Ile de France Ripaud is likely to have laid low on Ile Bourbon for

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<sup>36</sup> Arrivages à l'Ile de France. Depuis la paix d'Amiens jusqu'à la conquête (1802-1810). *Revue Rétrospective de L'Ile Maurice*, Vol. 5, publ.1954, pp.49-54

<sup>37</sup> Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer: Etat Civil numérisée: Pondichéry: baptism 4 Jan 1806. The entry names Pombart's wife as Jeanne Streen, native of Negapatam

<sup>38</sup> National Archives of Mauritius, Gargantua database: HA3A, p.19: Oaths of Allegiance

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.cgmr-genealogie.org/actes/acte\\_deces.php?xid=25160&xct=7055](http://www.cgmr-genealogie.org/actes/acte_deces.php?xid=25160&xct=7055)

<sup>40</sup> Archives Départementales de la Nièvre: Registres Paroissiaux, St Pierre, 4 E 194 art. 46, p.11

<sup>41</sup> Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer: Etat Civil numérisée: Chandernagor 1824, p.7: marriage of Jacques Alexandre Millet, to Marianne Félicie Balandreau, 12 January 1824 ; & Chandernagore 1825, p.20: marriage of François Millet to Marie Anne Balandreau, 30 November 1825

<sup>42</sup> Diagou, Gnanou, ed. *Arrêts du Conseil supérieur de Pondichéry. Tome 8, 1816-1820*, publ.1941, pp.34 & 47

<sup>43</sup> British India Office wills & probate, Bengal: L-AG-34-29-109, pp.396-399

<sup>44</sup> Bengal Ecclesiastical Returns, Bengal: N-1-161, p.337

a few months. It is possible that the venerable Malartic had dissimulated with the ambassadors over Ripaud's whereabouts because he was soon threatening shipping once more, no doubt carrying Letters of Marque, officially authorising his plunderous activities. By 1799 Ripaud was in command of an English prize, the *Pearl* (*La Perle*) which he renamed the *Laurette*. Just a few weeks either side of the French prisoners' arrival on the *Cornwallis*, 8<sup>th</sup> February 1802, Ripaud was plying the waters between Ile Bourbon and Ile de France on the schooner-brig *La Concorde*, carrying a few passengers and goods such as coffee. He married and had family. He saw maritime action against the British throughout the rest of his life. Following Ile de France's capitulation in December 1810 he headed for France. Ripaud died on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1814 at the age of 60 near Bayonne, at the helm of the corvette, *La Sapho*. The vessel was protecting the Adour River, preventing English troops crossing, but the flotilla of French boats was barraged by cannon and Congreve rockets (ironically, weapons directly based on Mysorean rockets extant in Tipu's time). Ripaud's arm was completely ripped off by a projectile and he died of his wounds hours later.<sup>45</sup>

### **Auguste Menaud**

He arrived at Madras in 1799 and perhaps because of his skills as a turner, cutler and founder he was retained. By 1808 he was employed under Captain Thomas Fraser (d. 1823, Bath) of the Madras Engineers casting large bronze cylinders for the Perambore gunpowder mill. Menaud happily signed an Oath of Allegiance in December 1808.

It is possible the reason he so readily went over to the English was in the interests of a young family. There is poignancy to be found in the record of his marriage to Monique Leroux dit Clérac at Notre Dame des Anges, Pondicherry on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1804, by the authority of Lieut-Col Alexander Keith, for on this same day they formally adopted four children: Rose, born at Seringapatam, 24<sup>th</sup> January 1792; Françoise, born at Seringapatam on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1795; Nicolas, born at Seringapatam on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1797 and Joseph born at Madras.<sup>46</sup> Almost certainly they were the hitherto illegitimate children of Menaud, now made legal heirs by this act of adoption for which ample precedent of such a practice exists.

Eventually he became a regular employee of the East India Company and in October 1816 was brought to Bengal, with his family, now numbering 11, on 300 rupees per month, to cast cylinders at Ishapore and Allahabad. In 1821 he returned to Madras and was granted a pension of 25 pagodas monthly.<sup>47</sup> Monique died 20 April 1855, Madras, aged 79. Her sister was Janne Sauvagère and it is clear that she was living in the household in the 1830s.

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<sup>45</sup> Vidal de La Blache, capitaine. *L'évacuation de l'Espagne et l'invasion dans le Midi, juin 1813-avril 1814. Tome 2, L'invasion dans le Midi*, publ.1913-14, pp.251 & 262-263

<sup>46</sup> Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer: Etat Civil numérisée: Pondichéry, 1804, p.6: his name was written François Auguste de Meneaud ; Monique had been born at Pondicherry 17 Sept 1775

<sup>47</sup> Young, Henry Alfred. *The East India Company's Arsenals & Manufactories*, publ.1937, pp.91-92



Auguste wrote his will in French, 16<sup>th</sup> December 1833, aged 79, giving his full name as François Cambu[s] Sieur de Meneaud, legitimate son of Pierre Cambu Sieur de Meneaud and Marie Roze de Casterat of old nobility. His father was a surgeon and both parents were natives of the village of Eymet, Périgord. Giving a nod to his connections to the *Ancien Régime* is a telling sign that Auguste may not have given his heart and soul to the republican movement. The latter spelling of his surname became the style used by his descendants.<sup>48</sup>

The children named in the will were:

*Roze Kelly*, who had married some time before 1812 to Francis Kelly, clerk of police in Madras. Her husband was educated at a Capuchin charity school in Madras and in 1834 he and Vambaukkam Raghavachariar became the first Indian-born Police Magistrates and Deputy Commissioners of Police. In his will written in 1842 Francis Kelly referred to his residence on Kalathiappa Street, Vepery, “nearly opposite the Roman Catholic Chapel.” A Kelly Lane still exists off this street. A large number of Meneaud and Kelly baptisms, marriages and burials took place nearby at St Matthias’ Anglican Church, Vepery. This couple had two sons, one of whom reached adulthood, and three daughters.

*Joseph Meneaud* who became manager of the General Police Office, Madras. His wife, Sophia Ormsby was the daughter of Lieut-Col William Ormsby, Superintendent of Police, Madras, from 1821 to 1830. Ormsby succeeded John McKerrell, a Scotsman, who was the natural father of the Kellys’ son-in-law William McKerrell Johnson. Joseph and Sophia Meneaud had at least 10 children.

*Eleonore Burke*, the wife of Marcellus Burke. Her husband was a surveyor in the Survey of India, born at Vellore in 1791, son of Francis and Margaret Burke. The couple were married in Calcutta in 1820. They had no children. She died at Vepery in 1866 and he in 1865.

*Auguste [Augustus] Meneaud* who was also a surveyor, as well as a draftsman. In 1831 he married Matilda Brunton, daughter of Lieut. Thomas Brunton of the Carnatic European Veteran Battalion. They had at least 11 children.

*Cecile Defries*, who was the wife of Lewis Defries, the son of Madras merchant Adrian Defries. Cecile died at Madras in 1835, aged 19 years. She was buried at the Catholic Church, Luz, Mylapore.

*Françoise Meneaud* who was living in Bengal when the will was written. She had 3 children at the time. No husband was mentioned and Auguste insisted that the children “receive their share of the property that I leave, after the death of my wife Monique Meneaud”.

## Epilogue

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<sup>48</sup> British India Office wills & probate, Madras: L-AG-34-29-235, p.19 & L-AG-34-29-250, p.25

Auguste Meneaud died on 2nd October 1835 at Vepery, Madras. The adventure to India of him and his companions had covered a period of great change in the power relationships of France, Britain and Indian states. Such dramatic changes could never have happened without enormous bloodshed and misery. Alongside, each jurisdiction administered its own kind of brutality. Meneaud, Debay, Pombart and Balandreau were a few of the lucky survivors. If only we had a few more words from them about their time at Seringapatam. Instead their marks are probably confined to a few embellishments on the captured weaponry and mechanical tiger of the once formidable Tipu Sahib. Perhaps this is how the artisans preferred it.

Raymond: Friends, Sahib is no more; and his blood which is on the ground...  
Is condemnation of an infamous attack...

In the bosom of the dead Tipu makes your vanquishers tremble...

(From "*Tippô-Saëb*", *A Tragedy in Five Acts* by Etienne Jouy)

## Remembering Aunt Peggy

*Emma Louise Oram*

Aunt Mabel 'Peggy' Cantem, who died earlier this year aged 94, was the self-appointed caretaker of the Jhansi Cantonment Cemetery in Uttar Pradesh, where she daily tended the graves of British soldiers buried there from the Indian Mutiny of 1857 up to the Second World War.

The cemetery, built in 1842, had suffered nearly three decades of neglect until she intervened in 2004, reclaiming the site from nature. She was laid to rest there after her death on 26<sup>th</sup> April.

In an interview broadcast on Radio 4 last year<sup>1</sup> she explained that before she had taken over care of the 14-acre site, huge palm trees and six-foot high grass made the place dark and dismal, and "there were snakes falling on your head".

While attending a funeral, she overheard the remark, "This is the last place I would like to come to be buried". The comment struck a chord, inspiring her to take action.

"I've taken it over to do something with my life," she said. "I want to give the dead the dedication they deserve".

The cemetery also provided a haven for wildlife: partridge, quails, rabbits and white hares made their home there, and Aunt Peggy ensured that a corner of the plot was kept undisturbed during the peacock breeding season.

Aunt Peggy was born on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1922 into a family of Jhansi railway workers, and during her working life took on roles such as stenographer, English teacher and community care worker.

She recalled that The Railway Institute in Jhansi was the hub of Anglo-Indian life. There were whist drives, ballroom dancing and moonlight picnics in the jungle accompanied by jazz music on the gramophone.

Aunt Peggy was a typical Anglo-Indian – proud of her mixed heritage and an avid collector of royal family souvenirs, who would always serve cakes, biscuits and sandwiches at afternoon tea.

She laughed that her final resting place would be the cemetery she had so carefully tended during her life. "I have to be buried here, no other place. I can dream that I can still go out in the night to look at the work going on. I will protect everybody there...we'll have a ball!"

She leaves a niece, Irene St Anne, of Mumbai.

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<sup>1</sup> "Teatime at Peggy's", BBC Radio 4, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

## Using Thacker's and Other Directories for Business in India

Richard Morgan

### The Directories

*Thacker's Indian Directory*, published annually 1863-1947 and afterwards, has long been recognised as a major source for information about British people in India. It started as *Thacker's Bengal Directory*, but in 1885 was extended to all India as *Thacker's Indian Directory*. Bengal of course included the mercantile centre and then capital of India, Calcutta. The British Library's Asian and African Studies Room has an almost complete run of *Thacker's* on open shelves at OIR 954, but odd volumes can also be found at many other libraries.

*Thacker's* immediate predecessor, the short-lived *New Calcutta Directory* was published from 1856 to 1863 (the two overlapped in 1863), and in its layout and comprehensiveness foreshadowed much of the better aspects of *Thacker's*<sup>1</sup>.

While these Directories list virtually all "Europeans" in India, their strength lies in their coverage of those outside the official classes and in particular those in business.

Both Directories are Calcutta-centric. The rest of Bengal (and from the 1885 *Thacker's* the rest of India) is deemed to be Mofussil, a useful word meaning roughly provincial – sometimes but not always with a slight sneer. Under each major mofussil town is a list of the administrators and services in the area and also local businesses. From 1866 the main cultivation businesses were also collected together at the end of the Mofussil section: indigo and tea – and later jute, silk, sugar, coffee, etc.

By way of illustration consider the jute business of some Morgans and their Landale kin. The families were related by marriage, when on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1851 Alexander Gibson Morgan married Ellen Russell Landale in Kirkcaldy<sup>2</sup>. A G Morgan 1817-1902 was Agent (ie Bank Manager) for the Bank of Scotland in Kirkcaldy. They had several children. Four of their sons were involved with business in India: David Morgan 1852-1935, Alexander Gibson Morgan the younger 1857-1934, Robert Russell Landale Morgan 1859-1924, and George Morgan 1867-1957. Their mother, Ellen Russell Landale, had two brothers: David

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<sup>1</sup> For more on Indian directories see my *FIBIS Fact Files No 3 Indian Directories*, May 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Some readers may find themselves doing a double-take on seeing the names Morgan and Landale in the same sentence. Aren't they the people who?... Yes. David Landale killed George Morgan in 1826 in the last fatal duel in Scotland (see James Landale (of the BBC) *Duel* Canongate, Edinburgh 2005). Alexander Gibson Morgan was the nephew of this same George Morgan, and Ellen Russell Landale was the daughter of the same David Landale. It must have involved a monumental burial of hatchets for this marriage to have come about!

Guild Landale 1842-1912 and Alexander Landale 1844-92, both of whom also had Indian connections<sup>3</sup>.

### *Alexander Landale*

Landale is a rare surname and it seems highly likely that all Landales are related to each other. The only point to watch in a name like Landale is alternative spellings. The form Landle also occurs – perhaps a clue as to how the name was at one time pronounced. So let us start with the Landales. Alexander Landale was the first of the two families to be in India – at least by 1870 when he appeared in *Thacker's* as an Assistant at L W Toulmin and Co of 19 Radha Bazar Street, Produce Brokers<sup>4</sup>.

David Morgan appeared in Calcutta in 1876. His uncle Alexander Landale brought him in as a fellow Assistant at L W Toulmin's then, and the next year A G Morgan joined them<sup>5</sup>. In 1879 both A Landale and D Morgan become Managers within Toulmin's, A G Morgan remaining as an Assistant.

But Morgan is a common name. Have I got the right D Morgan and A G Morgan?

### **George Henderson & Co and Jute**

For the Morgans, rather than turning immediately to *Thacker's*, I suggest a different starting point. One online database with good links to business at this period is the *London Gazette* (and its siblings the *Edinburgh Gazette*, etc). This is a Government publication giving various kinds of official news and notices – for example lists of Army promotions. But its importance for business is that it lists all bankrupts and, even more usefully, all dissolutions of partnerships. For our Georgian and Victorian ancestors almost all small and even moderate-sized businesses were, or at least began as, partnerships. Furthermore for these types of record the full name is usually given. The *Gazettes* are online and free at <http://www.london-gazette.co.uk><sup>6</sup>. Searches on Alexander Gibson Morgan produce for example on page 3784 of the *London Gazette* for 10<sup>th</sup> June 1902 a notice of, "A Partnership lately subsisting between us the undersigned, William Lindsay Alexander,

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<sup>3</sup> I am indebted to Edwin Conde Landale of Whonnock, British Columbia (my cousin by marriage – or possibly cousin by murder – see preceding footnote) for assistance on the Landale genealogy.

<sup>4</sup> I am sure I have the right A Landale. On 4 Jul 1873, when he married Lucy Dupre Abbott in Mozufferpore (now Muzzaffarpur, Bihar, north of Patna), he was described as "Produce Broker". (BL IOR N/1/144/90 (not .../91 as appears in the index). The BL lacks the 1869 *Thacker's* volume so he may have started at Toulmin's then.

<sup>5</sup> *Thacker's* of course. A mysterious "W. Morgan" appears as a one-off among the firm's Assistants in 1874. Is this an error for "D. Morgan"?

<sup>6</sup> For the past several months when you call up the London Gazette Home Page, Internet Explorer says: "There is a problem with this website's security certificate... We recommend that you close this webpage and do not continue with this website. \* Click here to close this webpage. \* Continue with this website (not recommended). \* More information." I have no idea why this appears. I am afraid I have been continuing with this page and so far have suffered no ill effects.

George Henderson, David Guild Landale, James Henderson, Robert Stewart Henderson and Alexander Gibson Morgan, carrying on business as Merchants at 7, *Mincing Lane in the city of London*, under the style or firm of “GEORGE HENDERSON AND SONS”

So here we see the two brothers-in-law, David Guild Landale and Alexander Gibson Morgan, in a joint venture. The next entry on the same page is for a firm called Henderson Craik & Co of Manchester with nearly the same partners. In both cases these entries are prompted by the departure of W L Alexander from the partnership. Further *Gazette* entries continue in this vein with eventually a notice on page 5672 of the *London Gazette* of 15<sup>th</sup> July 1921 when A G Morgan finally retires from the partnership. English Directories show that George Henderson & Sons of 7 Mincing Lane were “East India Merchants”<sup>7</sup>.

We now have a clear reference to India and are ready to turn to the Indian Directories. This leads us to a Calcutta firm called George Henderson & Co Ltd. They appear in the commercial section (Section VIII) *The New Calcutta Directory* of 1857<sup>8</sup>:

George HENDERSON & Co Office 6 and 7 Jackson’s Ghaut Street PARTNERS – George Henderson (London) and Herbert Knowles; *London Agents* – R & J Henderson<sup>9</sup>; *Assistants* G McDougal.

In the 1862 Directory we see the first appearance of Alexander Landale’s brother, David (Guild) Landale as an Assistant. Henderson’s is still at 6-7 Jackson’s Ghaut Street, Calcutta with partners, George Henderson in London, and Herbert Knowles and David Fergusson in Calcutta, and now four Assistants, one of whom is David Landale. We also learn that the firm now act as Agents for the Borneo Co Ltd, London. In fact Robert Henderson jr of R and J Henderson was one the founding Directors of this company, founded in 1856 to exploit the mineral wealth of Borneo, and it was George Henderson who persuaded the Borneo Co to invest in the Baranagore jute factory in 1857<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> *Post Office London Directory* 1920. The Guildhall Library in London has a good run of London Directories, and many other libraries have odd volumes.

<sup>8</sup> The British Library’s copy of the 1856 *Directory* lacks vol 2 which includes the Commercial Section.

<sup>9</sup> R & J Hendersn can be elucidated from other sources. John Henderson 1780-1867 got into the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* as an ultra-evangelical – he even spent £4,000 writing to every railwayman in the country on the evils of working on the Sabbath. He was enabled to do this by becoming immensely rich: with his elder brother Robert first as a dry salter in Glasgow and then as East India Merchants in London. After Robert’s death in 1842, John Henderson took into partnership Robert’s sons, one of whom was George Henderson.

<sup>10</sup> Wallace pp15-16. Wallace p23 has a wonderful picture of the Baranagore European staff all heavily bearded and topeed in 1862. The papers of the Borneo Company (swallowed up in the Inchcape Group) in the London Metropolitan Archives reveal a succession of Directors from the Henderson family (Ms 27179) .

By 1866 George Henderson's moved to 1-1 Fairlie Place. William Alexander is a partner, and David G Landale, now the only Assistant, "signs per procuracy" – that is to say he has authority to sign on behalf of the company.

We need not follow the firm through every year of *Thacker's* but note the firm's expansion into new areas. By 1873 they have taken on the Baranagore Jute business from the Borneo Company, and added two tea companies, New Ghola Ghat Assam and Dessai Parbuttea Tea Co to their portfolio.

Ten years later David Guild Landale had become a partner in Calcutta – doubtless not unconnected to the fact that in 1879, he married Agnes Katherine Henderson, daughter of George Henderson<sup>11</sup>. There were also now 12 assistants. They have added to their list of companies, agencies or affiliates: M David & Co of Narraingunge, the Bally Paper Mills Co Ltd, the Bengal Stone Co Ltd, Hanwal Tea Co Ltd, Naga Dhoolie Tea Estate, Gotoonga Tea Estate, Bordeobam Tea Estate (Assam), Irangamara Tea Estate, North British and Mercantile Insurance Co (Fire branch), Watson's Patent Press Co Ltd and Royal Exchange Association, Marine Dept. Henderson's now looks a pretty successful company with interests in jute, tea, insurance, paper, stone, etc.

The most important new subsidiary is David & Co merchants & agents, of Narraingunge<sup>12</sup>. M David & Co entered the Henderson partnership in 1882, though George Henderson had been a partner in David's since 1879. Narraingunge is NE of Calcutta in the Ganges delta, near Dacca, to be found in the Mofussil Commercial section of *Thacker's* under Dacca.

#### *Landale & Morgan/ Landale & Clark*

Meanwhile by 1880 all was not well at Toulmin's where we left Alexander Landale and David and A G Morgan. From 1880 the firm disappears from *Thacker's*. The insolvency of John H Hutchison, a Partner in L W Toulmin of Calcutta, had been announced 7<sup>th</sup> March 1879<sup>13</sup>. So whether the remaining Toulmin partners simply dissolved the partnership or whether Hutchison brought the whole company down is not clear.

Thus it was that in 1880, while David Guild Landale is climbing Henderson's ranks, his brother Alexander Landale formed a new partnership with his nephews David Morgan and Alexander Gibson Morgan, to be called Landale and Morgan at 3 Mission Row Calcutta as "Brokers &c". The three Assistants included R L Morgan (this is Robert Russell Landale Morgan, yet another brother of David and A G Morgan). This is evidently a much smaller more specialised outfit than Henderson's. Alexander Gibson Morgan must have left the business by 1887.

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<sup>11</sup> They were married 30 April at Brasted, Kent. George Henderson lived at a large house called Hevers Wood nearby.

<sup>12</sup> The spelling of Indian place names changes from issue to issue of the Directories! This name ended up as Narayanganj.

<sup>13</sup> *London Gazette* May 27 1879 p3631, reprinting notices from the *Calcutta Gazette*.

Landale and Morgan split in 1888. Alexander Landale formed a new firm of commission agents with a former assistant from Landale & Morgan, John B Clark, to be called Landale and Clark. David Morgan and his brother R L Morgan stayed on at Landale and Morgan, jute brokers. The fact that both firms operated out of the same premises, 12 Clive Row, suggests the split was amicable. Alexander Landale died of a cerebral haemorrhage in 1892, aged only 48<sup>14</sup> and Clark carried on the business, still under the name of Landale & Clark. Clark's name disappeared in 1909, but the firm continued as a limited company with Managing Agents in charge.

Landale & Morgan does not list its partners or staff 1891-98 and 1901-12. However if you know who the partners may be, you can still look them up from the Index. So for example R L Morgan is shown till 1909 as *res* [i.e. residence] 5 Little Russell Street, which means that he is at least still in Calcutta. However I can see no relevant David Morgan till 1896 (why?), when he is described as "firm of Landale & Morgan". At 5 Fairlie Place, the address of Landale & Morgan, we find

Ground flat: Landale & Morgan and T S Cicil [sic]. Top flat: D Morgan.

So David is living over the shop and presumably manning that shop during business hours. Whether Robert is still in the business is less clear. In 1897 the Ground Flat becomes crowded: Landale & Morgan, Cecil & Co, Thorumba Gold Co Ltd. I think we can deduce some sort of corporate crisis in Landale & Morgan. Perhaps this is why David Morgan returned to England by 1901<sup>15</sup>.

### **Back to Henderson's**

By 1892, M David's have branches in Chittagong and Serajgunj. They are agents for Henderson's in Calcutta and George Henderson & Sons in London (replacing R & J Henderson as London Agents<sup>16</sup>), and also for A G Morgan in Dundee, whom we last saw at Landale & Morgan in 1886. There are eight partners, including David Guild Landale in London. Among the 13 Assistants is A G Morgan's younger brother George Morgan, now aged 25, who remained there till 1907.

So in 1892 A G Morgan now appears as a Jute Merchant at 3 Royal Exchange Court, Dundee<sup>17</sup>. A brief history of the jute trade is essential to understand what is happening<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> BL OIR N/1/226/131.

<sup>15</sup> UK Census 1901, 1911 for Carlisle Road, Eastbourne.

<sup>16</sup> The different Henderson companies can be confusing: they comprise R & J Henderson in Glasgow, Geo Henderson & Co in Calcutta, Geo Henderson & Sons in London (replacing R & J as London Agents), and Henderson Craik & Co in Manchester concerned with timber.

<sup>17</sup> *Slatter's Directory of Scotland 1896*.

<sup>18</sup> I found Gordon T Stewart *Jute and empire; The Calcutta jute wallahs and the landscapes of Empire*, Manchester University Press 1998, and D R Wallace *The Romance of Jute* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn published by Thacker's London office 1928 especially useful.



Dundee was the centre of the manufacture of jute products (hessian, sacking, etc.), the jute itself being grown on the banks of the Hughli. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the methods of milling and making products out of jute (collectively known as “gunny”) were sufficiently well understood to be conducted in India, which effectively left Dundee with a rapidly diminishing role in the whole business. However the jute wallahs in India were mostly Scots, many of them from the Dundee area, and had a tendency to recruit middle and junior management from Dundee. Thus the relations between Calcutta and Dundee have been described as “a peculiar combination of competition and intimacy”<sup>19</sup>. Henderson’s had been involved in jute since 1859<sup>20</sup>. We may surmise that A G Morgan is still placing some raw jute for working in Dundee and also assisting in recruiting new staff there<sup>21</sup>.



*Scenery on the Hooghly. A hand-coloured print from the Fiebig Collection: views of Calcutta and surrounding districts, taken by Frederick Fiebig in 1851. (British Library Online Gallery, Asia, Pacific & Africa Collections.)*

Thereafter the production of jute continued to increase and be sold world-wide. The peak for the industry was World War I when practically every sandbag on the Western and other fronts was made from Indian jute. After the War the industry suffered a decline in demand

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<sup>19</sup> Stewart p18.

<sup>20</sup> Wallace pp15, 73-4, 96-97.

<sup>21</sup> Even in the 1940s Landale & Morgan were still recruiting staff from the Dundee area (*Dundee Courier* Thur 18 Apl 1940 p4 and Sat 3 Jun 1950 p4 on the career of a partner called Dan S Smith from the Dundee area.

and also had to compete with cheaper alternatives. The larger jute companies kept the dividend high to discourage investment in new jute companies<sup>22</sup>.

By 1894 A G Morgan was also a partner in Henderson, Craik & Co of Manchester, timber importers, whose board of Directors heavily overlapped that of George Henderson & Sons<sup>23</sup>. By 1897, A G Morgan left Dundee and moved to London to become a partner in the London business of George Henderson & Sons. He remained there for the rest of his working life, retiring in 1921<sup>24</sup>.

Meanwhile George Morgan left M David & Co in 1907 and the next year appears as Manager at the Sonakunda Baling Co – another jute company, also at Narayanganj. The agents are not Henderson's but another well-known jute agency called Bird & Co, so George has joined a rival outfit. One can only guess at the extent of the falling-out between him and his erstwhile relatives and colleagues at M David & Co. In 1913 it seems he was a partner in H D Cartwright & Co of 13 Clive Street, Calcutta, yet another firm of agents and brokers for jute and gunny (jute products)<sup>25</sup>. Then he was back at Sonakunda till 1919. He then began a public office career: Chairman of the Narayanganj Municipality for 11 years, and later Member of the Legislative Assembly, East Bengal & Assam. He was appointed Companion of the Indian Empire (CIE) 2 Jan 1928<sup>26</sup>.

In 1905 a new Assistant at George Henderson & Co Ltd of Calcutta was H R Landale. He is Henderson Russell Landale, the son of David Guild Landale and grandson of the original George Henderson, born in Calcutta in 1880. He was a Partner from 1909 to about 1928.

### **Retiring on the Proceeds**

The continuation of high dividends during the 1920s and '30s must also have meant more money for the jute company Partners.<sup>27</sup> Alexander Landale dying in 1892 never got that far. David Guild Landale settled in London in 1906 as a partner in Henderson & Sons and Henderson Craik till his death in 1912<sup>28</sup>, but also died before the best years of jute during the First World War. Despite that, he bought a large house to retire to: The Grange, Limpsfield, Surrey (the building is now a special needs school) – not far from George

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<sup>22</sup> Stewart pp60, 93-96.

<sup>23</sup> *Slatter's Manchester Salford & Suburban Directory 1894*. In the 1917 *Thacker's* Henderson's in Calcutta are "Importers of Burma, Siam and Java teak; Pynkado, Padouk, Yan, Oregon [sic] & Baltic pine, etc". Presumably Henderson Craik were responsible for selling this in the UK.

<sup>24</sup> *London Gazette* 15 Jul 1921 p5672.

<sup>25</sup> *Thacker's Calcutta Commercial*: Cartwright, H D & Co, 13 Clive street, jute, gunny and produce agents and brokers.

<sup>26</sup> *London Gazette* Supplement 2 Jan 1928 pp4-5 and *Who's Who*.

<sup>27</sup> Stewart p93.

<sup>28</sup> eg *London Gazette* 10 Jun 1902 p3784, 4 Nov 1904 p7130, 12 Aug 1910 p5895.

Henderson at Hevers Wood south of Nuthurst and Robert Evelyn Henderson at Sedgwick Park near Horsham. At his death in 1912, D G Landale's estate was valued at £24,361 13s 4d – almost two million in today's money.

Alexander Gibson Morgan did much better. He retired in 1921 to increasingly grand houses in Sussex and died in 1934 worth £246,692 3s 10d – perhaps nearly £20,000,000 in today's money<sup>29</sup>. His brother Robert Russell Landale Morgan also did well, on his return to Scotland purchasing a seventeenth-century Scottish castle, Rockhall in Dumfriesshire. David Morgan died in Eastbourne in 1935 worth £89,207 15s 3d (perhaps £7,200,000 today)<sup>30</sup>. George Morgan retired to Kalimpong, Darjeeling, where he built himself a sumptuous residence which is now a guest house<sup>31</sup>. He died 26 Jun 1957. Jute had paid very well.

*Richard's Fact File Indian Directories is available to purchase in the FIBIS store <http://www.fibis.org/store/>.*

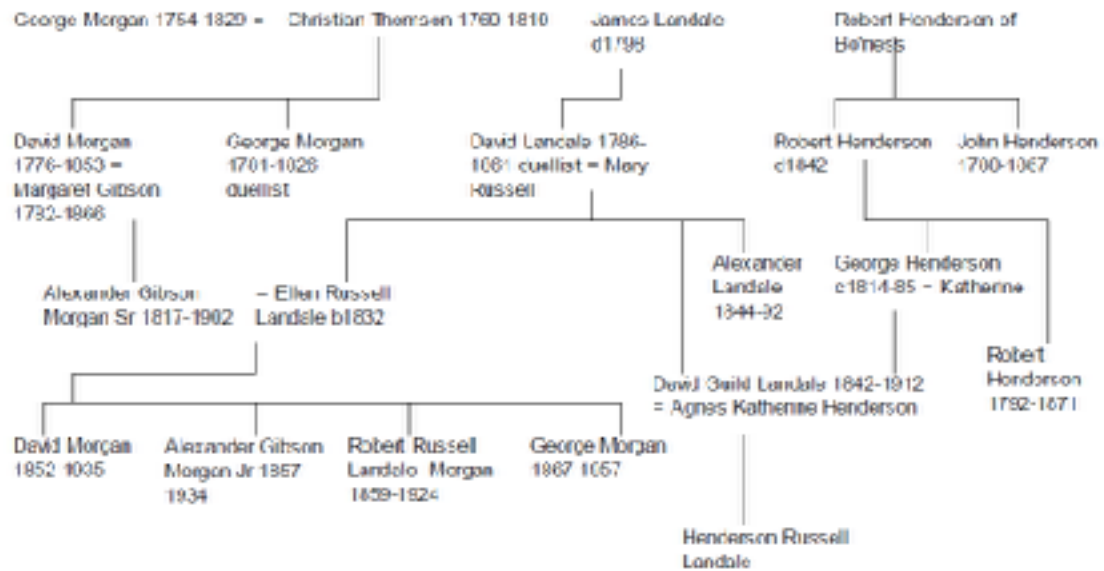
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<sup>29</sup> His last house was Cranesden Lodge, Mayfield, with 4 reception rooms, 7 bedrooms, 5 servants' bedrooms and an 140-acre estate (*Kent & Sussex Courier* 29 Mar 1940 p1). London Probate of A G Morgan 2 May 1934.

<sup>30</sup> London Probate 4 Jun 1935.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.flickr.com/photos/kolsandy/14769759447/>; <http://1001things.org/morgan-house-kalimpong/>. The house is allegedly haunted.

## Morgans, Landales and Hendersons in India



## Inspector James Dwyer and the Thanks of the Bengal Government

*Kimberley Lindsay*

On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015, after agonizing about the price of £550, I arranged instalment payments with Freddy Kirkpatrick, of Philip Burman (with whom I had previously enjoyed dealings) for the original James Dwyer Indian Police Medal group with a good citation. The medals went on to yield numerous details about his life and achievements.

Inspector James Dwyer had previously served with The King's Own Lancaster Regiment in France, then, after transfer to the Machine Gun Corps, with Armoured Cars in the Third Afghan War. His medals, including the 1935 Jubilee Medal, were all confirmed.

### **The medals**

Indian Police Medal GVR 1<sup>st</sup> type, bronze: 'For Distinguished Conduct' (engraved in running script: *James Dwyer, Insp. Bengal Police*); British War Medal 1914-18 (impressed: 5561 PTE. J. DWYER, M.G.C.); Victory Medal 1914-19 (impressed: 5561 PTE. J. DWYER, M.G.C.); India General Service Medal 1908-35 GVR, clasp AFGHANISTAN N.W.F. 1919 (impressed: 5561 GNR. J. DWYER, M.G.C.); 1935 Silver Jubilee (un-named). (G. V. F.) £550.

An account of the April 1930 riots mentioned in the Citation, which led to Inspector Dwyer's award, was included with the lot, as was the Gazette of India mention of his decoration, and his Medal Index Card.

### **The research**

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015 Dr Dick Flory kindly beamed me a copy of the Medal Index Card to James Dwyer, showing the recipient's address on the reverse of the card. Additionally, Dick thoughtfully provided the Medal Roll for the award of Dwyer's British War Medal 1914-18 and Victory Medal 1919.

Interestingly, a note of the award of the Indian Service Medal GVR with clasp Afghanistan N.W.F. 1919 was stamped on the Medal Index Card (which was not always the case, despite qualification).

Dick also attached the Medal Roll for the award of the Indian Service Medal. This was a great help, inasmuch as Gunner Dwyer's unit for Third Afghan was shown, namely 11<sup>th</sup> Armoured Motor Battery, Machine Gun Corps.

Paul Evans, of the Royal Artillery Museum, most helpfully checked 'Findmypast' for the Dwyer service papers, but without success. Cliff Parrett, in Paris, also investigated the 1924-vintage home address of James Dwyer, 54 Andrew Street, Silvertown, London E16, but established that this no longer existed.

The Machine Gun Corps (Motors) roll confirming awards of the British War Medal 1914-18 and the Victory Medal 1914-19, was made out by Lieut. E. Drummond, at 91 York Street, Westminster, SW1 on 18 March 1920, and devoted three lines to 5561 Gunner James Dwyer (who was born in 1897):-

19031, Pte. Dwyer, James, King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment.

5561, L/Cpl. Dwyer, James (rank crossed out and corrected to 'Pte. '), Machine Gun Corps.

5561, Gunner Dwyer, James, Machine Gun Corps.

An interesting clue appeared in the Machine Gun Corps roll confirming awards of the Indian General Service Medal 1908 with clasp 'Afghanistan North-West Frontier, 1919', to seven Privates and one Gunner (Dwyer):-

5561 Gnr. Dwyer, James, of 11<sup>th</sup> Armoured Motor Battery: Discharged Para. 392 (xxviii) King's Regulations, 5 April 1920. [This paragraph meant: 'on demobilization'.

### **The Great War at Eighteen**

Peter Donnelly, Curator of the King's Own Museum, kindly told me the following: 'Dwyer, who enlisted into the King's Own Lancaster Regiment and received the number 19031, would have joined the regiment at the end of June 1915 (between 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> June).

'Private Dwyer [now known to have been born in Lahore, India, on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1897] would have gone overseas after the end of 1915 [aged 18]. As the King's Own appears on his medal roll, he would have been overseas with a battalion of the regiment – more than likely being posted to them when he arrived on the Western Front.'

(From late 1916, many men of the Machine Gun Corps (Motors) MGC(M), transferred to the Heavy Section, MGC (later to be known as the Tank Corps). In 1922, the Tank Corps absorbed the MGC(M) completely and the Motor Machine Gun units disappeared from the order of battle of the British Army.)

### **The Machine Gun Corps**

Peter Donnelly continued: 'He then transferred to the newly-formed Machine Gun Corps (only established in September/October 1915), and ended up going out to India with them...'

The creation of the MGC in October 1915 incorporated the Motor Machine Gun Service, which now became known as the *Machine Gun Corps (Motors)*. At this time the MGC(M) had around 2000 men.

By May 1916, most of the batteries had been withdrawn from divisional command and were under orders of the Corps (on the organisational level).]

It seems possible that he served with the embryonic Motor Machine Gun Corps (Motors) on the Frontier, ca. 1917/18; possibly against the Mahsuds and the Swatis. [Major A. J. Clifton, closely associated with the Armoured Cars in India, was Mentioned several times for actions in these areas.

### **The Third Afghan War**

As far as his service with 11<sup>th</sup> Armoured Motor Battery, MGC, is concerned, this unit was raised in Ambala, 1915, and equipped with three Straker-Squire Armoured Cars, plus support elements. A good picture of the three armoured cars, with the crews of one officer and seventeen NCOs & Other Ranks exists.

The official history of the Third Afghan War notes that on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1919, № 11 Armoured Car Battery, previously in Hyderabad, arrived in Baluchistan.

Unfortunately, the war diary of 11<sup>th</sup> AMB is scrappy, but, happily, an account of their activities in Third Afghan is given in “Crisis on the Frontier: The Third Afghan War and the Campaign in Waziristan 1919-20” by Brian Robson (Spellmount, 2004):-

### **Action at Hindubagh**

The action now shifted to the Lower Zhob: “The same evening [22<sup>nd</sup> July 1919] Hindubagh came under fire all night and the railway station was burned. The situation was not cleared up until the arrival at Hindubagh of 1/102 Grenadiers and two sections of № 19 Motor Machine Gun Battery (armoured cars) from Quetta, followed by № 11 Armoured Motor Battery and a squadron of the Alwar Lancers from Kila Saifullah.

“It was not until Karezgi, just west of Hindubagh, was occupied and garrisoned, that the fighting in Hindubagh died away.

“This was effectively the end of the war as regards the Zhob. What remained were several months of fighting to suppress the tribal insurrection.

“With hindsight, Quetta had been slow to grasp the situation in the Zhob and equally slow to reinforce the area when additional troops became available. Proportionately, more casualties were suffered in the Zhob than in any other theatre.’

“A photograph of 11<sup>th</sup> Armoured Motor Battery Austin Armoured Cars (used previously in the Middle East, and which had replaced the Straker-Squires), shows the unit returned from Fort Sandeman, Zhob District, in 1919. (“War Cars”).

### **Bengal Policeman**

With army discharge looming, some sort of connection (or simply a Bengal Police request or advertisement for suitable candidates) enabled the twenty-one year old Gunner Dwyer to translate from the British Army into police service with the immediate rank of Sergeant.

We know from his Indian Police Medal citation, that Dwyer energetically quelled some of the Calcutta rioting in 1930, at which stage he would have been in his early thirties. He followed this up by sterling service in the Calcutta Traffic branch, this having been recognised with the award of the 1935 GVR Jubilee medal.

Tegart, the Calcutta Police Chief, had survived several assassination attempts – but despite the danger he continued to be driven around in an open-top car with his Staffordshire Bull Terrier riding on the bonnet!

On 25<sup>th</sup> August 1930, at Dalhousie Square in Calcutta, an Indian revolutionary threw a bomb into Tegart’s car: however, Tegart shot down the wretched man and, yet again, escaped unhurt.

**FIERCE RIOTS. CALCUTTA NATIVES. FIFTY INJURED**

Armed police cleared fanatical mobs of natives by bayonet charges in Calcutta on Tuesday. Fierce riots broke out in various parts of the city. Europeans were stoned, tram cars burnt, and roads blocked by dismantled cars. Fifty persons were injured. Two hundred British soldiers are being kept at readiness. *Brisbane Courier*, 17<sup>th</sup> April 1930

### **A KPM for Mulcahy and Thanks for Dwyer**

Apart from his being thanked by the Bengal Government, and subsequent but perhaps belated decoration, Dwyer is also mentioned in the King's Police Medal gazette notice for Daniel Mulcahy, Sergeant, Calcutta Police, in The Gazette of India (p. 28), 1<sup>st</sup> January 1931: "On 1<sup>st</sup> April 1930, Sergeant Mulcahy was on rounds with Inspector Dwyer about noon in the Juggernath Ghat area.

"On entering Galiff Street he found the road blocked with buffalo carts which he successfully cleared, and then sent telephone information to Headquarters and was told to proceed to Howrah Bridge. There he found the whole road blocked with carts and dustbins to form obstructions and found further progress impossible. He forced his way on foot through a crowd of carters and was heavily brickbatted from all sides in so doing

"He started clearing obstructions on Howdah Bridge approach, and was then attacked by a dense crowd of carters who proceed to hurl bricks at him.

"The Sergeant was unarmed and seized a stick from one of the carts and attacked the crowd and actually forced it back about 50 yards, until at a side gully he was surrounded, disarmed and his helmet torn off.

"He then protected himself with his bare fists successfully until he was struck across the face with an iron bar and had his nose broken.

"He staggered and at the same moment, received blow across his mouth which broke several of his teeth, and was actually saved from certain death by the timely arrival of a party of Police who found him lying in blood and practically unconscious on the foot-path.

"He was revived by a drink of water and very pluckily proceed and carried out his duties for almost half an hour afterwards when the Commissioner ordered him to be taken away to Hospital.

"He was detained in Hospital for over three weeks.

"Sergeant Mulcahy displayed the greatest gallantry and perseverance in a very dangerous and menacing situation.'

### **An Inspector with a Decoration**

The Inspector received the Indian Police Medal, an achievement which was described in the Gazette of India on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1935: 'James Dwyer was appointed as a Sergeant in the Calcutta Police from the British Army in 1919. He was promoted to officiate as an Inspector in 1926 and was confirmed in that rank in 1927.

"In 1930, he received the appreciation and thanks of the Bengal Government for the bravery which he displayed during the April riots.



“During the last five years he has been responsible for many of the traffic schemes now working successfully in Calcutta, and has earned commendation from all quarters for the excellence of the traffic arrangements which he has made on many important occasions.

“He is a capable organiser and has handled the various problems given to him with initiative, foresight and thoroughness, and his services have been of immense value to the Headquarters Staff.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, James Dwyer received a 1935 Silver Jubilee Medal. The Roll for India confirmed: ‘Dwyer, James: Inspector, Traffic Police, Calcutta.’

Further interesting detail was found by Janice (O’Brien), my diligent British Library researcher.

### **Born in Lahore**

James was a true son of the Raj, having been born in Lahore, Punjab, on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1897. A Roman Catholic, his name was actually James Clifford O’Dwyer, the son of Thomas O’Dwyer. His eldest brother was Michael O’Dwyer.

Following his war service 1915-19, and three years’ Police service, Sergeant Dwyer, aged 24, married the 27-year- old Juliana Virginia Connolly, daughter of Joseph Connolly. The Roman Catholic service was performed by the Reverend A. Dessa, and took place in The Sacred Heart’s Chapel, Dharamatala, Calcutta, on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1922. Police Sergeant Dwyer signed the Register as ‘James O’Dwyer’.

The Quarterly Civil List for Bengal, of 1<sup>st</sup> April 1929, showed Inspector of Police James Dwyer having been appointed to the Calcutta Police on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1919. He was appointed in the grade of Inspector, on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1926, having been with the Headquarters Force since his first appointment in 1919.

It seems that James and Juliana Dwyer had five children, indicating a happy marriage. Sadly, by about 1935, the mother of his children had died, making James a widower when still in his thirties.

### **The Second Mrs O’Dwyer**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1936, “James O’Dwyer, 39, widower and Inspector of Police” married a second time. This was the 27-year--old Spinster Sarah Clarke, daughter of James Clarke.

The marriage took place at the Roman Catholic Cathedral Church. This was situated at 36 Park Street, Calcutta and the ceremony was performed by the Assistant Vicar, the Reverend Mariano Uguet, S. C. [S. C. Brother of the Sacred Heart.]

As he did 14 years previously, Dwyer once again signed his name as ‘James O’Dwyer’.

The Bengal Civil List of 1<sup>st</sup> January 1941, showed ‘Inspector of Police James Dwyer (Indian Police Medal) (Born, 9<sup>th</sup> March 1897)’, as having joined the Traffic Police on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1938. He had enjoyed leave from 6<sup>th</sup> November 1940 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1940.

### **Death in Calcutta**

At Calcutta, on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1941, the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, E. N. Blandy, Esq., CSI, CIE, I.C.S., reported to the High Commissioner for India, in London, and

submitted details of the deaths of European Officers (including members of the Civil Service of India) and pensioners in the province of Bengal, for the month of February 1941. James Dwyer was one of those deceased members of the Civil Service. It was reported that James Dyer, Inspector, Calcutta Police, died on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1941 (aged 43 years).

He had been admitted to the Calcutta Presidency General Hospital, and died of Pulmonary Tuberculosis. He had served the Calcutta Police for 21 years, seven months and eight days.

Sadly, after only five years of his second marriage, he left a widow, Mrs Sarah Dwyer. His children – probably from his first marriage, were - Colleen Mary Dyer; Kathleen Amelia Dwyer, Patrick Anthony Dwyer; Desmond Stanley Gordon Patrick Dwyer; and Michael Alexander Dwyer. He also left an older brother, Michael O'Dwyer.

## Review

***An Infamous Mistress*, by Joanne Major and Sarah Murden (Pen and Sword Books Ltd. 2016) pp245, Hardback RRP £25, ISBN: 9781473844834**

Essentially the biography of Grace Dalrymple, a little-known, good-time girl, this book is well-researched and illustrated. In minute detail, perhaps a little too much at times, we learn of Grace's upbringing in the Scottish Borders within a well-connected family, her rise to fame and her ultimate downfall. Grace was born around 1754 and from an early age, she was renowned for her beauty and charm. Her early marriage to Dr. John Eliot soon ended in divorce and from then on, Grace used her freedom to pick and choose from well-heeled and connected gentlemen, including the aristocracy and royalty, to forge her way through life and maintain a high level of affluence, excitement and easy living. She was a popular socialite and a charming, warm-hearted companion. Her portrait was painted by Gainsborough – and the gossip columns had a field day in keeping up with her exploits. Grace was rumoured to have had a son by Lord Cholmondeley and even managed to bag a prince, giving birth to a daughter by the Prince of Wales, before moving on to conquer Paris society and the French Royal Family.

There are accounts of battles and bloodshed, including the Peninsular War, shipwrecks, Waterloo and the Walcheren Campaign, as well as life in India. The Earl of Peterborough's sons were shipped off to seek their fortunes – a popular method of giving a helping hand to superfluous, illegitimate offspring in those days. But life in the Indian Civil Service as a teenager was not easy and the climate took its toll. Grace's cousins served with the EIC in Madras and Bengal, as did her brother, Robert Cornwallis Dalrymple, in the 1760's. Capt. John Mordaunt even managed to work his way into the court of the Nawab of Oudh, by virtue of his expertise in cock fighting- and there is an account of 132 single ladies, including two of George Cornwallis Brown's daughters, leaving England to find husbands.

Grace's life as a courtesan was one filled with balls, routs and a merry-go-round of rich lovers. She became independently wealthy. But amidst the scandal and titillation lay more than her fair share of rejection, misery, debt and money worries. The book is a colourful reflection of a tawdry, degenerate society, riddled with illicit affairs, illegitimate births and debauchery. Grace certainly created ripples by her wanton behaviour, but no more so than those created by others. These themes of scandal are constant, but the backdrop varies between military outposts, the law courts, street mobs and high society amusements. Grace became entangled in the fervour of the French revolution in 1789 and was accused of spying and of aiding the escape attempt of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. She survived, but as her beauty waned with age, so did her money and her popularity. Grace died quietly in Paris in 1823, with little left to show for her life of luxury and fame.

*Margaret Murray*

## Review

***The Herklots Folder of Photographs: The development of Coonoor and the coffee plantations in the Nilgiri mountain range, South India during the nineteenth century*** by Christopher Penn, obtainable from the author at Pendle Burdenshot Hill, Worplesdon, Surrey England GU3 3RL or [www.atwpenn.com](http://www.atwpenn.com). 2014 paperback £15 plus postage: £3 Uk; £5 Europe; £10 elsewhere ISBN 978-0-9559455-1-9

Christopher Penn must know more about the Nilgiris and Ootacamund (“Ooty” to its friends) than anybody else. He is also formidably well-informed about early photography in South India, so it must have been no surprise that when a bundle of photographs of this area dating from the 1860s came onto the market, he bought them. That he did so is, as this book shows, our good fortune.

His previous books *In Pursuit of the Past* (reviewed *FIBIS Journal* Spring 2009 No 21 p48) and *The Nicholas Brothers & A. T. W. Penn: Photographers of South India 1855-1885* (reviewed Spring 2015 No 33 p51) will have prepared his fans for what to expect – a portfolio of 77 stunning photographs excellently reproduced on large (29cm x 21cm) landscape pages. They are the familiar mix – none the worse for that – of landscape, ethnography, early urban development, people on the verandahs of their houses, schools and portraits. Among the latter is a striking picture of Dr Alexander Hunter, Principal of the School of Arts in Madras and himself a talented photographer. And there are also half a dozen views of Devon and Wales, showing how the skills mastered in the strong light of South India can also be put to good use in a very different landscape.

Seventy more pages are devoted to explaining the background of the pictures: a history of the development of Ooty and the Nilgiris in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the beginnings of coffee cultivation and other business in the area, Ooty as a hill station, missionary work and schools, and the families of those depicted in the photographs. There is also a detailed explanation of the wet collodion process used for these pictures – much equipment, complicated, slow, messy, and requiring nice judgement (“set but not dried (a matter of seconds)”) as to precisely when to move onto the next stage, knowing that the slightest misjudgment will mean no usable picture.

Two small niggles: I could have done with a little more about the families involved. The pedigrees in Appendix A are rather small to read. We are told May Herklots married William Rhodes James. What relation was he to any other Rhodes James such as M R James the ghost story writer. Is the Robert Rhodes James in the pedigree the late MP and scourge of Speaker George Thomas?

On p49 it is suggested that Dr Alexander Hunter was the author of the *Comparative Dictionary of the non-Aryan Languages of India and High Asia*. In fact this was by the redoubtable William Wilson Hunter 1840-1900, only begetter of the *Imperial Gazetteer* and the *Rulers of India* series.

Quibbles aside, anybody interested in the Nilgiris and Ooty will want this book.

Richard Morgan

## BACK ISSUES

Members sometimes request copies of back issues of the Journal and some issues are now in very short supply. It has been decided not to reprint them but to supply digitised copies only when current supplies are exhausted. These will be issued in PDF format and, owing to copyright issues, many of the early editions will not contain photographs. Editions 1–23 are already available online.

## OVERSEAS/EU MEMBERS

Would you like to receive your copy of the Journal as a paperless option?

In return for a reduced annual membership fee, FIBIS is considering the feasibility of offering a PDF version of the Journal, to overseas members only at this stage, and would like to know your views. The advantages, apart from the price reduction, would be an environmentally-friendly Journal which would reach you earlier by avoiding mailing delays. The slight disadvantage would be that, owing to copyright regulations, some photographs in the Journal could not be digitally reproduced.

Next time you log in to the FIBIS website, you will see a site-wide message at the top of the screen with a link to the survey. Whatever your preference, we would appreciate it if you would take a couple of minutes to let us know what you think.

### THE FIBIWIKI RAILWAY PROJECT

The Fibiwiki Railway Project is making progress. We are working on further updates to this list by adding new information and references from many different sources. The aim is to make as much information as possible available on all aspects of the railways in India from the first beginnings in the 1840s through to partition in 1947. Open the Fibiwiki quick link to “Railways” to see the latest.

We have extended the number of railways identified and now include tramways, monorails, industrial lines, rail/river ferries, railway constructions and railway equipment manufacturers. The current number of pages is over 730 and this will be further extended. The results of an online search of the Indian Office Records (IOR) held at the British Library have been added to each appropriate railway page and these have provided many new sources of information that are currently being reviewed. We have also created a “Railway People” section where that person made a significant contribution to the early development and operation of the railways in India, and we have cross referenced these to the appropriate railway page.

If you have a specific query regarding railways (or can contribute with new information), please email the FIBIS membership secretary ([membership@fibis.org](mailto:membership@fibis.org)) asking your question to be forwarded to Michael Pearce PEA-2292 who is co-ordinating this project.