

THE FAMILIES IN BRITISH INDIA SOCIETY
(A company limited by guarantee)
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2021

The Trustees are pleased to present their report for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015). Advantage has been taken of the exemptions contained therein for smaller charities which are not subject to a statutory audit.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Document

The charity is controlled by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, and constitutes a company limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting for a term of three years, and between meetings may be co-opted by the Board until the next AGM. One third of the Trustees must retire by rotation each year but may stand for re-election.

All new Trustees have their duties and responsibilities fully explained to them and are given a copy of the Charity Commission's guidance, *The Essential Trustee*.

The work of the Society is undertaken entirely by Trustees and other members, all of whom are volunteers who receive no remuneration other than reasonable expenses, mainly for travel purposes.

Risk Management

The Trustees have kept in mind their duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against loss, fraud and error.

ANNUAL REPORT

Objects of the Charity

To promote and encourage the public study of family, social and economic history, genealogy, and related subjects such as local history, with reference to those areas which were administered by, or of interest to the Honourable East India Company, and those areas which were administered by, or of interest to, the Government of India. For the purposes of the Charity the areas shall include Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Ceylon/Sri Lanka, Persia and the Persian Gulf and any other areas deemed relevant by the Trustees.

How our activities deliver Public Benefit

- Operating a substantial website which includes a database containing close to 2.0 million names, a wiki offering information on the political, military and social history of British India, and a gallery of photographs illustrating life in British India. The database is fed by the voluntary efforts of FIBIS members and other contributors, and both the wiki and the gallery are open to contributions from members of the public. Database, wiki and gallery are all available to the public free of charge;
- Publishing Guides and Booklets at affordable prices to aid genealogical research relating to occupations (e.g. the Indian Army, maritime services, the Indian Railways, Government service) or explaining the use of resources (e.g. gravestones, directories, civil lists);
- Holding twice-yearly meetings open to all members of the public offering presentations on topics relating to family history research or life in British India;
- Answering genealogical enquiries relating to British India;
- Periodically holding a Conference to include Workshops and Seminars and How - to activities. The next one is due to take place in September 2021.

ACTIVITIES

The Families in British India Society (hereinafter referred to as FIBIS) has continued to expand and improve its services to the British India family history community throughout the year. Expansion and activity has, in particular, been in the continued growth of data on our database and in the wiki and gallery as well as our Facebook Group (British India Family History) which goes from strength to strength with an ever increasing number of members.

Membership

We would like to thank Libby Rice for her commitment and continued hard work as Membership Secretary. In large part we have her to thank for the increase in our membership which finished the year at 1,886 members (1,699 at 31 Mar 2020). This net increase of 11%, helped by the introduction of our 'paperless' membership goes against the current trend for most Family History Societies, a fact of which we are proud.

Publications

Our Journal Editor Mark Young, has successfully managed during the year under review to maintain the quality of content and presentation of the FIBIS Journal. The usual two journals were published, on time in Spring and Autumn, both with an attractive and informative selection of articles and commentaries on the history of British India. As mentioned in the last journal, Mark is handing over as editor, due to work commitments, to Jacob Bailey, to whom we wish every success in the role, and thank Mark for his time as editor. We plan the updating of at least two of our Fact Files in the near future, and during the year reprinted the *FIBIS Guide to Indian Armies* by Peter Bailey which continues to sell well. It is hoped that a new FIBIS Guide on the various trades in British India such as jute and indigo will come out during the current Financial Year.

Outreach & Shows

Due to Covid, no physical shows were held during the year, but FIBIS was represented 'virtually' at two of the main Family History Fairs during the year: *RootsTech* in February and the *Family History Federation's* show in November. These gave an opportunity for overseas members to attend, which will certainly be continued at future shows, which are likely to be 'hybrid' in nature, both physical and virtual.

Meetings

The Annual General Meeting took place 'virtually' on Zoom on Saturday, 20th June, followed by the opportunity for attendees to ask questions of experts in break-out rooms. The 'virtual' Open Meeting in October included a talk by Mike Young on "Mental health in British India", which was very well received. Since then, Zoom meetings for advice to members at 6-8 week intervals have been instituted, which have been very successful, and are continuing in the current year.

Overseas

Mary-Anne Gourley the FIBIS representative in Australia continues to do a wonderful job in increasing our presence in that country, as does Eleanor Neil in New Zealand.

Website

Increasing activity on our website has been well handled by our consultant Nik Parker. The Database, the Wiki and the Gallery now contain ever increasing data. The project to photograph gravestones which are in danger of being lost forever will re-commence once Covid restrictions are lifted. The number of images in the gallery continues to increase and is very popular with members and non-members alike.

Volunteers

Thanks to all the volunteers who have helped to promote FIBIS in so many ways by helping at shows, researching and transcribing records. As always, more volunteers are needed so please consider giving as much time as you can no matter how little time that may be. No experience is necessary as support and training will be provided.

Transcriptions & Fund-raising

Our Transcriptions Co-ordinator, Sandra Seager, has been busy with a team of transcribers working on new as well as ongoing projects. Transcriptions are from various sources, including many little-known ones in the India Office Records in the British Library. The results are to be found on our Website which supplement, not duplicating, records that can be found on commercial family history sites.

The presence of the pandemic, particularly in India has curtailed our activities of photographing cemeteries there throughout the year. However, we must thank *The Pilgrim Trust* for their continuing support in funding this project, although no grants have been applied for during the year.

Research

Our dedicated team of volunteer researchers, led by Beverly Hallam, continues to support members who need help and/or assistance as required, although while the British Library has been closed due to Covid, this has in the main been by way of advice as to online sources. The policy continues of contacting new members within three months after they join, informing them of all the facilities we offer to help them with their research. This has proven to be very popular and is a particularly welcome stimulus both to our members and our Research Team. Our Facebook Group 'British India Family History' continues to be well supported and helps many members and non-members (hopefully soon to be members) in their family history quest.

BACSA

The Policy of working with our sister organization The British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (BACSA) on issues of common interest continues.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

In the period 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021, FIBIS continued to attract and register new members, its principal source of income, offset by non-renewing members. At the end of March 2021, total members paying subscriptions were 1,886 compared with 1,699 as at 31 March 2020.

During the year to 31 March 2021 incoming resources totalled £33,058 (2020 - £33,655), including £28,156 (2020 - £26,447) of subscription income. Resources expended in the year amounted to £24,407 (2020 - £29,687) resulting in a net excess of income over expenditure of £8,651 (2020 - £3,968). Closing funds at 31 March 2021 were £57,058 (2020 - £48,407).

INVESTMENT POLICY AND PERFORMANCE

Aside from retaining a prudent amount in reserves each year most of the charity's funds are to be spent in the short-term. Accordingly, at present there are no funds for long-term investment. If circumstances change, FIBIS will develop and implement an appropriate and ethical investment policy.

RESERVES POLICY

It has been agreed that it is appropriate for FIBIS to maintain strategic reserves sufficient to support unavoidable operating costs of FIBIS (primarily the cost of technical support for our website) for the future. The strategic reserve must consist of unrestricted funds.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

FIBIS will continue its existing programme of work to support the public with an interest in family history research in British India. We will explore and, where appropriate, develop and introduce new services for members of the public, researchers, subscribers and others. Amongst those planned for the next 12 months are:

- Restarting the use of an Indian photographer to record gravestones and inscriptions of British persons who died in India, when conditions allow;
- Continue the development of the web and social media sites;
- Continue to look at and attend where appropriate the various regional and proposed national genealogy events around the country, both by physical attendance and virtually;
- Hold our Conference in September 2021, the plans for which are well in hand.

TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

The following lists the Company's current Trustees and their responsibilities.

Scully, Patrick	Chairman
Charnock, Robert	Vice Chairman
Napper, John	Treasurer
Sherman, Alexandra	Company Secretary
Charles, Geraldine	Museum's Liaison
Hallam, Beverly	Research Officer
MacGregor, Elaine	Shop Manager
Murray, Margaret	Meetings Secretary
O'Kelly, Joss	Public Relations
Rice, Elizabeth	Membership Secretary
Tipper, Penny	Events Manager
Van Dulken, Steven	Publications
Young, Valmai	Website & Social Media Manager

In addition to the above Peter Bailey (Immediate Past Chairman) is Non-Executive President.

The Trustees (who are also directors of 'The Families in British India Society' for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the affairs of the charitable company and of the income resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- ✓ Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- ✓ Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- ✓ Make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- ✓ State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- ✓ Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In preparing this report, the Trustees have taken advantage of the small companies' exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

CONCLUSION

By all these means we have endeavoured to pursue our objectives of supporting India-related family history research and informing researchers and historians about the historical and social environment experienced by their ancestors in India.

Approved on behalf of the Trustees

Patrick Alexander Scully,
Chairman of Trustees

Approved on 10 July 2021