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EDITORIAL

Many of our ancestors served in the Indian Army and its predecessors so it is fitting that the cover of this issue should feature the only remnant of the Indian Army that still exists within the British Army: the Gurkhas. My thanks to the Gurkha Museum, Winchester, for permitting us to reproduce Terence Cuneo's magnificent depiction of the 1/6th Gurkha Rifles, my uncle's old battalion, in one of the great feats of the First World War: the capture of the heights of Sari Bair on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The future Field Marshal Viscount Slim, lying wounded on the slopes, wrote later: 'I was so struck by their bearing in one of the most desperate battles in history that I resolved, should the opportunity come, to try to serve with them'. This episode and others in which the Gurkhas served with great valour is recounted by Craig Lawrence, a former Colonel of the Gurkha Rifles and author of the regiment's 200th anniversary history. Many thanks to him for accepting my invitation to contribute an article on the Gurkhas in the First World War to mark the centenary of 1918.

British regiments served alongside Indian ones, conquering India, policing it and defending the Empire, and I was delighted also to receive FIBIS member Ron Horton's account of his grandfather's service with the Black Watch, part of the Meerut Division on the Western Front. Sir Allan Ramsay rose to the challenge of writing a review article on a biography of a commander from an earlier period: one of the great military figures of British India, Sir Hugh Gough, conqueror of the Punjab. The Indian Army's predecessors were the three Presidency Armies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay. Gough as C-in-C had to contend not only with a disciplined foe, trained by Europeans, but with field command of three separate armies and political intervention. In so doing he saved India for the British.

2018 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Families in British India Society. Peter Bailey, long-time Chairman and now President, recounts how FIBIS succeeded in putting together a free encyclopaedic online resource that provides an invaluable source of information for those researching family history in India. This is an ongoing project thanks to FIBIS's many supportive volunteers.

VALERIE HAYE

GURKHAS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

CRAIG LAWRENCE

The First World War was a defining event for the Gurkhas, not just because it was the first time that these proud warriors had fought on European soil, but because it was their first exposure to 'modern' warfare. Despite being poorly prepared and ill equipped for the horrors of the trenches, they were to make a lasting impression, winning three Victoria Crosses and numerous other gallantry awards. But the reputation they earned and the many accolades they received came at a cost: of the 90,780 Gurkhas who fought for the Crown during the Great War, 20,000 became casualties. Of these 6,168 died. This article highlights some of the actions in which the Gurkhas played a key role: on the Western Front and further afield on the Gallipoli Peninsula and in Mesopotamia.

There were ten Gurkha regiments at the outbreak of the war, each comprised of two battalions. Their primary role until then had been maintaining the security of British India. They were therefore equipped and trained for frontier operations against small groups of determined tribesmen, not for massed attacks against highly disciplined, well-equipped European troops. Two divisions deployed from India to support British operations in Europe, both containing Gurkha units. The Meerut Division had four Gurkha infantry units (1/9th, 2/2nd, 2/3rd and 2/8th Gurkhas), whilst the Lahore Division contained only two (1/1st and 1/4th Gurkhas). Both divisions formed part of the Indian Corps, which was deployed to reinforce the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to the south of Ypres.

On 29 October 1914, 2/8th became the first Gurkhas to be sent into the line. It proved to be a sobering experience; within twenty-four hours, the Germans had attacked, inflicting heavy casualties. By the evening of 30 October 1914, 4 British officers, 4 Gurkha officers and 146 Gurkha other ranks from the battalion had been killed; a further 3 British officers and 61 Gurkha other ranks had been wounded. Sadly, it was a story that was to repeat itself over the months that followed as the battalions settled into the attritional routine of trench warfare.



1/1st in France in 1915. Despite the horror of life in the trenches, the smiles in this photograph illustrate the bond that existed, then as now, between British and Gurkha officers.

The stalemate could not endure and on 10 March 1915 the Allies launched a major offensive. The plan was to try and seize the village of Neuve-Chappelle and then exploit beyond it to secure the Aubers Ridge which, heavily defended by the Germans, dominated the Allied positions. 2/3rd Gurkhas, as part of the Garhwal Brigade, were in the vanguard of the attack. As soon as the Allied artillery barrage lifted, they raced over the open ground separating them from the German trenches and, kukris drawn, secured the position, capturing Neuve-Chapelle. It was the first time on the Western Front that the German line had been broken and was, as the military historian Christopher Bullock notes, a 'brilliant success'. The follow-on force, which comprised the Dehra Dun Brigade and included 2/2nd and 1/9th Gurkhas, eventually pushed forward towards the Aubers Ridge but, as darkness fell, they were forced to occupy a hasty defensive position short of the ridgeline. The Germans then launched a massive counter-attack to try and retake Neuve-Chapelle. Comprised of some 16,000 men, it was a formidable force but the Dehra Dun Brigade held firm, inflicting some 3,000 casualties on the enemy. There were numerous acts of heroism. Rifleman Gane Gurung, for example, single-handedly

captured eight German soldiers whilst clearing one of the houses in the village. He was awarded the Indian Order of Merit for his bravery.

Six months later, on 25 September 1915, the Allied forces advanced in what would become known as the Battle of Loos. It was the 'big push' expected to break the German line. As ever, the Gurkhas were in the thick of it with both 2/8th and 2/3rd forming part of the assaulting Garhwal Brigade. Both battalions sustained dreadful casualties. 2/8th advanced and managed to clear a number of German trenches but their victory was short-lived. Isolated from the



Rifleman Kulbir Thapa

units on their flanks, they had little option but to fall back. In the single day's fighting, 2/8th's casualties amounted to 9 British officers, 8 Gurkha officers and 453 men; a further 166 men, many of whom later died, were taken prisoner. 2/3rd were mown down by German machine-guns as they tried to cross wire obstacles which the British artillery barrage had failed to breach. An officer and 38 men were sent out to cut a way through the wire but were all killed, with the exception of Rifleman Kulbir Thapa. Badly wounded, he started to crawl back towards the British positions but came across a soldier from the 2nd Leicestershire Regiment, also severely wounded. The British soldier urged Kulbir to save himself but Kulbir remained with him throughout the night and early the next morning started to carry him towards the Allied lines. Kulbir then stumbled across two wounded Gurkhas, both unable to walk. He dragged the British soldier into cover and then went back for the Gurkhas. One at a time, he carried them to the safety of the Allied lines before returning to collect the British soldier. All three survived and Kulbir became the first Gurkha to be awarded the Victoria Cross for his conspicuous bravery.

The Indian Corps was eventually withdrawn from operations in Europe in late Autumn 1915. By then, additional British and Canadian troops had begun to arrive on the Western Front and it was decided that the infantry of the Indian Corps would be better employed in Egypt, East Africa and Mesopotamia where the 'climate and general conditions would be more familiar to them, and contacts with India much easier'. The Corps' arrival on the Western Front in late October 1914 had prevented the Germans from breaking through the British defences and reaching the Channel ports. Its actions at Neuve-Chapelle had also clearly demonstrated that the

seemingly invincible Germans could be driven from their trenches. By the time it left the Western Front, the Indian Corps had sustained 25,000 casualties and eight of its members had been awarded the Victoria Cross. Although many regiments within the Corps distinguished themselves, the Gurkhas in particular established a reputation as the most fearsome and loyal of soldiers—indeed, General Sir James Wilcox, then commander of the Indian Corps, was unequivocal that the Gurkhas were his best soldiers.

In April 1915 a force of some 75,000 soldiers from Britain, France, New Zealand and Australia landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula in the South of Turkey. The intention was to seize the ground dominating the Dardanelles, the strip of water that connects the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, in order to open a sea route to Russia and to bring Constantinople (now Istanbul) within range of British warships. A previous attempt to take the straights with a purely naval force had failed after three British ships had hit mines and sunk. General Sir Ian Hamilton, the Commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, had asked for 100,000 men for the land operation but been given far fewer. An accomplished soldier, he was a veteran of the North West Frontier and recognised the value that Gurkhas would add in the hilly terrain of the Peninsula. He wrote to Lord Kitchener, then Secretary of State for War, in March 1915 requesting that he be given a brigade of Gurkhas. He got his wish and 29 Indian Infantry Brigade, which included three battalions of Gurkhas (1/5th, 1/6th and 2/10th), joined his force, albeit several days after the initial landings had taken place. 1/6th Gurkhas were the first battalion to arrive and had immediate impact, seizing a position which two British units had been unable to take. So impressed was Hamilton by the battalion's performance that he renamed the feature Gurkha Bluff.



6th Gurkhas in the trenches at Gallipoli, 1915

Hamilton then switched his focus to a feature known as Achi Baba which, lying to the north of Gurkha Bluff, dominated the beaches on which the Allied forces had landed. All three of 29 Indian Infantry Brigade's Gurkha battalions were committed to trying to take the feature but the Turks,

who also appreciated its tactical importance, held firm, inflicting tremendous casualties on the attacking forces. 1/5th lost 129 men and seven British officers within the first few hours of the attack with 1/6th sustaining 95 casualties.

In a separate operation 2/10th achieved a notable victory at Gully Ravine, scaling a sheer cliff to surprise the defending Turks. Notwithstanding the occasional success, the constant fighting took its toll. Within thirty-five days of arriving at Gallipoli, for example, 2/10th had lost three-quarters of its British officers and 40 per cent of its other ranks. The brigade was therefore pulled out of the line and given a month to recuperate on the Isle of Imbros, an Allied staging post for operations on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

By August 1915, 29 Indian Infantry Brigade was back in action, this time as part of a new offensive further to the north in the ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) area of operations. The plan was to seize the central Sari Bair massif in order to gain control of the Peninsula and isolate the Turkish forces that were causing so many problems down in the south. As Hamilton notes, 'the first step in the real push—the step which above all others was meant to count—was the night attack on the summits of the Sari Bair ridge'. But the night attack did not go as planned and, as dawn broke on 9 August 1915, Allied troops had still not reached the crest of the ridgeline. 1/6th Gurkhas, under the command of Major Cecil Allanson, were eventually launched at the Sari Bair feature, the highest of the ridgeline's peaks. The fighting was intense, with Gurkhas drawing their kukris and using their weapons as clubs as the ammunition ran out. Eventually, supported by two companies of the South Lancashires, 1/6th reached the top of the peak, driving the Turks down the far side. The Gurkhas pursued them until, mistaken for fleeing Turks, they were engaged by the guns of HMS *Colne*.

Once part of the ridgeline had been secured, the plan was that four battalions, under the command of General A. H. Baldwin, would then use the lodgement to exploit along the ridge, clearing



Major Cecil Allanson, under whose inspirational leadership the 6th Gurkhas succeeded in capturing the critical point of the Sari Bair Massif on 9 August 1915.

A remarkable officer and superb athlete, Major Allanson held the Army record for the two miles for a number of years.

the enemy's positions. But Baldwin's battalions had lost their way during the night approach and never arrived. The Turks quickly counter-attacked, pushing the Gurkhas and reinforcements from the South Lancashires and the Wiltshires off the ridgeline and pinning them down on the mountainside. By this stage of the battle, all of 1/6th's British officers, except the medical officer (Captain Edward Phipson), were either dead or wounded and it was left to Subedar Major Gambirsing Pun to command the battalion as it withdrew. The next day the Turks counter-attacked in force, consolidating their defensive positions on top of the ridgeline and driving the Allies back down towards the beaches. Though wounded, Major Allanson survived the attack on Sari Bair. He was recommended for the Victoria Cross but eventually received the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for his actions.

The Allied forces sustained 12,000 casualties in the failed operation but the number of casualties was to increase. By October 1915, it was apparent that additional forces would be necessary to defeat the Turkish defenders. As these could not be spared, Kitchener made the decision to withdraw from the Peninsula. In mid-January 1916 the last of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force left Gallipoli. Over the course of the campaign, the Allied force had sustained some 205,000 casualties.

Gurkhas also found themselves fighting the Turks in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) as part of a large British force deployed to secure access to Persia's oilfields. Advancing up from the Persian Gulf, the British initially made surprisingly good progress, defeating large Turkish forces at Shaiba, Nasiriya and Kut-al-Amara, a major Turkish stronghold about 200 miles east of Baghdad. Events took a turn for the worse when a British force commanded by Major-General Charlie Townshend encountered some 18,000 to 21,000 Turks and Arabs occupying a well-prepared defensive position amongst the ruins of the ancient city of Ctesiphon, 22 miles south of Baghdad. Townshend's force launched their attack on 22 November 1915 but, although they broke through the first line of trenches, they were unable to breach the second.

Outnumbered, outgunned and having sustained losses of some 4,600 men, Townshend ordered his force to withdraw back to Kut-al-Amara. The Turks followed in hot pursuit. Surrounded on three sides by the Tigris, Kut was in many ways an ideal place for Townshend's force to await the arrival of a relief column. However, despite repeated efforts, which involved 1/1st and 1/9th Gurkhas, the British were unable to break through the Turkish cordon. Attempts were made to resupply Townshend's beleaguered division by aircraft, the first time this was ever done, but it was a token effort given the size of Townshend's force. In April 1916, and using T. E.



Soldiers from 9th Gurkhas prepare for crossing the Tigris in February 1917 in order to defeat the Turkish defences at Kut. The operation was made particularly difficult because not only was the river in spate following heavy rains but the opposing banks were covered by enemy machine-guns.

Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) as an intermediary, the British even offered the Turkish commander £2 million to let Townshend's force go free but the offer was 'disdainfully refused'. On 29 April 1916 Townshend surrendered unconditionally to the Turkish General Khalil Pasha.

In August 1916 General Frederick Maude was appointed as the commander of the army in Mesopotamia. On 13 December 1916 he went on the offensive, resuming the advance to Baghdad at the head of an army of some 165,000 men. About 110,000 of his force were Indian and Gurkha, and included 1/2nd, 4/4th, 1/7th, 2/9th and 1/10th Gurkhas. Following Townshend's surrender, the Turks had occupied Kut, preparing defensive positions either side of the Tigris. Maude realised that he would need to clear Kut before he could continue the advance to Baghdad. His plan was to advance up both sides of the river and then, having pushed the Turks back on the west bank, move additional forces across the river in order to attack the rear of the 'Turks' main defensive position. It was an audacious plan, particularly as the river had swollen following heavy rains. On the morning of 23 February 1917, D Company of 2/9th Gurkhas, commanded by Major George Campbell Wheeler, and a detachment from 1/2nd, commanded by Lieutenant C. G. Toogood, succeeded in establishing tentative footholds on the opposing bank despite heavy enemy resistance. The Norfolk Regiment also managed to secure a foothold in a slightly less exposed position, allowing the remainder of 2/9th and 1/2nd to cross the river and expand the bridgehead. By early afternoon a boat bridge had been established, allowing

Maude's forces to attack the rear of the Turkish defences. Realising that their position had become untenable and recognising that they were in danger of being cut off, the Turks withdrew towards Baghdad. It had been a brilliant victory but had come at a cost with 1/2nd and 2/9th losing 98 killed and 132 wounded. For conspicuous bravery Major Wheeler, who led with such determination despite sustaining a bayonet wound to the head, was awarded the VC.

Further north in Palestine, General Sir Edmund Allenby, who had taken over command of the British forces in Egypt in June 1917, also made good use of his Gurkha troops, which included 1/1st, 2/3rd, 3/3rd, 2/7th, 1/8th and 4/11th. The battalions distinguished themselves in numerous battles under Allenby's command with Rifleman Karnabadaur Rana, then only 19 and serving in 2/3rd Gurkhas, being awarded a Victoria Cross for his actions at El Kefr on 10 April 1918. Interestingly, a detachment of 30 soldiers from 2/3rd Gurkhas also served as volunteers with T. E. Lawrence and his irregular army of Arabs. Along with a detachment of Indian troops, they provided mortar and machine-gun teams to support his tribal forces in their fight to defeat the Turks.

On 30 October 1918 the Turkish Army eventually surrendered. Though the British achieved success in Mesopotamia, it came at a high cost: 30,000 of the 250,000 Allied troops who took part died.

The First World War formally ended with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 11 November 1918. For many regiments in the British Army, the subsequent decades would be relatively quiet until the outbreak of the Second World War. This was not the case for the Gurkhas; it was 'business as usual' for those policing the Empire and the Gurkhas were kept fully employed.



Soldiers from 2/9th Gurkhas mounting guard in Mesopotamia after the surrender of the Turkish Army on 30 October 1918.

ON THE WESTERN FRONT WITH THE MEERUT DIVISION

LT THOMAS JACKSON MC

RON HORTON

My grandfather Thomas Johnson was born in Manchester in 1882, the third son of a family of four boys and four girls. His father was a plumber and gas fitter. When he was 13 Thomas's mother died, followed by his father four years later. Thomas's elder brother, now married, took in his siblings. At the age of 18 Thomas enlisted as an other rank in The Black Watch (Royal Highlanders).

Thomas did his basic training in Scotland and was posted to the 2nd Battalion, then serving in the Boer War in South Africa. In 1902 Thomas sailed for India with the battalion and served in India until the outbreak of World War I. During this twelve-year period of service, Thomas gained promotion to the rank of warrant officer, was present at the Coronation Durbar for King George V and received the Delhi Durbar Medal 1911. A major event in Thomas's life during this period was his marriage to Edith Constance Curtis on 10 June 1914.

Edith Constance was born in Calcutta in 1896, the eldest child of Albert Curtis and Alice Rondeau. Her father was employed by the East Indian Railways but had arrived in India from East London in 1889 as a private in the 1st Battalion The Rifle Brigade. By 1892 the battalion had moved to Calcutta, where Albert met and married Alice. In 1894 Albert was promoted to the rank of corporal but the following year, when the battalion was posted to Hong Kong, he transferred to the army reserve and remained in India. He had served his six years with the Colours. Alice was born in Calcutta in 1873. She was the third generation of the Rondeau family born there. Her great-grandfather, a silversmith, had moved to Calcutta from Nantes in France in the late 1700s.

Edith Constance was brought up and schooled in Calcutta. She probably met Thomas Johnson while the 2nd Battalion was serving in Calcutta between 1911 and 1914. The battalion moved to Delhi in early 1914 and Thomas and Edith Constance were married there on 10 June 1914.



7990 Lt Thomas Johnson MC

On the outbreak of war the 2nd Battalion was stationed at Bareilly and formed a part of the Bareilly Brigade of the 7th Meerut Division. The other infantry units in the Bareilly Brigade were the 41st Dogras, the 58th Vaughan's Rifles and the 2/8th Gurkha Rifles. The battalion received the order to mobilise at 3 p.m. on 9 August 1914. At the time it had three companies at the hill station of Rhaniket and some detachments, mainly convalescents, at the hill station of Kasauli. These were at once recalled to Bareilly.

Once the battalion had recalled all its personnel, it reorganised from an eight-company organisation to the new four-company organisation that had been introduced into the British Army in 1913. My grandfather had been promoted to company sergeant major on 10 August 1914 and under the new organisation was made the company quarter master sergeant of no. 4 company just prior to embarkation. The strength of the battalion on leaving India was 24 officers and 934 other ranks. The battalion reported 'ready to move' on 18 August and left Bareilly on 3 September, arriving in Karachi on 6 September. It embarked on the SS *Elephanta* on 16 September and sailed on 21 September.

When the battalion left India, the wives and families followed at a later date. What arrangements were made to house these families is not known, but Edith Constance on her first visit to England went to live with her husband's younger sister Florence, who was married with a young son and living in Manchester.

Three days out from Karachi, the ships containing the rest of the Meerut Division, which had embarked from Bombay, joined to form a single convoy of over forty ships under an escort of six warships. In the Mediterranean Sea, the convoy was escorted by French warships to Marseilles, where the troops disembarked on 12 October. The battalion remained at Marseilles for a week in a wet and muddy camp at Le Valentine, five miles east of Marseilles. Here the battalion's first reinforcement of eighty men was detached from the unit and eventually posted to the 1st Battalion The Black Watch, which had lost a large number of troops in the First Battle of Ypres. New rifles were issued to the battalion while in camp and



The wedding of Edith Constance Curtis and Thomas Johnson at St James's Church, Delhi, 10 June 1914.

on 20 October it entrained for Orleans, where the Meerut Division was concentrating and equipping.

On 26 October the battalion left Orleans for the front line. It detrained north of Lillers and marched to its position near the town of La Bassée, arriving on the night of 29 October, a wet and stormy night. The battalion was deployed on the extreme right of the British line, within shouting distance of the French line. Throughout October, November and December the battalion was heavily involved in the fighting around Givenchy, although my grandfather was not personally involved in the frontline fighting. By the end of October the battalion was occupying trenches east of the town of Festubert, with G Company (Thomas's company) occupying trenches just north-west of Givenchy.

As well as the enemy, the men from India had to contend with wet and muddy conditions, hard frosts and in late November snow on the ground. It rained continuously during December but from 25 December through January and February 1915, the battalion was in Corps Reserve, occupying billets in the vicinity of Lillers, some miles behind the front line. Movement was by marching and included Paradis, Les Lobes, Annezin (south-west of Béthune), Arras (to the south), Vieille-Chapelle and Calonne. However in March the battalion reoccupied trenches in the Rue de Bois area,

where the Meerut Division made an attack against the German lines. The battalion did not take part in this assault.

Neuve-Chapelle was the first major action involving the battalion, although initially it did not form part of the assaulting troops. The assault commenced on 10 March and soon the battalion became embroiled in the fighting. Over the next four days 3 officers and 32 NCOs and men were killed, and 6 officers and 126 NCOs and men were wounded. Fortunately my grandfather, who took part in these actions, was not among them. On 14 March the battalion was relieved and spent the next week at Paradis in reserve. It then returned to the front line until 30 March, when it resumed its reserve duties at Paradis.

On 15 April 1915 news came through that Thomas and another NCO had been granted commissions as second lieutenants, dated from 5 April, and that Thomas had been posted to the 1st Battalion The Black Watch. This ended his association with the Indian Divisions.

The 1st Battalion was a unit of the 1st Brigade, 1st Division of the British Army. In April the 1st Battalion was fighting in the same area as the 2nd Battalion, near Neuve-Chapelle in the village of Festubert. On 22 April, after being relieved from the front line, the 1st Battalion was shelled in a rest area known as Long Cornet (north of Béthune). Thomas was wounded in this action and evacuated to England, where he was reunited with Edith Constance.

When Thomas recovered from his wounds, he was posted to the 3rd Battalion The Black Watch, which was the regimental training battalion based in Aberdeen. Edith Constance joined him there. Thomas was promoted to lieutenant in April 1916 and shortly afterwards accompanied a heavily pregnant Edith Constance back to Manchester to give birth to their daughter Edith on 16 June. Thomas was fortunate to have seen his daughter and have her baptised, as he was posted back to the 1st Battalion in July.

On 1 July the Somme Offensive was launched. Thomas rejoined his unit in late July while the battalion was in a rest area near Baizieux. On 14 August the battalion moved up to Bécourt, near Albert, and then occupied support positions at Bazentin-le-Petit and south of Bazentin-le-Petit Wood. The enemy was defending the ridge north and west of High Wood. In between the two positions ran an old communications trench known as Intermediate Trench. The eastern end of the trench was held by the battalion and the western end held by the enemy. On 16 and 17 August the battalion attacked the Intermediate Trench without success and with many casualties.

The next morning the battalion once again attacked the trench and once again failed. Thomas was slightly wounded in this attack and was recommended for the Military Cross. His citation reads:

Lt Thomas JOHNSON – R Highrs

For conspicuous gallantry in action. He led his company with great dash after being slightly wounded, and shot two of the enemy with a revolver. Later he was again wounded, but continued to rally and direct his men.

On 19 August the Battalion moved back into support at Mametz Wood and the next day the whole of the 1st Brigade marched back to billets in Quadrangle Wood. Accommodation, where it existed, was very poor but fortunately the weather was fine. On 27 August the battalion relieved the 2nd Welch Regiment in front of High Wood and stayed in the front line until 31 August. The weather had broken and the four days were wet, muddy and full of discomfort, with heavy shelling by the Germans.

The battalion returned to High Wood trenches two days later and an attack on the wood was made the next day. This attack was costly and Thomas was one of the casualties, killed as a result of enemy shelling. The next day the battalion was withdrawn to the reserve area closer to Amiens.

For his service in all campaigns Thomas was awarded the Military Cross, the Queen's South Africa Medal with Clasps Orange Free State and South Africa 1902, the 1914 Star, the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the Delhi Durbar Medal 1911.

Thomas is buried in the Caterpillar Valley Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery near Longueval, in the area of the Battle of the Somme in Picardy. In October 2003 my wife and I, together with our two eldest grandchildren, visited Thomas's grave and toured the area in which he had fought. Unfortunately, High Wood is now private property and we were not able to find where he was killed.



Thomas Johnson's daughter Edith, his granddaughter Sally and her husband Richard, and his great-grandson Tristan visiting his grave in 2005.

That is the story of my grandfather, his service with the Colours, his short, interrupted marriage and his sacrifice. But what of his young widow? Married at 18, moved across the world by fate and living in a strange country far from her real home, widowed at 20 while mothering an infant.

It is not known if Edith Constance remained in Manchester after her husband's death, or whether she moved to London to live with her parents. As a reserve soldier, Albert was mobilised and the family had moved to England in 1915. Albert served throughout the war with the Rifle Brigade training battalion and lived in East London. By 1919 Edith Constance had joined up with her family and sailed back to India with them. In India Albert resumed his service with the East Indian Railways, retired as a superintendent and died in 1941. He is buried in St Oswald's Cemetery, Lahore, and his wife Alice, who died in 1944, is buried in Rawalpindi.

Edith Constance remarried in 1923 in Jha Jha, Bihar, to Frank Brotherston, who also worked for the railways. She had three more children but only the eldest son, also named Frank, survived infancy. For a time, she was matron at Queen's Hill School for girls while her daughter Edith was a student there. In 1940 Edith married my father, an officer in the Royal Artillery, only to farewell him to the fighting in the Middle East a year later. In 1944 Edith was sent 'home' to England with me. My father survived the Second World War.

Edith Constance worked for the Attock Oil Company in Rawalpindi for some time before leaving India in June 1950. Arriving in England, she settled in Harold Park near Frank, who was now married and living in Romford. She died in April 1985.



GEORGE KING IMD AND HIS MEDALS

ALLAN STANISTREET

I have collected and researched military medals and decorations for over sixty years. Since readers may possess medals awarded to relatives who served with the Indian services in the First World War, I shall explain in this article how to go about researching them. Researching the medals themselves is relatively straightforward. There are many books on the subject but for the purposes of this article three will suffice. All are easily acquired, if only through one's local library. They are *British Battles and Medals* (2006) by John Hayward, Diana Birch and Richard Bishop; *British Gallantry Awards* (1981) by P. E. Abbott and J. M. A. Tamplin; and *Medal Yearbook*, published annually.

British Battles and Medals deals with campaign medals from 1588 to the Iraq Medal of 2003. It includes all of the many medals relating to India from the Deccan Medal of 1778 to the India Service Medal for the Second World War. It also includes details on the units involved in campaigns before 1939, though it does not claim to be exhaustive. *British Gallantry Awards* deals exclusively with awards for gallantry and will be useful for readers with such awards in their possession. The *Medal Yearbook* contains much useful supplementary information on such awards as the many long-service and good conduct medals and coronation and jubilee/durbar medals. It also contains a most useful guide to present market prices, though the value of any award depends on many factors, such as the fame of the recipient, the unit involved, or the total number of awards made. For example, an India Medal 1895–1902 to a defender of Chitral is worth many times more than one awarded to a foot soldier for the relief of the garrison.

A more challenging aspect of medal research is putting together the biography of the recipient. My current interest is in medals awarded to members of Indian Government departments, e.g., Postal and Telegraph, Railways and Medical services (IMD and Nursing) and I shall take as my example a member of the Indian Medical Department (IMD): Assistant Surgeon George Henry King, who had a non-combatant role but one that was vital to the Indian war effort.



Apothecaries of General Roberts' Division, 1878

The Indian Subordinate Medical Department was formed after the Mutiny to centralise the independent arrangements adopted by the Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras. Members were originally known as compounders and dressers or hospital apprentices (one was awarded the VC in China in 1860) and virtually all were Anglo-Indian, although there were a few native Indians as well. Members were warrant officers (later officers) so their careers can be traced through the Indian Army List (IAL). The IAL records when an officer was born, when he entered the service and where he was currently serving. In addition to the army, IMD members served with the Royal Indian Marine and in civil hospitals. Indeed many seem to have spent most of their career in civil hospitals, usually in charge of the pharmacy or X-ray department. The IAL, however, gives no details on domestic circumstances, such as whether an officer was married or had children. It also does not record where IMD members received their training, though most were trained in India, possibly on-the-job under more experienced medics.

There were, however, exceptions. A very few members of the IMD, presumably the most promising, were sent to Britain to train, and emerged with qualifications such as MRCS, LRCP, LMSSA and even FRCS (Edin). Readers may recall my article in the Autumn 2013 Journal about Dr Frank Quick, who qualified in London as LMSSA and MRCS. In his case the Society of Apothecaries was a most useful source of information.

No matter how highly qualified, members of the IMD were always regarded as inferior to members of the Indian Medical

Service, which was reserved for British doctors and a very few British-qualified Indian doctors. Indeed IMD surgeons were specifically prohibited from treating Europeans, though *in extremis* any succour must have been welcome. One suspects this edict was often honoured in the breach!

George King was born, according to official records, on 27 February 1875, though his place of birth is not mentioned. (In the IAL of 1 July 1898, his birth date is given as 28 February 1875 but this sort of anomaly frequently crops up in the records). Nothing is known of his early life, though presumably he was an educated man. He must have done his medical training in India and on 3 December 1897 he was granted warrant rank in the IMD as an assistant surgeon 4th class (ranking as a sub-conductor), stationed at Peshawar.

It was not long before King was in the thick of the action, as a member of one of the Punjab Frontier expeditions of 1897–98, for which no fewer than eleven Victoria Crosses were awarded. He could have been attached to any of the three Field Forces taking part: Mohmand, Malakand or Tochi. However the Malakand Field Force included 2 Native Field Hospital, so he may well have been with them. Suffice it to say that as a result of his participation he received the India Medal 1895–1902 with clasp, *Punjab Frontier 1897–98*.

In the normal course of events, members of the IMD could expect to be promoted to a higher class every five years, so that by the time they had done twenty years' service, they would be eligible to retire on pension. That is, until the grade of senior assistant surgeon was introduced around 1910, when they might achieve officer status: the equivalent of a Viceroy's Commission. Even then they would be subordinate to the most junior British medical officer.

By 1912 George King was stationed at Mhow with 5 Company, Army Bearer Corps (ABC) as an assistant surgeon 3rd class (sub-conductor). In this capacity he would probably have been second-in-command. The ABC did sterling work during the First World War as stretcher bearers, as their name implies, and I have a bronze British War Medal in my collection awarded to one member.

Among the many components of the British Expeditionary Force in 1914 was the Indian Corps. They arrived slightly after the British with George King, by now a 2nd class assistant surgeon (ranking as a conductor), disembarking in France on 14 October 1914. His unit is listed as 7th Battery, Royal Field Artillery.

Precise details of King's career during the war are unclear but by October 1916 he was serving, still as a 2nd class assistant surgeon, with 9th Division. He does not appear to have suffered any

wounds but served in Europe only until 31 March 1916. For his war service he was awarded the 1914 Star (without clasp), the British War Medal and Victory Medal, all of which he would have received in the early 1920s from the Government of India. That there is no record of him receiving a clasp for his 1914 Star, indicating service under fire, may be because he never bothered to claim it when it was issued after the end of the war.

George King was promoted to assistant surgeon 1st class (conductor) on 15 April 1917, which accords with twenty years' service. He had been awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in 1915. The April 1926 IAL records him as serving in the Waziristan District, though he does not appear to have qualified for the India General Service Medal 1908–35 for service in this area. Unlike many others, he seems not to have served in a civil hospital.

On 8 April 1926 George King was commissioned as a lieutenant (senior assistant surgeon). He was promoted captain (senior assistant surgeon) on 11 April 1929 and was recorded as serving at the British Military Hospital, Lahore. The retirement age for senior assistant surgeons was 55, so he would have retired to pension as a captain the following year. He made a valuable contribution to his chosen profession and I am proud to be temporary custodian of his five awards.



Left to right: India Medal 1895-1902 with clasp *Punjab Frontier 1897-98*, 1914 Star, British War Medal 1914-18, Victory Medal 1914-19, Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

THE LAST OF THE WHITE HUNTERS

JOSHUA MATHEW

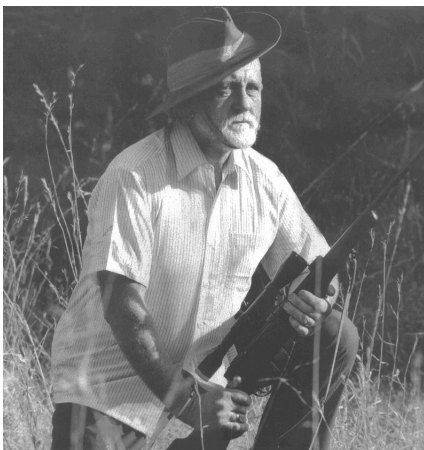
Although the British Raj ran from 1858 to 1947, Britain's association with India started centuries earlier. The East India Company began to trade along the coasts of India from the early 1600s, competing with the Dutch and the French to gain access to its abundant natural resources. In 1757 when Clive won the Battle of Plassey, often considered the beginning of the British Empire in India, Scotland was already part of Great Britain. And amongst the multitude who rounded the Cape of Good Hope to come to India, the Scots constituted a sizeable proportion. In 1869 the opening of the Suez Canal shortened the distance from Britain by thousands of miles and with the timely invention of steam ships made the journey far easier. Those who landed on Indian shores were an eclectic mix of civil servants, traders, missionaries, army men and teachers, all seeking adventure, fame or fortune of one sort or another. While India held promise, fear was fueled by stories of dangerous animals, unpredictable brown-skinned natives and above all the air, which could be fatal to the Westerner. 'Two monsoons are the age of a man' was a popular saying, implying that no one was expected to last more than a couple of years in India.

The domiciled British came to be known as Anglo-Indians, although over the course of the next two centuries the definition would change many times over. For the newcomers, especially those who lived in proximity to forests, hunting provided not just recreation but was considered a rite of passage. Compared to the foxes, badgers, weasels and deer back home, the forests of India contained ferocious beasts and presented opportunities for daring individuals to prove their bravery. 'Beating' was the preferred practice. Locals would form a human chain over a long distance and create a cacophony of sounds with drums and other instruments. This would drive large animals onto a predetermined path, where hunters with rifles would wait, usually up a *machan*. This worked for most large mammals, elephants being the only exception. For Nimrods who wanted to test their mettle, tracking large game on foot was dangerous but exciting. Conservation was unheard of, although for some inexplicable reason elephants were protected as

early as 1873, while tigers, panthers, bears and other mega fauna were often considered vermin and hunters rewarded for their destruction. Pioneers like James Forsyth, Edward Stebbing and E. F. Burton wrote of their hunting experiences, which motivated others to follow suit.

However the early hunters all hunted for sport, and not until Jim Corbett's *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* in 1944 did the colonial *shikaris*' tales garner mass readership. Corbett was born in India and while a *pukka sahib* at heart, his love for India and the people was heartfelt and there was a distinct Indian flavour to his books. His stories, based in the United Provinces, at the foothills of the Himalayas, were often about hunting tigers and panthers that were a menace to society. His stature and rank of lieutenant-colonel brought him reverence from the people of the region, besides gratitude for protecting them and their villages. His growing concern for the destruction of India's wildlife caught the attention of the government and as a token of appreciation a national park in India was named after him. Despite his evident affection for the people of India, he chose to emigrate after Independence and never got to live in free India.

Kenneth Anderson was Corbett's counterpart in south India. His ancestors had arrived in the early 1800s from Glasgow and his father, who worked for the army, settled in Bangalore. Anderson relied on an informal network that brought news of man-eating tigers and panthers—reports that often never made it to the newspapers—and he shot them in the four southern states of India. Although he worked for the Telegraph office, he was never associated with the British government and never acquired the fame of his contemporary, remaining an enigma. It is possible that he loved animals more than Corbett, and his eclectic collection of pets included panther and bear cubs, hyena and jackal pups, deer, squirrels, mongooses, monitor lizards, bar-headed geese, vultures and a herpetarium that provided specimens to extract snake venom, which he sold to hospitals to produce antiserum.



Kenneth Anderson

A further testament to Anderson's affinity is a line in his epitaph: 'Author and friend to all the wild animals and little birds'. His jaunts into the forests were usually to observe animals at close-quarters and he resorted to hunting big cats only when they threatened the lives of his friends — tribal folk deep within the jungles, unable to fight the

scourge that brought normal life to a standstill. Not all his stories are hunting anecdotes. He often wrote about the lesser creatures of the jungles, considering them equally interesting. A firm believer in the supernatural, his books often contain references to black magic and unexplained mysteries, and at times border on the implausible. Anderson's books were always restricted to his experiences in the wilderness, unlike Corbett, who also wrote about the people that surrounded him.

Despite his affection for the people he lived amongst, Corbett migrated to Kenya in 1947. Unsure how he would be treated, he never experienced life in an independent India. Anderson, on the other hand, was vociferous about how India was always meant to be free. For a brief period, he went to Edinburgh to train as a barrister but his affinity for India and its people was so strong that he grew homesick and returned without completing his degree. As he grew older, like all hunters he gave up hunting, often advocating for protection of the animals in his beloved jungles but never recognised for his efforts.

Anderson's children followed two very different paths. His daughter June migrated to Australia in 1951 but his son Donald chose to stay in India, the last of the Andersons to do so. Donald led a life like any other citizen in free India and his true calling always remained hunting, influenced by his father and other *shikaris* of the Raj. Over the years the loss of friends and family, and eventually loneliness, made him a recluse and he lived his last years in penury, neglected and forgotten by the world around him. An obstinate septuagenarian who refused to compromise on the way he lived his life, his decline was tragic.

The Andersons were not the archetypal Anglo-Indian household, considering their passion for the forest and its denizens, but their story is poignant, often painful, and evocative of the experience of many families.



Donald Anderson and helpers

REMINISCENCES OF A JUTE WALLAH IN WEST BENGAL

KENNETH MILN

Jute wallahs were mainly folks from Dundee, Scotland, who having gained some mill experience chose to leave their native land for greener pastures in India, where large new mills were under construction. This movement of skilled workers and processing expertise took place from the mid-1800s through to the 1950s, by which time the last wallahs were leaving India. For many the promise of higher remuneration and a more comfortable lifestyle was the draw, for others it was travel and adventure.

We lived in part of a very large bungalow on the mill compound, separated from the rather noisy mill by a series of well laid-out gardens, tennis courts, bowling green and a play park for jute-wallah children. Beyond these amenities and further from the Hooghly lay the extensive mill buildings, including engine-house and boiler-house. The main source of power was a large steam-turbine from which driving power was transferred to hundreds of process-machines by means of belt-driven pulleys mounted on long steel shafts. With Megna's mills operating round-the-clock, the total labour force (operative personnel) would have amounted to over four thousand, including European (Scottish) expatriate overseers and management staff.

The compound area was enclosed on three sides by high walls. The remaining side to the west led down to the Hooghly, where a jetty with two cranes facilitated the transfer of jute-fibre (in the form of 'coarse bales' in river-barges) to the mills by means of a small steam railway system. Compound gardens were full of exotic plants and colourful flowers, including cannas, frangipani, hibiscus and poinsettia; in addition there were well-tended vegetable plots. In fact most compounds were virtually self-contained; items such as meat, chicken, fish, rice and colour were purchased from nearby bazaars. Wonderfully coloured birds, butterflies and dragonflies were much in evidence. Among other creatures commonly found were snakes; fortunately most were harmless.

The main rooms in jute wallahs' homes were fitted with electric punkahs (fans) suspended from very high ceilings. Punkah speed could be regulated as required by wall-mounted rheostats: there

were no air-conditioning systems fitted into most compound bungalows until the late 1950s.

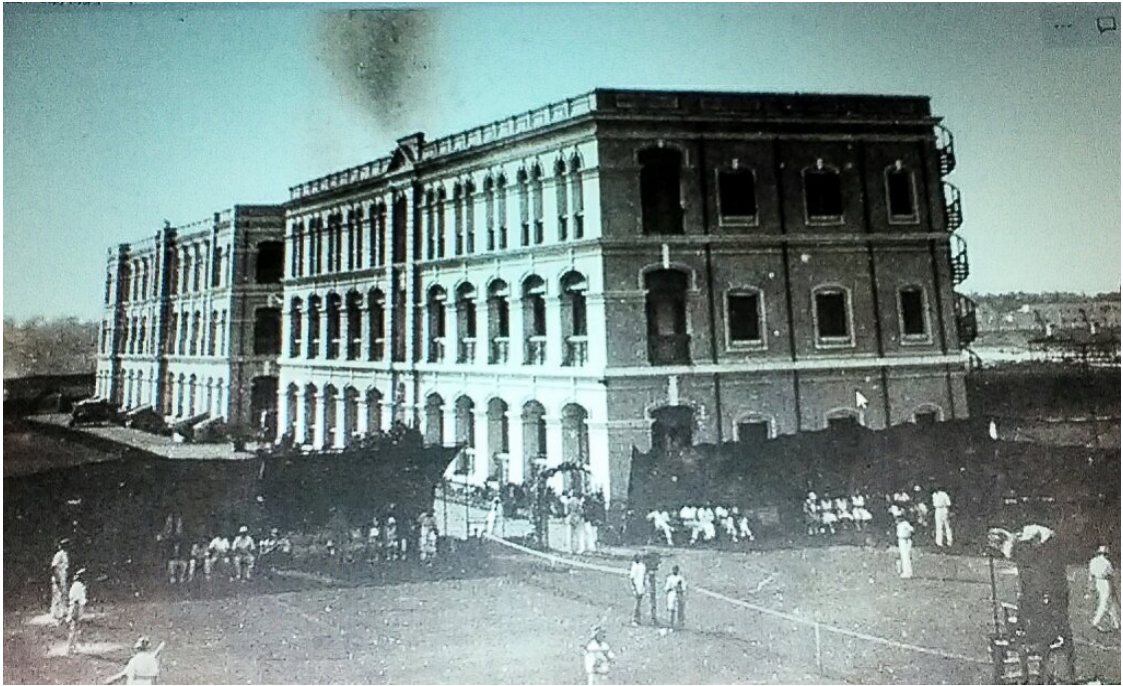
Jute wallahs with families usually employed between four and seven servants. In order of rank: a bearer (in effect a butler), a *khansama* (cook), a *jamadar* (sweeper and floor-polisher), an *ayah* (child-minder), a *mali* (gardener) and a *chokra* (young lad) for bazaar shopping duties. A compound *dhobi* and assistants were employed by the company for general laundry work. It was said that some *ayahs* would at times place a small amount of opium under their fingernails when tending a noisy and disobedient child, who would then have eaten fruit peeled by the *ayah*.

As regards leisure activities, the nearest Club was the hub to which most jute wallahs were drawn at weekends. Most clubs were very well equipped and comfortably furnished, with swimming-pool, billiard table, cinema hall and, of course, the all-important bar. I well remember, as a *niah-sahib* (newly arrived rookie bachelor), running up hefty bar bills incurred by signing bar-chits while downing bottles of strong ice-cold Indian beer. Inter-compound tennis matches were held regularly and were an excuse for big *tamashas* (noisy and boozy parties). These usually ended up with a sing-song and a number of inebriated wallahs jumping into the mill reservoir—all good fun until the next day, normally a Sunday.

Local leave periods were, during the war years, usually taken at Darjeeling, some four hundred miles by rail north of Calcutta. Located at seven thousand feet above sea level, Darjeeling's climate may be equated to a good Blighty summer.

On the subject of mill staff and work colleagues, there was always strict adherence to hierarchy. At the top was the mill manager (the *burra sahib*), then the assistant manager (the *do number*, i.e. number two). Under them were the senior accountant (the *kerani sahib*), the chief engineer (the *burra mistrie sahib*) and the mill overseers (the *sahib log*). Native staff were at the lowest levels. Up to the late 1950s there was almost no fraternising between European expatriate staff and locally appointed staff. It was almost unknown for Europeans to invite Indian colleagues to their compound bungalows, a most unfortunate state of affairs which may have contributed to ill feelings, especially during the lead-up to Partition. However all that is now past history and in general both Europeans and Indians get along very well together.

During the war years most wallahs would tune in (on their valve-type radios) to BBC news bulletins for the latest information from Blighty about the war in Europe—and the Japanese advance through Burma towards India, not far from Calcutta! Although there was nothing like the dangers faced by folks in Blighty, there



The Megna compound where we lived. Each block contained six large flats. Ours was the middle one at the far side of the first block.

were times when bombers flew overhead looking for West Bengal's major power station.

During the pre-Independence riots in West Bengal, I was one of a small group of youngsters living with their jute-wallah parents within the protective walls of a mill compound. Our particular group, made up of three boys and two girls—the *burra baba log* (past the babyhood stage)—attended school at Chandernagore, a town situated on the west bank of the Hooghly River some twenty miles north of Calcutta. We, the *burra baba log*, together with our respective *ayahs*, used to meet at half past eight on weekday mornings at the mill's jetty and board a dinghy for the river crossing to Chandernagore. The jetty's strong steel girders supported thick teak planking, which in turn held a railtrack system for puffing billy (steam reservoir locomotive) plus a number of flat-top trolleys jutting out some thirty feet from and above the river's bank. The jetty served to transfer bales of cutcha-jute (raw fibre) from barges, by means of steam-powered cranes up to the trolleys for transportation to the mill's great godowns (storehouses). At that time bales of jute-fibre were shipped to mill jetties in large flat-bottomed barges, which were towed by paddle-steamers from the jute-growing regions. Below our jetty ran two powerful electric pumps up to the mill's reservoir tank (a man-made pond) from where the 'settled' water was used to feed a number of steam boilers. At the jetty's river-end these pipes turned down into two huge filter-cages, the purpose of which was to prevent flotsam and jetsam from being sucked into the pumps.

Under the guidance of our good *ayahs* we, the *burra baba log*, clanked in single file down the jetty's steel stairway to where our dinghy lay moored. As we stepped aboard, our *manji* (boatman), with outstretched arms at the ready, ensured our safe arrival on board his gently swaying craft. With his charges securely seated, the *manji* moved to the dinghy's stern, taking hold of a single very long oar which, by a pulling, twisting and pushing action, propelled us smoothly across the river. While the good *manji* manoeuvred his dinghy through clumps of weed—upon which crows perched to peck at best-left-unseen objects—he would sing old Indian love songs. During these episodes the dinghy's long oar-shaft creaked loudly against a hard wood rowlock, producing a somewhat discordant accompaniment to his vocal efforts. Thus entertained, we looked out over the quietly flowing Hooghly to witness many marvellous sights: elephants being washed by their *mahouts*, water buffalos wallowing in the shallows and many types of river-boats.

However, what we fortunate children did not really see, or for that matter understand, were the violent riots taking place day and night right outside our compound's high walls. Rioting took place mainly between Moslems and Hindus, Europeans were largely unaffected. It has been estimated that over half a million lives were lost during the riots and some two million people displaced. During 1946–47 there were times when the Hooghly was littered with the bodies of people killed in the rioting.

The river at Chandernagore is, within tidal influence, subject to tidal-bores and deep enough to support a host of ferocious predators. At certain times, when making the return crossing from Chandernagore during low tide, we would be off-loaded at a muddy stretch of river bank some two hundred yards from the jetty. There we, the *burra baba log* and *ayahs*, were actually carried to *terra firma* by our good *manji*—a prodigious feat of strength and balance! Sections of river bank severely damaged, our *manji* was left with no alternative but to steer directly for the jetty. As our dinghy edged closer, we became aware of a great commotion taking place in the water and the *manji's* loud cry of '*Cubbar dar!*' (take care) as he pointed towards a huge fish-like creature snapping at the filter-cages. As our dinghy arrived at the jetty we suddenly, and at close-quarters, came upon the cause of the disturbance: human remains, obviously sucked against the filter-cages during pumping operations, were being torn away by some large voracious creature.

Many years later I learned that the human remains were there as a result of the rioting. The large voracious creature was either a species of giant catfish known as a goonch or a Ganges shark!

FIBIS: THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS

PETER BAILEY

When the Journal editor invited me to write a history of the Families in British India Society, I was of course flattered but had to admit that I am perhaps one of only two people qualified to write it. The other is Geraldine Charles, who was active from the start in promoting genealogical research on the British in India. Geraldine attended the first worldwide Anglo-Indian reunion, where she put up a display on researching Anglo-Indian family history. From the interest she received Geraldine conceived the idea of producing an occasional newsletter, the *East Indies Telegraph*, to provide a platform on which people could comment about the families they were researching and their specialist interests. It would also include book reviews and items of wider genealogical interest. I feel it appropriate to pay tribute to Geraldine and to all the others mentioned in this account for the great achievements of FIBIS, which in twenty years has become the world's most successful amateur family history society.

The early days

I first met Geraldine at the Society of Genealogists' Family History Show. She enthused me and pointed me towards the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia stand, where I met the celebrated Theon Wilkinson, its founder and chairman, and his colleagues. My personal knowledge of British India was limited to the facts that my grandfather was born in Madras in 1879 and attended St Joseph's College in Bangalore before moving to England in 1904. I had done a certain amount of genealogical investigation and learnt that most research on British India was best undertaken at the India Office Records. Still working at that stage, I was unable to devote much time to research, although in 1990 I had been able to visit St Thomas' Mount in Madras, where I had been permitted to copy many of the parish records, including those relating to my ancestors. I had also been to St Patrick's Cathedral in Bangalore, where my grandfather and his mother had lived and where there is a plaque commemorating her involvement in the erection of the Lady Chapel.

In 1995 a group of British India enthusiasts founded an organisation eventually called the British Ancestors in India Society (BAIS), which I joined. Unhappy with the direction of BAIS, we decided to form an alternative organisation. In 1998 meetings were held in Jenny Law's office at the London School of Economics to plan the breakaway organisation, which we called the Families in British India Society. (The name was derived from Geraldine's suggestion of the FBI Society, to show that it related to the days



Peter Bailey beside the plaque in St Patrick's, commemorating the part played by his great-great-grand-mother in the construction of the Lady Chapel in 1897.

of a unified subcontinent and to make tongue-in-cheek reference to the detective work of the family historian!) These were attended by Geraldine, Michael Gandy, Tony Fuller, Donald Jacques and a couple of others. The first formal meeting of the Society was held on 25 September 1999 at the former East India Company Chapel of St Matthias in Poplar, East London. Currently serving officers of FIBIS, either present at that meeting or joining shortly afterwards, were Geraldine (4), myself (36) Robert Charnock (99) and John Napper (171) and we are delighted to note that they are still with us today. We were also pleased to welcome Cathy Day from Australia, former administrator of the Rootsweb India List, who established the first online databases for British India genealogy. The good ship FIBIS was launched.

An uncertain start

From early days we realised that for FIBIS to survive, we would need to establish a bank balance and a record of names and addresses (especially email addresses) of people expressing interest in joining. Donald Jacques generously came up with a loan of £50 and Rootsweb kindly gave us publicity through their India List. Cathy Day had established a network of enthusiastic researchers, many well informed on the research techniques involved in British India genealogy, and had put spreadsheet data lists on her own website. An early decision was made that all data that we published should be made available to visitors free of charge, whether a member of FIBIS or not. This rule has always been respected and is a source of mild envy from other family history societies.

Relations with the British Library have always been strong, not to mention cordial. Those who enjoyed transcribing records of British India soon learnt that there were no constraints on copying and publishing them. They were subject to Crown Copyright and could freely be copied by us. We therefore agreed with the British Library which of the vast number of datasets available we would transcribe for publication on Cathy's website. In addition, and with huge gratitude to our colleagues at the British Library, we were permitted to hold our bi-monthly committee meetings in the Oriental and India Office Records Reading Room after its normal closing time of 5 p.m. until the Library closed three hours later. The British Library also permitted us to hold our twice-yearly Open Meetings at one of its meeting rooms until the number of attendees became too large. We must express our gratitude to Penny Brook and Hedley Sutton and their colleagues at the British Library for their assistance in this.

As mentioned earlier, FIBIS's first formal meeting was held at St Mathias's, Poplar. Some thirty members were addressed by the late Tony Farrington, then Director of the India Office Records at the British Library. Our founding secretary, Tony Fuller (3), also gave a presentation on the aims and objectives of the proposed society. This concept was accepted by the meeting and FIBIS was formed. Also confirmed at the meeting were the positions of chairman (Rosemary Taylor), treasurer (Donald Jacques), membership secretary (Peter Bailey), members' interests (Camilla von Massenbach), representative for Australian and New Zealand members (Cathy Day) and committee members (Jenny Law, Geraldine Charles and Michael Gandy). Sadly, after about six months, both Rosemary Taylor and Michael Gandy resigned and a year later Tony Fuller and Jenny Law found the pressure of running FIBIS too much for them. They had appealed for help but little was forthcoming. We considered closing down the society, in the hope that researchers could in future find what they needed on the fast-growing internet, but a few trustees refused to accept this and offered themselves for the outstanding positions: namely Peter



Geraldine Charles

Bailey (chairman/secretary/journal editor), Lawrie Butler MBE (membership secretary), Geraldine Charles, Robert Charnock, Tim de Gruyther, Jenny Law, Camilla von Massenbach, Anthony West and Shirley West (committee members) and Marie Westwater (British Library). During this period, the membership continued to grow and the committee focussed on editing the Journal and preparing the next

informative stand at the Society of Genealogists' annual Family History Fair. This was in early 2001. Throughout the coming months we were able to increase membership and our membership secretary, now Lawrie Butler, was kept busy. Marie Westwater retired from the British Library and was replaced on our committee by Tim Thomas, a highly experienced and long-serving staff member of the newly named Asia, Pacific and Africa (APAC) section. At the Society of Genealogists' 2002 Family History Fair we were fortunate to recruit two very active new committee members. First, Elaine MacGregor, who was later to occupy many roles in FIBIS including treasurer, membership secretary, events coordinator and even organiser of our second tour of India in 2015. The second was Anne Kelsall, not only an active and innovative marketing manager who designed our first proper show stand but the founder of the FIBIS website, which was to become our flagship for the future.



Elaine MacGregor

Growth and stability

The year 2003 was particularly significant for FIBIS. Not only was it the fifth year of our formation—which passed uncelebrated—but we were fortunate in two major respects. First, we recruited to our number David Blake OBE, just retired as Curator of the India Office Private Papers at the British Library, who brought with him years of expertise. Second, Ian Baxter, compiler of the celebrated *Baxter's Guide to Biographical Sources in the India Office Records*, also retired from the British Library and became a consultant to us. We then negotiated with the British Library the right to publish *Baxter's Guide* under the name of FIBIS. This became the first of several guides to researching ancestry in British India that were greatly to advance our reputation. David Blake helped very substantially in this, as well as assuming responsibility for editing the FIBIS Journal, which continued to be issued twice every year. Norman Meadows, a retired marketing manager, helped develop an attractive exhibition stand and assisted considerably in raising FIBIS's profile in the genealogical world. At this point, I should mention two of our most stalwart members. The first, Noel Gunther, has always been of great help to our committee. Noel first joined us at the *Who Do You Think You Are? Live* family history show in 2007. Whenever there is a job to be done, such as erecting the FIBIS show stand, transcribing data or assisting with research questions, Noel is there. Although never joining the committee, Noel played his part. In any case, he seems to have been related to half the people in India and is a most popular member! The second is vice-

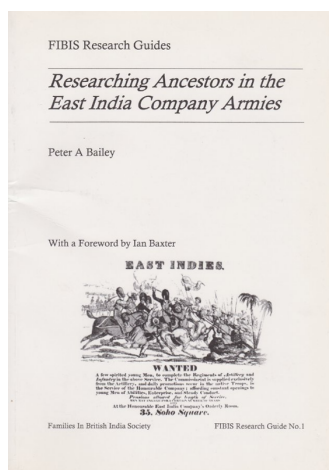
chairman Robert Charnock. Robert not only very capably stood in for me as chairman when necessary but has been a prodigious transcriber of the India Office Records that have added so much to our searchable database over the last twenty years.

Over the next three years or so Lawrie Butler took on a research officer role, Elaine MacGregor took over as membership secretary and John Lawrence became treasurer. Sadly Cathy Day's business commitments obliged her to relinquish her role as Australian members' representative. This was happily taken on by Sylvia Murphy, well known to us as an expert on British India genealogy through the Rootsweb India List. In recent years Sylvia had worked with LDS FamilySearch and been largely responsible for helping Australian researchers use the renowned and comprehensive LDS microfilms for British India family history research. She kindly arranged for me to address a meeting of FIBIS members at the Royal Australian Historical Society premises in Sydney in 2005. It was great to meet about 40 of them and strengthen links with our Australian cousins.

This was an early example of FIBIS's outreach programme, which eventually included presenting a series of meetings and lectures outside London. Several of us gained valuable experience in attending family history shows and presenting lectures in different parts of the world. These notably included Geraldine Charles, who gave talks in Calcutta and Australia, as well as Portsmouth, Blackburn, Manchester, Bury St Edmunds and Greenwich. Richard Morgan, Penny Tipper, Elaine MacGregor, Valmay Young and Lawrie Butler were all part of the large FIBIS outreach team and played a significant part in promoting FIBIS and helping increase and stimulate our worldwide membership.

In 2005 we were fortunate to recruit two experts: Richard Morgan, who had significant ancestry in British India and experience lecturing and writing on the subject, and Steve van Dulken, who had undertaken a great deal of transcription for us at the British Library where he worked. Another very significant acquisition was Valmay Young, who took over the position of webmaster from Anne Kelsall. Valmay was in the process of developing a website of her own on British India and welcomed the opportunity of doing so on behalf of FIBIS instead.

I was greatly helped by both Lawrie Butler and David Blake in 2006 in the preparation, editing and proofreading of my first book,

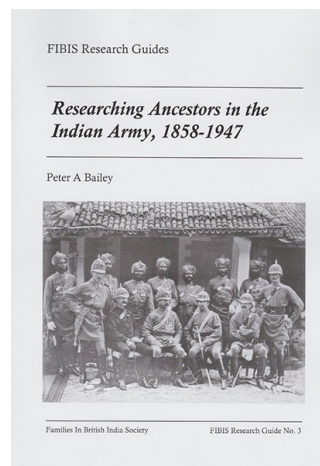


Researching Ancestors in the East India Company Army (FIBIS Guide no. 1). This was an addition to our existing publications, *Baxter's Guide* and the FIBIS *Fact Files*, and helped to provide a small but steady income to swell our coffers. These were joined in 2012 by Richard Morgan's book, *British Ships in India Waters: Their Owners, Crew and Passengers* (FIBIS Guide no. 2), and eventually in 2014 by my second book, *Researching Ancestors in the Indian Army, 1858–1947* (FIBIS Guide no. 3). In producing the latter, I was greatly helped by then Journal editor Sarah Bilton.

From 2007 Brand Events took over the running of the annual Family History Show from the Society of Genealogists. FIBIS had participated in these shows with great enthusiasm and mounted an increasingly impressive stand there for ten years, initially at Olympia and from 2014 to 2017 at the NEC in Birmingham.

In 2008 we were particularly pleased to welcome Sylvia Murphy, who came from Australia to help. The 'celebrity' at the show that year was Alistair McGowan, the well-known impressionist and actor, whose ancestors had lived in British India. We invited him across to our stand for a few pictures and then to our next Open Meeting. Our presentation there was on 'The Batta Mutiny', in connection with which Robert Clive had awarded his ancestor (later Major-General) John McGowan his first commission in the Bengal Army. This coincided with FIBIS's tenth anniversary and we asked Alistair McGowan to celebrate it with us by cutting a birthday cake that Tricia Bailey and Elaine MacGregor had made for the occasion.

From this point on our progress accelerated. Valmay brought to her portfolio as webmaster expertise in data handling, which helped John Kendall develop an appropriate online searchable database. With the help of the transcription team, he developed the system for which FIBIS has become so well known. We were proud to announce this at *Who Do You Think You Are? Live* at Olympia in April 2007. The new online searchable database allowed us to make available much of the data that we had been gathering in quantity from the India Office Records. It expanded the website that Valmay had been developing and significantly enhanced FIBIS's reputation. Shortly afterwards our close links with other family history societies enabled us to introduce John's new *Frontis* programme to other customers, including BACSA, the Sussex Family History Group, the Norfolk Family History Society and, finally and most notably, to the



Society of Genealogists. It is worthy of note that from 2009, for six years in succession, FIBIS won the competition run by the Federation of Family History Societies for the best family history website in each of the categories we entered!

In 2007 Eleanor Neil, later to return to her home country New Zealand and to coordinate FIBIS's activities there, took on the role of book sales coordinator. Emma Sullivan took over from Elaine MacGregor as membership secretary. John Lawrence assumed the role of treasurer and Penny Tipper was recruited to the committee as coordinator of transcription volunteers. Penny and John had joined us on our amazingly successful first trip to India earlier that year, organised by member Philippa Waterfield. This trip was designed to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Some thirty members of FIBIS participated, coming not only from Britain but from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, and we were pleased that Sylvia Murphy, our Australian representative, was able to join us too. Shortly afterwards Penny Tipper visited New Zealand and met a number of our members there.

The 'new' limited liability company

During 2007 we learnt that the Charity Commission was reviewing the regulations for organisations to qualify as a formal charity. We sought legal advice and drew up a fresh memorandum and articles of association for FIBIS as a company limited by guarantee and fresh objectives and targets as a charity. The first annual general meeting was held on 20 October 2007, the new constitution was accepted and a 'new' company was formed. FIBIS comprised over 700 members worldwide at this stage.

Early in 2009 Lawrie Butler, who had been a particularly active team member, decided to retire. He had spent three years as membership secretary, followed by a further five as research officer. During this time he had accumulated significant knowledge on the history of British India and written several Journal articles and *Fact Files*, in particular *Fact File 7* (with Tim Thomas) on aspects of the Indian Civil Service. The position of research officer was taken on by his knowledgeable and efficient deputy Beverly Hallam, who joined us as a trustee in 2008. Beverly has been an active and industrious research officer and a great contributor to the FibiWiki, an encyclopaedia about life in British India.

Also in 2009, John Lawrence retired as treasurer and this role was taken over by Hugh Wilding. Hugh was an experienced researcher with considerable ancestry in British India. He had a particular affection for the Indian Railways and had produced a

Fact File on the subject. At about this time Norman Meadows too retired as marketing consultant and was replaced by Joy Baker, Hazel Church and Joss O'Kelly; the latter has most usefully produced a 'scrapbook' of press cuttings on FIBIS.

In 2010 David Blake decided to retire as Journal editor, a position he had held very capably for seven years. This position was taken up by Sarah Bilton, who had significant ancestry in India that she traced with great professionalism. Sarah was also a worthy contributor to our Fibi-Wiki with Maureen Evers, Sy Morse-Brown and Michael Pearce.



David Blake

The Journal has been published twice a year for the past twenty years, throughout which we have strived to maintain the highest standard of research and writing. This high standard, introduced by David Blake, has been maintained by Sarah and by subsequent editors Margaret Murray, Emma Louise Oram and Valerie Haye.

After David resigned the position of Journal editor he took on the role of FIBIS company secretary. He suggested a minutes secretary be appointed to record the proceedings of committee meetings and Alexandra Sherman took up this position in addition to her duties as a researcher for Beverley. When David retired from FIBIS after ten years devoted service, Xandra assumed his wider duties as company secretary. David then offered his services to our sister organisation BACSA.

The FIBIS Conference

One of the highlights of recent years was the three-day residential conference organised at Meriden in April 2014. It was attended by some 130 persons, including five from Australia, three from Canada and one from each of New Zealand, Sweden and the USA. We were privileged to welcome 99-year-old member Ailsa Stewart, who had travelled down from the Isle of Mull by herself to attend. The conference was capably organised by Penny Tipper and Elaine MacGregor, with the aid of most committee members. It included a variety of speakers who presented a stimulating programme on British India. We were delighted to feature a presentation by Sylvia Murphy, and to welcome our active and experienced new Australian representative Mary-Anne Gourley. Our links with Australia were noticeably strengthening and I had recently given a live lecture by electronic link to the Western Australian Genealogical Society. Their chairman and her husband also attended our conference. We were proud to incorporate the new FIBIS exhibition stand and logo that Penny, Elaine and I had commissioned to our design. We now

anticipate an equally successful 20th Anniversary Conference in September 2018.

We were sorry that Hugh Wilding had to resign as treasurer due to professional commitments but pleased when this responsibility was taken on by John Napper, one of our longest-standing members, who had many connections to British India. Elaine MacGregor resigned as membership secretary in 2006 and this role was taken on by Emma Sullivan, who did an excellent job from 2007 to 2012. When she resigned due to family commitments, Suzanne Webber took over. Suzanne did a first-class job from 2012 to 2015, until the increasing number of members—we were now some 1400—made the position difficult to control. Luci Valery St Martin took on the role for a short time but resigned to take up a job and Libby Rice, the current membership secretary, kindly took it on.

Towards the end of 2015, Penny Tipper resigned as coordinator of our small army of transcription volunteers. This job had developed and now entailed allocation of datasets, issuing instructions on how to transcribe them and organising their transfer to the webmaster, who placed them into our searchable database. The number of lines of data probably exceeds two million today—a tribute to Penny's devotion to the task. Of particular note is the work that she put into capture and transcription of the Canning Papers. Penny's retirement left the position of transcriptions coordinator vacant but by now we had embarked upon a major programme to photograph for posterity the large numbers of gravestones of Britons buried in cemeteries throughout India. FIBIS financed the initial cost of engaging Rajat Sharma, an Indian national, to undertake this and newly appointed trustee Nigel Penny volunteered to investigate funding for the project. Nigel was successful in obtaining grants from the Pilgrim Trust and now coordinates gravestone photography and the other transcriptions that FIBIS volunteers are working on.

FindMyPast

An ominous event in our history was the decision by the British Library to award a contract to BrightSolid (FindMyPast) to digitise the records of baptisms, marriages and burials, cadet papers and wills in the India Office collections. We had considered these records far too numerous to transcribe for the FIBIS database, although we had attempted to produce small sets, particularly the names of brides in certain marriage records. We were concerned that researchers would no longer consult our records since they would now have access to complete online sets at FindMyPast, albeit at a price; our records had always been made available free of charge. In the event, our fears were misplaced.



The FIBIS team with TV presenter Anita Rani at *Who Do You Think You Are? Live* 2016: Peter Bailey, Noel Gunther, Pat Scully, Anita Rani, Steve van Dulken, Beverly Hallam, Hena Jawaid, Valmay Young, Libby Rice, Tricia Bailey, John Napper.

The British Library's contract with FindMyPast caused us to focus our activities in other directions and FIBIS instituted a policy of transcribing sources of data beyond the India Office collections. We were favourably surprised that announcements of domestic events (births, marriages and deaths) found in publications such as the *Times of India*, *Allen's India Mail* and the like did not necessarily duplicate those in the India Office anyway! Our army of industrious transcribers, particularly those organised by David Edge and the late John Gannon, produced thousands of lines of fresh information for our database as a result. I spoke about extra sources to search for data not only at a FIBIS Open Meeting in London but at lectures given in Wellington and in Auckland during a trip to New Zealand in early 2017. Both lectures were attended by many FIBIS members there and capably organised by Eleanor Neil and Deirdre Dale. It was good to meet members, hitherto only names, whom I had got to know via email exchanges.

FIBIS attendance at *Who Do You Think You Are? Live* continued each year until the organisers decided to close the show in 2017. In recent years, Elaine MacGregor had been responsible for organising the FIBIS stand. However her other activities on behalf of FIBIS took up too much of her time and she decided to withdraw

from this task. Pat Scully was asked to take it on and his energy and negotiating skill ensured that we obtained more table space and better positions in the Hall than we had paid for. As a result, we were seen to be the leading amateur family history society at this annual jamboree. We were punching far above our weight.

In 2016, as I entered my ninth decade, I thought it appropriate to step down from the chair. Pat's energy, skill and organisational ability made him the obvious person to succeed me and I was able to stand aside in the knowledge that under his leadership FIBIS will retain its leading position in British family history circles for the long-term future.

In conclusion, my main objective for FIBIS has always been to establish an encyclopaedic online resource to which any person can refer for a comprehensive answer to any question relating to Britons who lived or served in British India. The FIBIS website accumulates in its searchable database, its gallery, its FibiWiki, its social media, its library and its blogs, comprehensive information on the history and personnel who created and maintained the Jewel in the Crown of the British Empire. So, echoing the celebrated memorial to Sir Christopher Wren in St Paul's Cathedral, and with sincere gratitude to John Kendall, Valmay Young and my colleagues, may I be permitted to say with much pride:

*Lector, si monumentum FIBIS requiris, inspice FIBIS website.**

OBITUARY: JOHN GANNON

It is with particular sadness that we recently learnt of the passing of John Gannon, one of the stalwarts of the FIBIS transcription team for so many years. A member since 2005, John answered our call for someone in the Cambridge area who was prepared to liaise with the Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge, and the University Library, which held between them most copies of *Allen's Indian Mail*, 1843 to 1891. John laboriously organised photocopying and distribution of the 'Domestic Occurrences' (births, marriages and deaths) reported in *Allen's* to his willing band of transcribers. Later he compiled transcription spreadsheets containing several thousand names for insertion in the FIBIS searchable database. Numerous questions arose during the project, which John frequently resolved, and the project was one of the most valuable undertaken for the database. John will be very sorely missed by all. *Requiescat in pace.*

Peter Bailey

President, Families in British India Society

* Reader, if you would like to see a monument to FIBIS, look at the FIBIS website.

YOU WERE BORN *WHEN*?

HEDLEY SUTTON

An accident of birth may have left one nineteenth-century cadet wishing his parents had been elsewhere when he came into the world. The L/MIL/9 sub-series of the India Office Records is concerned with recruitment, and contains details of the births, parentage and education of young men who wanted to join the armed forces of the East India Company. In March 1821 a certain John Thompson tendered an application to be trained for service as a junior officer, then being sixteen years of age. The Company did not insist that its troops had all been born and bred in the British Isles, and therefore the fact that his place of birth was Antwerp and he had been educated at Brussels were no bars to his setting out on a military career, his father William being a merchant.

To tease out what made his application very probably unique requires a passing knowledge of Belgian history. Independent since 1830, before this date Belgium had been ruled at various times by the Dutch, the Austrians and the Spanish. Between 1795 and 1814, however, the country came under the sway of revolutionary France. This meant not only that French rather than Dutch became the language of the administration, but also that all official papers issued in this period were dated according to the Republican calendar devised and implemented in 1792 and imposed on those territories which came to be occupied by French armies. This renamed the twelve months to reflect prevailing meteorological conditions and instituted a (later abandoned) system of three ten-day weeks, factoring in an extra day every four years. The Thompson family knew that John had been born on 30 April 1804, but unfortunately the document proving this showed his date of birth as the tenth day of Floreal, Year Twelve. The Company's recruitment procedure required the provision of proof of age, and accordingly the document was duly sent in to East India House. Young Thompson's sponsors had the foresight to include an English translation of the original French document, authenticated by Robert Annesley, the British Consul; it can be seen that the Antwerp authorities had compromised by adding the familiar date in brackets, as if assuming that the new calendar would not last forever.

This curious faint echo of the French Revolution is at shelfmark L/MIL/9/143/401, and the digitised image can be seen on the FindMyPast website in the *British India Office Births and Baptisms* dataset. The story ends happily, in that the powers-that-be in London processed the application as normal and passed him fit to serve in the Bombay Army.

Further reading

Matthew Shaw, *Time and the French Revolution : The Republican Calendar, 1789 – Year XIV*, Boydell, 2011, shelfmark YC. 2012. a.3742.

BOOK REVIEWS

REVIEW ARTICLE

A SOLDIER'S SOLDIER: THE CONQUEST OF THE PUNJAB

Christopher Brice. *Brave as a Lion: The Life and Times of Field Marshal Hugh Gough, 1st Viscount Gough*. Helion & Company, 2017. 616pp. Hb. £35. ISBN 978-911096-51-1.

This is a book about a Victorian general, almost forgotten today, whose principal theatre of war is the subject of revisionary apologetics rather than a source of pride. The author is, among other things, a lecturer in military history at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. The book is handsomely produced, clearly printed, carefully and comprehensively indexed and full of interest. The maps are plentiful and good. Quite a lot of it is taken up with attempts to establish the truth behind the who-said-what-to-whom and who-did-what-when variety. The itch to get it right is evident throughout. The Sandhurst lecturer sometimes gets the better of the narrative historian.

'Cometh the hour, cometh the man.' Gough was pre-eminently a man for his time though his hour came towards the end of a long career. He was a soldier in an epoch where the British Army was engaged in campaigns of a variety and frequency seldom experienced. He was a 'soldiers' soldier' in an age where humane concern for the rank and file was uncommon. Wellington once described 'that article', the common soldier, as 'the scum of the earth, the merest scum'; he was primarily a tool, indispensable, needing to be fed, clothed and trained, a resource to be husbanded rather than an individual. The tone of Wellington's remark was that of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy. That was how they saw the native Irish, of whom there were many in the British Army at the time. The out-of-work labourer from the shires and the destitute from the slums of the new industrial age fell into the same category. It was not a humanitarian age but if Gough's concern for the welfare of his soldiers was unusual for his times he was at one with Wellington, as with Marlborough before and Slim and Montgomery since, in delivering the one thing that soldiers most look for from their generals, success in battle.

The Gough family is an old one, Welsh in origin, reaching Ireland by way of Wiltshire, the army by way of the Anglican Church. The Goughs were actively engaged in the turbulent period



Sir Hugh Gough, wearing his conspicuous white coat of Irish politics during the late 18th century when, encouraged by the example of the French Revolution, Irishmen sought to break the stranglehold of Westminster and the Whig aristocracy on their nation. As Limerick landowners the Goughs represented the forces of law and order. This created no apparent conflict of loyalties in Gough himself; he proclaimed himself an Irishman to the last but also a loyal servant of the Crown, in contrast to contemporaries who conformed to the adage 'if you can't beat them, join them'. Protective camouflage was not for Gough; hence the conspicuous white coat he invariably wore when commanding armies in battle.

After a haphazard education, no more than gleanings from his brothers' tutorials, he was commissioned into the army at the age of 13. Two years later he saw action in his first campaign of any importance, the taking of Cape Colony from the Dutch. Thereafter he was to spend four years in the Caribbean, in the 87th Regiment

(later the Royal Irish Fusiliers), whom he was to go on to command in the Peninsular campaign. The Caribbean was essentially a sideshow for the army during the wars with Revolutionary France but fatalities were disproportionately high because of sickness. Regiments returned decimated by disease and officers transferred rather than serve there. Gough saw action in a number of small-scale operations but the experience was invaluable primarily in educating him in the care and administration of his men.

In his next theatre, the Peninsular, by then married to the love of his life, Gough was to serve under Wellington, both a consummate strategist and a well-connected member of the British establishment who knew, almost as second nature, how to deploy his friends in Parliament. The two attributes went hand-in-hand where the conduct of the campaign was concerned since it was Parliament, always reluctant to loosen the purse strings, who dictated supplies. Husbanding scarce resources became second nature to Wellington, as to almost every British field commander before or since, an art in which the education of their continental counterparts—and later, American—lagged some way behind. But the casuistries of the corridors of power were not a language which Gough ever bothered to master. He might, however, have drawn his own private conclusions from the criticism of Wellesley by Parliament and press for his conduct of the Battle of Talavera, in which the 87th under Gough fought conspicuously well and Gough himself was seriously wounded. Partly incapacitated, he nevertheless rejoined his regiment after a fortnight spent in evading capture, which must have tested his stamina and courage to the utmost.

Gough and the 87th were present at the Defence of Tarifa—where Gough was again wounded—at the Battles of Vittoria and of Nivelle, where he was wounded a third time, which led to a long and painful convalescence. By the time he recovered the long campaign was over. It was one which, in the author's words, 'was the making of him'. He had been in the thick of the fighting against what was considered the most formidable army in Europe, still full of revolutionary ardour and well led. Gough had commanded his battalion with distinction, had observed at first hand the leadership of capable commanders like Hill and Graham and had attracted the favourable notice of Wellington himself. The highs and lows of the campaign, as they affected the discipline and battle worthiness of the 87th, added to his experience as a commander. The 87th, it must be added, took some commanding. Often brigaded with their fellow Irishmen of the 88th—the Connaught Rangers, the 'Devil's Own'—the combination was combustible, unrivalled in battle but unruly out of it. Gough was exactly the right man to channel their fighting

qualities into the proper direction. His knighthood was well deserved.

There followed perhaps the unhappiest period of Gough's career. From 1819 to 1825 he held a number of appointments. Passed over as regimental colonel of the 87th he was given command of the 22nd, later the Cheshire Regiment. After a period of garrison duty in England his battalion was ordered to Ireland, where it became responsible for what were later called 'counter-insurgency duties'. The army's job was to put down insurrection and protect the landowners against violence. Gough was by then a landowner himself but handled his responsibilities with tact and sympathy as well as firmness. But his dislike of paper work involved him in a case of alleged falsification of accounts, which led to Gough being censured by an official court of enquiry. The affair was relatively trivial in itself and no one attributed any dishonest practice to Gough himself; but the pontificating of Horse Guards seems, even today, an perfect example of the military authorities predilection for swallowing camels and straining at gnats. As with Sir John Moore, unfamiliarity with the ways of Whitehall exacted its price.

Gough then spent the next eleven years unemployed, on half pay. Like Cincinnatus he turned his sword into a ploughshare. But money was short and frustrated ambition gnawed away at his peace of mind. Promotion to major-general in 1830 must have been a palliative but he had to wait a further seven years before resuming active service as commander of the Mysore Division of the Madras Army of the East India Company. Gough might have been disappointed: so far as it could ever be said to have been so, India was quiet and the prospect of active service seemed comparatively remote. The seat of operations had shifted north and, progressively, north-westward, leaving Madras a comparative backwater. Moreover the Madras Army, whatever its achievements in the early days of the Company, was considered more decorative than useful. There was every expectation, however, including on Gough's part, that he would succeed to the command of the Madras Army itself when the present incumbent retired. No doubt he would have licked it into shape. With that distant prospect he had to be content.

Wafted from the simplicities of Irish country life to the arcane complexities of the British administration of India, Gough found life far from easy. For one whose experience of the Caribbean had left him with a dislike of campaigning in hot weather, India must have been anathema, even leaving aside the other aggravations of life. The ramifications of the East India Company's trade were complex, most especially so with countries to the east. Nowhere was this more evident than with Imperial China, where we discovered, with some discomfiture, a culture far older and even more arrogant than our

own. The East India Company was sensitive about its profits and prerogatives, China excessively so about its own. China was a huge market with almost limitless opportunities but the Chinese restricted access to Canton and the supply of available goods was regulated by Imperial decree. The crux of the issue became the opium trade, banned by the Chinese but incomparably lucrative for smugglers, of which the EIC was the principal. Negotiations to regulate affairs with the Chinese were almost impossible for the uninitiated: cooped up for years at a time in Canton there was not, alas, much hope of initiation among the merchants. Misunderstandings abounded, exacerbated by insult, real or imagined, and outbreaks of violence, the British merchant community feeling increasingly besieged. Incident led to incident until, with a speciousness reminiscent of the invasion of Iraq, the British Government declared war, wrong-footing the EIC who didn't want to find themselves paying for it.

It was a very one-sided conflict. 'To Gough . . . the moral ambiguity of the war would not have been a consideration', writes the author. But the distress of the local population placed him on the horns of a dilemma. He was experienced enough to know that the aftermath of a battle is often more dangerous than the battle itself. The experience acquired new dimensions in China. The sufferings of the local population were intense. The situation is inherent in all 'wars of intervention', as we would now call them, and Gough, who had seen much suffering in Spain and Ireland, could not have been blind to the effects of the 'moral ambiguity' which propelled him into it.

After two years campaigning a ceasefire was declared and the Treaty of Nanking signed in August 1842. It opened up five ports—Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Nanking—to British trade. The opium question was left unsettled and the EIC continued smuggling. We had got what we wanted at derisory material cost. Gough had learned a great deal about the planning and execution of battles, albeit of a minor scale. The campaign was fought throughout as a combined operation with the Royal Navy, rare then, commonplace enough today. The real enemy was not the Chinese but climate and geography. Gough weathered the campaign well but ended it a tired man. At the age of 62 he admitted to being 'sick of war'. After protracted shilly-shallying by the EIC over his pay and allowances and the British Government over his next appointment (during which time Gough and his wife were left to kick their heels in India), without employment and short of money, Gough was appointed in May 1843 as Commander-in-Chief, India. It was to be the setting for the final act of Gough's career.



Death of Major General Churchill, Gwalior, 1843

At this point we are halfway through the book. The rest is devoted to Gough's campaigns against the Sikhs. His initiation, both military and political, was not long in coming. Within weeks of his arrival he found himself in action against what was left of the Mahratta Confederacy. The Mahrattas were a proud people with a large and efficient army. It had already required two wars to bring what we saw as a permanently unruly element of the Indian scene under control. But the state of Gwalior remained unsubdued. It might not have mattered had Gwalior's strategic position not threatened the flank of any subsequent operation against the Sikhs to the north, even then regarded as a probability. The Battle of Gwalior, a muddled affair over broken ground against well-prepared defences, was essentially a prelude to that later conflict. It was watched from a tea tent by Lady Ellenborough, Lady Gough, Lady Smith and other women, and by Lord Ellenborough, the Governor-General. Ellenborough was no soldier but he suffered from the delusion, common enough among high-placed civilians, that he knew all about commanding an army. Gough must have found his interventions irksome, though he was far too polite to have said so.

The 'Ellenborough effect' was to bedevil Gough's career in India. The expression 'a simple soldier' is a contradiction in terms, certainly at Gough's level in the Indian context of the time, since British India was the EIC, a civilian set-up. The EIC paid for an army to protect its investments but by the time Gough got to India it was almost broke, in spite of its profits. As trade had extended so did the commensurate responsibilities of administration and security, until it became evident to the EIC and to the government that the venture was no longer affordable. The task was huge, altogether too much for a group of self-elected and rather elderly individuals living in London, however shrewd and rich. But the EIC, like today's banks, was 'too big to fail', so a very English dual administration was set up whereby the EIC and the British Government shared responsibility between them. It was as if two men were trying to get into the same suit which was coming apart as the seams and soon destined to fall apart. Government 'control' was a misnomer: parliamentary attention was fitful and easily subverted and everything needed to be okayed by the EIC Court of Directors. Economies were the order of the day, urgent ones, and the army was first in line for these. The perception entertained of Indian affairs by members of the Court of Directors as they peered after lunch into the gloom of a December afternoon in London was not the same as Gough's in the clear light of an Indian winter's day.

Gradually, imperceptibly, we were edging towards the cliff edge of what became the Mutiny of 1857. It was niggling over pay and allowances and terms and conditions of service for the sepoy, not greased cartridges, which precipitated the discontent, already rife at the time of Gough's arrival. The recent conquest of the Sindh had added another vast slice of territory to our Indian possessions. The Bengal sepoy saw it as foreign parts and demanded the appropriate pay and allowances. To the EIC it was just India. The sepoys' obduracy was boosted by our defeat, a decade earlier, in the First Afghan War. Their complaints were mishandled from the outset. Concessions were made at the wrong time and discipline came under strain. Malcontents were already at work spreading sedition, the more seductive since the quality of British officers in sepoy regiments was sometimes poor. Far from being the traditional court of appeal for sepoys' discontents, officers were often ignorant of what was happening under their noses. So it was not a well-ordered, well-disciplined army that had to confront the last but almost certainly the greatest threat to our Indian possessions, the Sikh Empire, with its large, well-disciplined and well-armed army, trained by foreign officers with the experience of the Napoleonic wars to draw on.



Charge of the 3rd King's Own Dragoons at the Battle of Chillianwallah, 1849

The author gives very detailed accounts of the two wars Gough had to fight to defeat the Sikhs and the battles with which he finally achieved that objective: Mudkee, Ferozshah, Sohraon, Aliwal, Chillianwallah, Gujerat. They were hard-fought, indeed almost desperate affairs, touch and go until the last moment, decided at the point of a bayonet. One or two—Chillianwallah being one—were inconclusive. Chillianwallah was also very costly in terms of casualties, which led to public censure. There were divided counsels among the Sikhs, but also on our side. The strained relations between Gough and Hardinge, Ellenborough's successor as Governor-General, added to the former's difficulties. In place of the vacillations of the one Gough found himself having to deal with a political superior who was a soldier of long experience, for whom interference into matters of detail proved irresistible. The ambivalence of the terms of cooperation between the two made misunderstanding and resentment almost inevitable. The irony is that Gough admired and liked both Ellenborough and Hardinge as much as they did him.

The defeat of the Sikhs and the conquest of the Punjab was more than a series of successful battles. The contumacy of the Sikhs and

the dangers inherent in their internecine rivalries could not be negotiated away. The issue had to be decided militarily and Gough was the man on the spot. That Gough saved India for the British is indisputable. Two decisive campaigns added one-fifth to the total area henceforward under British administration. Had the Sikhs remained undefeated there would have been no Koh-i-Noor and it is unlikely that Queen Victoria would have become Empress of India. There would have been no North West Frontier problem, no Great Game, no splendid regiments like the Guides. There is every possibility that our defeat might have sparked the Mutiny earlier. Had it done so there would have been no Sikhs fighting alongside us. There would have been less space for the thousands of young men turned out by Arnold and his successors to expend their surplus energy and idealism, no vast territory of the Five Rivers for our engineers and agriculturalists to transform into one of the most fertile parts of the subcontinent, fewer unclaimed souls for our missionaries, fewer bright pupils for our teachers to prepare for Oxbridge. There would probably have been no Pakistan. There would certainly have been no Rudyard Kipling and no *Kim*. The benefits cut both ways: Sikhs are now a well-integrated part of the community of our islands. As a nation we would have been poorer culturally, with much less to look back on with the pride of achievement.

The Sikh Wars were perhaps the apogee of what might be called 'the old British India'. Its sad and bitter coda was the Mutiny of 1857. Thereafter it became a different place. It would achieve its own apogee in the Second World War, for without India as its hub, and the outstanding contribution made by a million Indian soldiers of all castes and creeds, it is doubtful if we would have won it. The Punjab helped to make that possible. Partition seems to have been a poor way to repay them and all those who went before them, British and Indian alike.

This is perhaps too detailed a book for the general reader. But it would certainly repay careful study by students at military academies, not only for its detailed analysis of battles and the vagaries that confront those in command, but also for its description of the interplay between high command and politics and the effects created by even the mildest character differences between those involved in what Clausewitz mistakenly called 'diplomacy by other means'. Those who know the Indian scene will be able to provide those things that are missing: the dust, debility, disease, obfuscation, obstruction, passivity, mendacity, disabling heat and impossible terrain against which the Indian achievement has to be measured. Gough was by the standards of the time an old man when he first encountered them. He found himself responsible for what

were in fact three separate armies—of Bengal, Bombay and Madras—amounting to some 200,000 men, deployed higgledy-piggledy over a vast landscape, separated by exiguous communications and with tenuous access to illogically placed sources of supply. The EIC armies were a very idiosyncratic organisation, essentially paternalist in outlook and wedded to tradition. Gough was aware of both his own limitations as Commander-in-Chief and those of the system he inherited. It worried him less that he would, unlike his counterpart in London, have to take the field in person in battle than that the administration for which he was responsible was so conspicuously unfit for purpose. He had little time or leisure to devote himself to its improvement, but his acknowledgement of the problem was swift and acute, his proposals practical and well thought out. The fact that they fell on deaf ears is not his fault.

Gough was much criticised for his repeated use of the frontal attack. It was partly in character because he was a direct and unsubtle man. But luck is *the* indispensable ingredient in any general's career. Gough had his, certainly, but it could be argued that he made his own breaks. Both the Mahrattas, and more especially the Sikhs, were formidable enemies who placed a high premium on personal courage. What they saw in Gough was an opponent who was determined to beat them, and beat them handsomely. Whatever charges might be laid at Gough's door by his critics, lack of courage is not among them. It was not infrequent that his superiors decided that their criticisms had been ungenerous. Both Hardinge and Dalhousie, his successor as Governor-General, are cases in point, Wellington too.

The author concludes with an appendix, measuring Gough's achievements against the criteria listed in Professor Norman Dixon's study *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*, of which there are fourteen. The balance in favour of Gough is equivocal. But to attempt to reduce the most difficult of all arts in the most unpredictable of all situations is *reductio ad absurdum*. In an epoch where wars are directed on computer screens by commanders in air-conditioned bomb-proof bunkers far removed from the scene of action, it is not really for us to judge the performance of those who confronted an enemy face-to-face to a series of boxes to be ticked or not. Whatever his shortcomings as a general, one can hardly carp about the magnitude of Gough's achievement.

SIR ALLAN RAMSAY

Richard Morgan. *FIBIS Research Guide No. 2: An Introduction to British Ships in Indian Waters: Their Owners, Crew and Passengers.* Foreword by Peter Bailey. 2nd edition revised 2017. 115pp. Pb. £5.95 (£3.60 FIBIS members). ISBN 978-0-9570246-2-5.

This book is a revised and expanded version of the 2012 edition—forty extra pages at no extra cost! It is a research guide for family historians wishing to trace information about people who served or travelled in British ships in Indian waters. The broad topics covered are the East India Company Maritime Service, country ships, the Marine Service—warships, pilot and survey ships, and independently owned commercial ships. Royal Navy and foreign ships are not included.

The guide focuses mainly on the India Office Records at the British Library but points out other sources there, for example the Western Manuscripts collection. It also describes holdings in other institutions, such as prize money records at the National Archives, and the papers of the Society of East India Commanders at London Metropolitan Archives.

A second edition has enabled Richard Morgan to add sections covering the East India Company Committee of Shipping and marine correspondence in the India Office Records. Revisions have been made to reflect the recent updating of the archival catalogue for IOR/L/MAR/C Marine Miscellaneous. It is very pleasing to see new light being shed on these records, which are a treasure trove of biographical and maritime material.

Ships' journals and related paybooks and ledgers (IOR/L/MAR/A and IOR/L/MAR/B) are analysed in detail: format, contents, and the possibility of interesting observations. The journals are generally written by the captain, and Morgan points out that those kept by the chief and second mates do not appear to have survived. The reason for this can be found in a resolution passed by the East India Company Court of Directors in March 1818. If a captain's journal and a Company log book in a good state of preservation existed for a voyage, the chief and second mates' journals were to be destroyed. This amounted to the clearance of about 4,000 volumes for ships that arrived before the end of 1800. A similar clearance of mates'

FIBIS Research Guides

*An introduction to
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Richard Morgan

With a Foreword by Peter Bailey

Families in British India Society

FIBIS Research Guide No. 2



East Indiamen in a Gale (detail), Charles Brooking, c. 1759

journals for ships that arrived 1800–1810 was to be carried out in 1830 (IOR/B/166 pp. 1197–98).

We are taken into a male-dominated world, but women and children do make an appearance in passenger lists and pension records. Morgan comments on the fragile condition of the Poplar Fund records, but these have now been digitised and are available online via FindMyPast.

Users of the guide can reap the benefit of tips from a diligent researcher who has spent a great deal of time trawling through the records. Morgan analyses the usefulness of different sources and advises on how to get the best out of them. He uses plenty of case studies to illustrate what can be gleaned, including his own ancestor Alexander Morgan. These individual stories bring the book to life.

The wealth of data discovered by Morgan underlines the value of persistence when exploring the India Office Records. He demonstrates how it is often necessary to switch between a range of record sets: Marine, Court of Directors, Finance and Military. This is an invaluable guide for anyone investigating the maritime world of the East India Company or India Office.

MARGARET MAKEPEACE

Rosie Llewellyn-Jones (ed.). *The Uprising of 1857*.

Mapin Publishing, 2017. 264pp. Hb. £55. ISBN 978 93 85360 11 4.

This is a lavish book of ‘coffee-table’ dimensions; beautifully bound and printed on sumptuous paper. The 168 illustrations of the Uprising of 1857, formerly known as the ‘Indian Mutiny’, are from the Alkazi collection in New Delhi. Many will be familiar to students of the rebellion but others less well known. There are several lithographs but the majority are photographs by eminent practitioners such as Felice Beato, Egon Lundgren, John Murray, Samuel Bourne and the Tytlers.

If the term ‘coffee-table’ risks demeaning the text let me immediately set the record straight. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones (RLJ) does not write (or edit) superficial books. She is an expert on British India and has a long-established reputation for digging beneath the surface of events to expose the deeper societal, religious and economic underpinnings. She is neither an apologist for the Raj nor a political antagonist. Her deft editorial influence can be felt across all nine essays, which are of a uniformly high standard of prose and dialectic. Indeed, from an editorial viewpoint the volume is almost faultless.

Central are the photographs themselves. Much of the commentary is about the nature of the photographs and how they were used to create lithographs which were widely used in the pages of the *Illustrated London News* (ILN) and similar media. Whereas photographs tended to freeze a moment in time and space a lithograph could be doctored, rather like modern digital photography, to tell eager audiences back in Britain about the heroics and horrors of the events. These sank deep into the public consciousness for generations and, until quite recently, schoolchildren would know about the Bibighar (the well in Cawnpore down which the bodies of British women and children were thrown) and even British retribution, such as mutineers being blown from the mouths of British artillery.

Zahid Choudhary’s chapter argues that photography became an instrument of colonial violence: ‘Even colonial photographs cannot be read only as technologies of domination, since they are this but much more’. He points to some images where skulls have been arranged with their ‘faces’ looking towards the camera. To my mind this is pretty innocent, as indeed are most of the images in the book. Indeed one can see why the ILN regarded photographs as being of little of propagandistic value. Even the images of the infamous Bibighar are somewhat banal. Portraits of the alleged culprits seem almost sympathetic and the photograph of The Last



Bahadur Shah Zafar II, The Last King of Delhi, 1858

King of Delhi (by Tytler and Shepherd) is full of pathos. I suspect the reasons for such 'innocence' were more technical than intentional. Something this book lacks is a chapter about how photos were taken in 1857. I assume they were profoundly static. This early war photography is light years away from Robert Capa, Eddie Adams or Nick Ut.

However the authors go beyond the photographs themselves to assess what they tell us about the Uprising and its causes. In her Introduction RLJ warns 'of oversimplifying an immensely complicated event'. She suggests that some answers may lie in the 60,000 unread manuscripts in Indian archives and she contributes an excellent chapter on the annexation of Awadh (Oudh), where the sheer incompetence of the takeover alienated local Muslim officials and soldiers (and is comparable perhaps with American mistakes in Baghdad after the 2003 invasion). As with most crises there was doubtless a combination of factors: discontent in the army over pay and conditions, an embryonic conspiracy which may have stirred up resentment over religion and waxed cartridges; perhaps, above all, too much cultural distance between the British officers and their Indian soldiers. The earlier generation of Company officers had been fascinated by India, its culture and languages, but this had given way to a widespread (but not universal) sense of superiority and even contempt.

Shahid Amin contributes a chapter on Sir John Kaye's famous history and how he managed to be both critical of British attitudes before the Uprising and simultaneously confident that only English values could 'trample it out'. He goes on to make the telling point that the story is full of identifiable Englishmen but 'an indistinguishable black mass' on the Indian side. I found him particularly fascinating on Delhi Ridge, where he refers to a 'national history of illusory hegemonies'. The ridge was preserved by the British after 1857 and became a focus for a number of memorial events in 1877, 1903 and 1910. However the whole area has continued to be maintained as the 'Jawaharlal Nehru Park' and the key sites (Flagstaff Tower, the Chauburja Mosque, the Observatory, etc.) are still protected but without any reference to 1857. The one exception is the 'Mutiny Memorial' to which an elegant plaque has been affixed: 'The Enemy of the inscriptions on this monument were those who rose against colonial rule and fought bravely for national liberation in 1857'. This surely is the answer to the current debates about Rhodes and Codrington.

Mahmood Farooqi examines the responses of two eminent Muslims to the Uprising. One, Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib, has been accused of being an arch collaborator although he was actually critical of the British. He was 'aristocratic and elitist' but was cold-shouldered by the British after 1857. The other, Maulvi Mohammed Baqar, supported the King of Delhi and had quite a sophisticated view of 'economic nationalism'. He was killed during the British assault on Delhi. Reasons for loyalty to one side or the other could be complex and there is more study to be done about how, for some Indians, the Company Raj fitted quite neatly into the Indian caste system. Some patriotic Indians could identify more closely with a British officer than, for example, a low-caste water-carrier. The growth of mid-19th century racism in British India was therefore doubly self-destructive in alienating Indians on grounds of their colour.

Farooqi rightly adds that 'Hindu-Muslim unity was the outstanding feature of 1857'. The British later tended to blame the Muslims: a fact that is nowadays uncomfortable for Hindu nationalists to accept. For its part Pakistan likes to draw a direct line between the Mutiny, the birth of the Aligarh Movement and the foundation of Pakistan. However the British were saved in 1857 by troops from (what is now) Pakistan; not just the Sikhs but also Punjabi and Pashtun Muslims. The Uprising is truly a minefield of contradictions.

NOTICES

JOURNAL NAME

Thank you to members who suggested alternative names for the Journal. From a shortlist of the following (The Banyan Tree, Chai, Company and Raj, Families in British India and FIBIS) an overwhelming majority of committee members voted for FIBIS, which has clearly established itself in twenty years of use. So FIBIS the Journal remains.

*****FIBIS CONFERENCE*****

Have you booked your conference place yet? 28-30 September in Oxford.
See the enclosed leaflet for more details.

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There is a misconception that the India Office Records held at the British Library were brought back to England after Independence in 1947. This is not the case. The 15km collection at the British Library consists chiefly of copies of documents held overseas that were sent to London in the course of business, and those created in the UK by the East India Company and the India Office. Large numbers of complementary archives are held in institutions throughout South and Southeast Asia, as well as in St Helena.

Margaret Makepeace
Lead Curator, East India Company Records, British Library

British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia



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