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Presentation:

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	2
WOODS AND WILSONS	3
Rob Wilson	
THE EARL OF ABERGAVENNY - AN EAST INDIAMAN	9
Peter Summers	
MULBERRY TREES IN MADRAS	17
Ed Storey	
PASSAGES IN UNCERTAIN TIMES	20
Kenneth Miln	
MISSIONARY FAMILIES IN BRITISH INDIA	23
Dick Wolff	
HENRIETTA WARDMAN - A "YORKSHIRE LASS" IN INDIA	29
Dr Ernest Lucas	
THE PERSIAN INTERPRETER - TURNER MACAN (1792 - 1836)	36
Keith Haines	
INDIA TO IRELAND AND BACK AGAIN, AND BACK AGAIN	43
Robert Ringrow	
BOOK REVIEWS	46
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS	51
NOTICES	54
EVENTS AND MEETINGS	55

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest edition of the Journal of the Families in British India Society. I hope this edition finds you well.

To introduce myself, I am Jacob Bailey and I have recently taken over from Mark Young as the editor. I am currently working in the London School of Economics, where I administrate their undergraduate programme in International Relations alongside studying for my master's at University College London. I would like to pass on my thanks to Mark for producing fantastic editions of the journal, for helping me with getting started and remaining available for my barrage of questions.

As we emerge from lockdown and (hopefully!) are able to get back to any sense of normality, I hope this edition of the journal provides comfort and connects you to your ancestors. In this edition, we will be taking a voyage through the Woods and Wilson families, delving into the history of Indian silk and learning how the *Shahnameh* was interpreted by Turner Macan, among other interesting articles. I do hope you find this edition as interesting and as engaging as I did when compiling it.

As always, if you do have anything to contribute, please do get in touch. The guidance for contributing can be found on page 55.

JACOB BAILEY

WOODS AND WILSONS

Rob Wilson

This is a tale of two British soldiers who made their way to India in the 19th century. Their descendants worked on the railways, in the police and in telegraphy. Some descendants have been traced to Central and South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Canada.

The Woods Family

The Woods family in India descended from Roger Woods who was born in 1812 in Tipperary, Ireland. He was a labourer and married Mary Quinn in 1834 in Dublin and enlisted as a Gunner Royal in the Royal Artillery at Dublin, 1836. He arrived in India that year, on the “Repulse”, and was promoted over the ensuing years to “Serjt. Sub-Conductor”. (From FIBIS records OR/L/MIL/10/123).



Albert Woods

Roger's surviving son, Albert Woods (1851 - 1920), who was my paternal grandmother's father, had an interesting story to tell:

*FROM: Dy File: Master A. W. Woods Bankipore
TO: The Telegraph Master in Charge Bankipore
Dated: 26 Sept 93*

Sir,

I have the honor to state that my Father Roger Woods and my mother Mary Woods were both from Tipperary (Ireland). My Father came out to India in the Royal Artillery and after a time he joined the D. P. W. During the Mutiny of 1857 my Father was a Conductor and Supervisor at Lucknow. During the Siege at Lucknow

there was a Battery called the Cawnpore Battery and it so happened that the enemy knocked this battery down and my Father was ordered to put it up again. In doing this, a round shot from the enemy shattered his right arm, just as the battery had been finished, which had to be amputated, and owing to the want of proper nourishing food he lived 7 days after the operation. My Mother drew a pension of 80 Rupees a month after we arrived at Calcutta from Lucknow and each child 10 Rupees a month. My only Sister is in England and has settled down at Croydon. My Uncle Bartlett Quinn is in America and other relatives in England. I have no relatives now in India.

*Your obdtly
A W Woods*

The book, "Personal Narrative of the Siege of Lucknow" by Sir Colin Campbell (available as a free Ebook from Google), lists: "Woods, widow of Serjeant Woods, and three children (one child dead)".

Family lore has it that, during the siege of Lucknow, Albert, then about 5 years old, carried water for the troops. He was "quite a rake and a Roman Catholic until he met Sarah Emmeline Newberry, whereupon he immediately reformed and also became a Baptist". Albert's birth and baptism records are missing, but I have found the baptisms of 3 siblings in Jullunder.



Sarah Woods

Albert's wife Sarah, born in Tamil Nadu in 1865, was "very beautiful and studied medicine in Calcutta in the early 1900s and had a clientele of petty Nawabs' wives," again from family lore. Sarah was the daughter of a soldier, William Newberry, a drum major in the Native Infantry. She died in 1944 in Jubbulpore, where many

of the Woods and Wilson families lived. Albert and Sarah had a son, Albert, and 4 daughters: Hilda Myrtle, Violet Iris, Daisy Muriel and Hyacinth Noreen. Violet (1893 - 1981) was my grandmother who married Denis Wilson, an army NCO, in 1915 in Jubbulpore. I remember her on visits to Portslade and Hove as a little old lady, very gracious and very deaf.

Violet's sisters also married: Daisy to Leslie Thomas; she died at the age of 47 in 1941, in Calcutta. Hilda married Henry Richardson. One of their daughters, Sheila, my cousin once removed, lived for many years in Zimbabwe where I met her several times (I lived in Zambia). I was then only dimly aware of our connections. After Henry's death, Hilda remarried in 1918, to George Grover in Jubbulpore. She died in Kenya in 1952. Hyacinth married Ernest Bellamy, a "mercantile assistant", in 1923 in Jubbulpore. Albert and Sarah's son, Albert Mervern (1908 1942), was a Police inspector in Bombay who married Marjorie Constance Mace (born 1918). I haven't yet found much more of their details - they seem to be thin on the ground!

The Wilsons

My paternal great grandfather, John Clement Wilson, was a railway engine driver. He and 14 other siblings were born to Archibald Wilson. Only 8 survived childhood. Like Roger Woods on my granny's side, Archibald came to India as a soldier. He was born in Berwick-upon-Tweed in 1825 and arrived in Lahore, India on the "Duke of Cornwall" in 1843. A lot of this information was found on his pension certificate, issued on his discharge from "Her Majesty's H[orse]. Arty" in 1862, having served them for 21 years.

Archibald married Mary Anne MacKenzie (born 1835) at Laulnah in 1850. Like Albert Woods' wife, she was the daughter of a soldier, Alexander, a farrier in the Horse Brigade and his wife, Sophia Scott. Archibald died in 1885. At her death in 1900, from "copper poisoning" Mary Anne was described as a "waiting room servant GIPR".

John Clement Wilson, my grandfather, left us a family Bible in which were written many records - some of which I haven't been able to verify elsewhere. A sad note in the Bible is from his mother, Mary Anne, at the death of her youngest child, Richard Scott Wilson aged 6:

“My Beloved Richard died on the morning of the 12th October [1883] at 3 A. M. after a painful and violent attack of spasms. God have mercy on him and prepare his all for that great change & May God of his great mercy bring his all together to ___ his ___ at the great and glorious day, where the hearts of all hearts shall be open.”



John and Sarah Wilson

None of John's male siblings became a soldier. Twins Edward and Robert were on the railways like John. Henry Archibald was a Police Inspector. Of the female siblings that I've been able to trace, Grace Louisa is most interesting. She married William Clarke, a railwayman. One of their grandchildren took the Wilson surname, rather than Clarke, in the form Scott-Wilson.

John C. Wilson married Isabell Toomey and gave birth to six children, the second of whom was my grandfather, Denis. It was Denis who married a Woods - my grandmother, Violet Iris. My father, their first-born, left India in 1935 to study at the Royal School of Mines in Camborne. In 1938 he travelled by ship and train to the then Northern Rhodesia, to work in the Roan Antelope Mine. After a spell in Burma during WW2, he returned and met and married my mother (a teacher fresh out from England). My sisters and I lived in Zambia (as it is now) until 1967.

The 'Other' Woods Child

Recollect that my great grandfather mentioned in his letter of 1893 that “my only Sister is in ... Croydon”. I have recently followed that up and discovered a whole network of Woods descendants in several countries. The lady in question was Margaret Alice Helena Woods, often going by just Alice Helena. She turns out to have been a remarkable woman: she married twice, bore 13 children over 25 years, and lived on three continents!

She first married in 1868 (aged just 15) one Thomas Price Williams, a Telegraph department employee, in Dacca. A witness was her brother, Albert Woods - I guess he also worked in that department in Comilla. The poor man died from dysentery at the age of just 33. They had 4 sons, one bearing the unusual name of Elphinstone. The name is of Scottish origin, and appears in British India a few times, including Mountstuart Elphinstone, a former governor of Mumbai.

After the death of her first husband, Margaret married William Norman Morris in Agra. He was a Bristol-born soldier in the 10th Hussars. They raised 9 children, 3 born in India and the remainder in England. The penchant for unusual names continued: Fidelia Alice, Isoline Lucy, and Geraldine Isoline.

The parents and surviving children appear in the UK 1891 and 1901 censuses - except for her husband William, who in 1900 secured a Short Service Commission in the Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa. This was during the 2nd Boer War, and he ended up in Kimberley (which was besieged by the Boers in 1899) where Margaret and many of the children joined him in about 1901. It looks like Margaret narrowly avoided living through another siege!

I then set about tracing descendants in South Africa. On the way, I found that a grandson by her first marriage had emigrated to New Zealand and has descendants living there and in Canada.

South Africa

Finding records in South Africa wasn't easy - certainly the LDS (familysearch.org) is a great help. I found that locating a deceased person's estate (or probate) papers in South Africa is a key move. It can contain a lot of information on their past life, including children and marriages. There are free databases such as NASA (National Archives of South Africa) provided by the government. I did employ a local researcher who was a great help in bringing local knowledge to the quest.

The most fascinating family was that of Fidelia Alice Morris. She married in 1907 in Beaconsfield, a town near Kimberley, to Hubert Fisher. He was an engineer from Birmingham. They had a child in 1912 but she died 4 months later. Now something odd happened - the next record I can find is of a son, Ronald Fisher, being born in 1915 in Sydney, Australia! Then 2 years later she remarries in Sydney, to one Benjamin Louw, a South African. A few months later, Ronald is

baptised and given the surname Louw. The three of them return to South Africa where a daughter is born in 1926.



Fidelia and Benjamin Louw

What became of the first husband, Hubert Fisher? I found a story on a Facebook group, from the book “Kimberley Murders Most Foul: True Tales Of Murder Between 1870 To 1950 From The Diamond Capital Of The World” by Steve Lunderstedt (ISBN 9780620277990). It appears that Fidelia “left him in 1914 to go to Australia with another man. He initiated divorce proceedings in 1916, and divorce was granted that same year”. Hubert became infatuated with Mary, the daughter of the household he was boarding with. One evening in 1920 he came across Mary and her boyfriend in a park. He “fired two shots from a pistol”, mortally wounding Herbert Wright and wounding young Mary. He was tried for murder and attempted murder and sentenced to death. He was buried in a cemetery in Cape Town.

I have managed to track down the ship on which Fidelia (and Benjamin, it turns out) travelled to Australia. It was the “Borda” and it arrived in June 1914. Shortly afterwards it became a WW1 troop ship. Fidelia’s second husband had the wonderful given names of Benjamin Francois Duminy, which made tracing his ancestors quite straightforward - the names strongly indicate French origins.

Back to Ronald Fisher/Louw. He married into a strong Jewish family: the patriarch Harry Landsberg changed his name to Landon, around the time of the Great War. Ronald’s bride was Harry’s youngest daughter Joyce, and they raised four daughters in the Cape - to whom I am indebted for so much of this part of the story.

THE EARL OF ABERGAVENNY - AN EAST INDIAMAN

Peter Summers

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;

Well, we all know William Wordsworth's lovely poem, written around 1804 in the Lake District. How does this connect with my forebear John Summers, working as a plater in a foundry in Birmingham? And where does India come into the story?

To answer the second question first, William's brother was John Wordsworth, the captain of an East Indiaman, the *Earl of Abergavenny*. John was the fourth child of the Wordsworth family and had been a sailor for 17 years, starting at the age of 16. He was a thinker and reader, carrying copies of all the poems on his sailing journeys which his brother William had written. He was in close touch with his two brothers and sister whenever possible, usually by letter, and stayed with them when he could at Dove Cottage, Grasmere.

He was given command of the *Earl of Abergavenny* in January 1801, taking over from his cousin of the same name, John Wordsworth, and had made two voyages in her before the fateful one in 1805. His last voyage, in convoy off the Malay Peninsula, had his ship involved in fighting off a French naval group, which was successful thereby earning each convoy captain 500 guineas from the East India Company (EIC). Interestingly, the Third Mate on the *Earl* was Joseph Wordsworth, cousin John's son - there can be no doubt that the Wordsworth family was assisting his career.

For this journey, planned to commence in January 1805, Captain Wordsworth had invested £20,000 of his own and his family's money, buying goods to carry on the *Earl* alongside the company's goods. It was usual for captains to do this and they could make their fortunes in trading for their own account (as well as smuggling opium from India to China). The East India Company treated this as a deliberate incentive for the captain to get his ship to the Far East quickly and safely.

So the story starts with an experienced captain from a good family commencing his fourth voyage to India and China on one of the East India Company's best merchant ships.

The Earl of Abergavenny

And so to my first question. John Summers had worked in Birmingham alongside his brother (or cousin) William but had joined the EIC in 1804; they went through basic training on the Isle of Wight to become artillerymen and after six months were designated as passengers on board the Earl of Abergavenny. The ship was one of the East India Company's biggest, of 1200 tons; it had 160 men to handle the ship and support its passengers. Separately identified in the records were 32 Chinese nationals.

The passengers were army men and civilians: 159 soldiers (both British army and company army (including John Summers) and 51 civilians. Of these, 40 were "at the Captain's table" and 11 "at the Third Mate's table". Both the Captain's table and the Third Mate's tables were completely full and their passage money was a part of the Captain's income, though the lavish food and drink was expected to be provided from these payments. The civilians included women, wives and daughters.

The ship carried goods to the value of just under £90,000, the majority for India, and this was for the profit of the company. And, of course, it also carried the Captain's goods.



Earl of Abergavenny off Southsea 1801 by Thomas Luny. A three mast ship. Note the gun ports, half of which were fake and designed to make it look like a large man o'war. The ship carried 30 nine pound guns. © British Library Board (Foster 59)

The Convoy

It was 1805 and Napoleon had made huge strides in conquering Europe; now his eyes were on the invasion of England. He was held in check by the Royal Navy which was blockading the French and Spanish fleets in their home ports along the English Channel, the Bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean. Nelson was the admiral responsible for the blockade in the Mediterranean but it was still nine months away from the Battle of Trafalgar.

Despite these wartime conditions, the East India Company needed to continue its trading; it did this by arranging departures of its ships in convoy, usually supported by a RN warship through the English Channel. For this reason, a convoy was formed at Portsmouth in January 1805 consisting of the *'Earl of Abergavenny'* along with the *'Henry Addington'*, the *'Wexford'*, the *'Royal George'*, the *'Bombay Castle'* and two whalers. The RN support was a frigate - *'HMS Weymouth'* – a fateful name, as you'll see later. It was winter, the weather was cold and there was a gale blowing. On its way to Portsmouth from Gravesend, the *Earl* was struck by another East Indiaman, the *'Warren Hastings'* which had dragged its anchor while the convoy was sheltering. The *'Warren Hastings'* was too badly damaged to continue.

The convoy gathered at Portsmouth, delayed for various reasons, and eventually was instructed to sail on the 31st. However, the *Henry Addington* collided with *HMS Weymouth* which resulted in further delay for repairs. Finally, on a clear 2nd February day at about 2pm, the convoy, with a pilot on each ship, headed for the Needles Channel to the west of the Isle of Wight. It cleared this dangerous area after night fall, dropped off its pilots and followed the RN frigate which was burning a blue light on its masthead to keep the convoy together. During the night, in the bad weather, the trailing merchant ships lost sight of *HMS Weymouth*.

In the grey of the morning, the convoy could not see the frigate, so it tacked around between the Isle of Wight and Weymouth, despite the rising wind, waiting for their escort to find them. The frigate, meanwhile, had received an incorrect message from another ship saying the convoy was heading west down the English Channel. She put on all sail to catch up with them.

A French naval force had been reported on the loose and the RN captain didn't want to lose his Indiamen to an engagement with them. As we know now, he did not catch up with the convoy (as they were behind him) and so on the 5th February, seeing the Lizard (the last sighting of England that ships make) he decided to continue on the rest of his planned route to Madeira and Rio.

Thus far, we have the convoy tacking up and down near the Needles waiting for *HMS Weymouth* in an increasing series of gales. *The Earl of Abergavenny* was short of its first and third mates who had been ashore when the order to sail had been given. These men, together with a company cadet and an army ensign (who had also missed the sailing) hired a boat to chase after the *Earl* and fortuitously (perhaps) with the convoy at a near standstill, were able to board safely.

The convoy, now under the leadership of the senior captain on the *Wexford*, decided to head for the next port in the hope of finding their warship, but failed in this aim. On the fifth morning, with an increasing gale, the *Wexford* decided to return the convoy towards Portsmouth and shelter in calmer waters near Weymouth. Before reaching Portland Bill, the convoy picked up pilots, since this was a hugely dangerous area with rip currents and underwater sand banks. *The Abergavenny* was the last to take on a pilot and it then followed its fellows towards the Bill. The gales of the previous days were still running, the tide was ebbing and there was a strong current round the Isle of Portland - the well-known Portland Race. Chesil Beach was to the port of the ship and the Isle of Portland was ahead, with Weymouth round the corner.

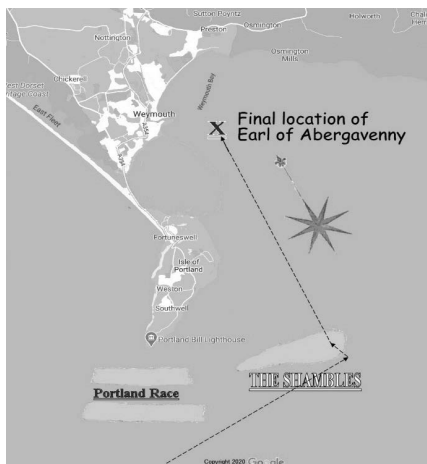
On the map of Portland Bill below can be seen an area known as 'The Shambles'. It is a sand and shingle bed which is very shallow; a well-known danger to shipping. To an experienced pilot, there would be no problem passing between it and Portland Bill. Correctly, for safety's sake, given the conditions of a gale and poor visibility, the pilot chose to take the *Earl* further south, both around the Portland Race and the shingle beds. However, he instructed a northwards turn towards Weymouth too soon and failed to clear the ship from the shingle beds. As the ship came round The Shambles, the wind dropped and the strong westerly tidal current ran the Indiaman onto it. It was 5 o'clock on that grey and murky day.

The Long Night

John Wordsworth tried to free the ship by sailing it off, the wind had risen again, but to no avail. The ship was stuck fast! The tide continued to ebb and the rising and falling waves bounced the ship on the shingle for two and a half hours. The ship's guns were fired as a distress signal. The ship's bottom was holed eventually and the pumps were manned to keep water out.

As the tide turned, the ship floated off at last, but the pumps couldn't keep up. The crew and soldiers created a bucket chain to help bail water out. Eventually, despite trying to sail for Weymouth, the ship was so waterlogged that no progress was being made. The ship's cutter was sent, with the ship's purser and Joseph Wordsworth in charge, to find the other convoy ships, as there had been no

response to the distress signals being made regularly. However, eventually a small boat appeared, sent over from a sloop nearby, and it took off five passengers including two women. The sea conditions were so huge that most passengers felt safer on the *Earl of Abergavenny*.



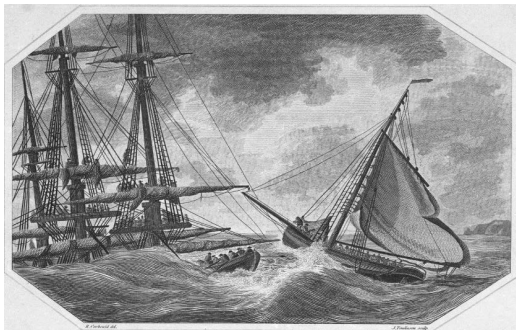
Map of Portland Bill and The Shambles, location of final resting place of the ship. By kind courtesy of the Weymouth Museum - Richard Samways and David Carter

Pumping continued while the ship pitched and rolled. Most of the pumping was done by sailors, cadets and the soldiers; no doubt John and William Summers among them. The work was hard, with men collapsing from the strain. Many passengers were so seasick that they didn't care what happened to them. Some sailors tried to get to the grog store but were held off by an officer with pistols. The captain ordered any lashings holding the remaining ship's boats to be cut.

It was after ten and the ship was two miles off Weymouth with no hope of getting closer. The gale was a furious north-easter, the ship was half-full of water, despite the pumping, and it became plain that she was finished. The subsequent court of inquiry showed that the officers of the ship behaved coolly throughout. The ship eventually began to settle, bow first with the stern being higher. John Wordsworth by this time knew that the ship was finished - as well as his family's financial future.

Passengers and crew began climbing the rigging which led up the three masts. John Wordsworth climbed onto a hen coop at the stern and people called to him to join them in the rigging as he had no chance where he was. Suddenly, a gust of wind pushed the ship on its side and, as it righted slowly, a wave ran down the

ship taking John overboard. He drowned. The boats, chicken coops, cattle pens and anything else loose went overboard. The ship then settled on the bottom with the masts sticking out of the water.



Engraving by Richard Corbould. Men shown on the rigging and cross trees, sloop alongside and a boat rescuing passengers.

A cadet and three soldiers dived into the sea and were picked up by a nearby boat. Others were washed overboard when the wave hit, some found their way onto the floating debris, though with the huge waves, these places of safety were twisting and turning and many drowned. For those who didn't find a float, their inability to swim and the cold water soon took them down.

There were small vessels in the area by this time. Some picked up survivors, while reported at the Court of Inquiry, at least one vessel told two crewmen clinging to a chicken coop to wait till daylight to be picked up. This was greeted with anger at the inquiry, but the vessel concerned could not be identified.

By this time, around 180 men had climbed into the rigging and cross-trees, including John and William Summers. The men on the lower cross-trees had the worst time, being constantly covered in sea water, and many of these lost their handholds as their hands froze and they plunged into the sea. Some men who survived were found to have frostbite. A crewman fought to go higher but was held back by a mate. The crewman then used his knife and stabbed at his mate who fell to his death.

Officers tried to raise morale at about midnight and encouraged singing. It was said that some vessels, who could have helped, heard the singing and decided that the survivors were drunk. So they held off, which may have been an excuse but I suspect that in the conditions and darkness the rescue crewmen would have been concerned for their own lives.

It was 2am and now only seventy men remained alive on the cross-trees. A sloop, the *'Three Brothers'*, came alongside. The weather had eased, and its boat made three trips to transfer the cold and worn-out men. One man did not respond, so a fellow crewman, a real hero, climbed up to the man, who was found to be unconscious, and carried him down.

In Weymouth the survivors were taken into the Town Hall, given fresh clothes and fed. However, some were so far gone that they didn't survive the day. As we can understand, there was confusion and the numbers of dead were estimated to be around 260.

Reference 1 gives a good account of the story, including details of the background to the Wordsworth family and a discussion of the various aspects of the sinking. I have used Reference 2 for my shortened version, published before 1805 was out. It lists everyone who was on board, identifying who lived and who died. One can see John and William Summers' names which concurs with the 1805 Bombay Artillery muster roll in the British Library.

The surviving company and army soldiers were taken onto the *Wexford* and the remains of the convoy sailed back to Portsmouth. Here, a number of those soldiers, including the Summers boys, were transferred to the *'Bombay Castle'*. Elsewhere, I read that the captain refused to let the rescued soldiers on board that night as 'it was too late!' One can imagine what the tired troops thought as they were rowed back to the *Wexford*!

Captain Clarke of the *'Wexford'* reported to the HEIC headquarters as follows:

"On receiving the Court's orders for our return to Spithead, I judged it as tending to the good of the service, to order all the troops and Chinese saved from the unfortunate ship that was wrecked, to be embarked on board the *Wexford*. [deleted] ...the poor fellows have now been two nights on board without beds to sleep on."

At this point we must briefly remember the situation. Two young men faced almost certain death; they had probably never been to sea, or even seen the sea, before arriving at the Isle of Wight six months earlier. It was February, a wild wind was blowing and the ship was going down. They stuck together, climbed one of the masts and spent the night on the cross-trees; they were tough, freshly out of army boot camp and they would have helped each other. But what a terrible start to their new job and life in India.

References

1. The Wreck of the Abergavenny by Althea Hayter Published by Macmillan 2002 ISBN 033398917 1
2. An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the Earl of Abergavenny by WD. (A Gentleman in the East India House) Published 1805 Lane Newman and Company. Available from Google Books as a pdf copy.

An Extract from Reference 2:

William White's (Midshipman and Coxswain) preservation was truly providential; and it is but doing him justice, to give his own account of it:

"To save the ship was impossible, and our only method to preserve our lives, was to run her aground; but, alas! this was also impossible: the water having reached the orlop-deck, a sudden gust of wind laid her almost on her beam ends, and in a few moments she sunk. As she was going down, what a horrid scene presented itself!—every poor soul shrieking in despair! I drifted some way from the ship on a hen-coop, with two others, when it upset, and they found a watery grave! I tried to regain my seat on the hen-coop, but without effect, and in making, as I thought, my last effort, caught hold of a piece of the wreck, from which a poor fellow had just lost his hold, and was drowned. Thank God! I at last regained the mizen-rigging, almost water-logged, and crawled with several others into the mizen-top".

He says he could not swim, but threw himself into the water as 'soon as he saw' the ship was sinking, trusting, for his safety, to his own active exertions, assisted by God.

MULBERRY TREES IN MADRAS

Ed Storey

We all have an interest in learning more about our ancestors' lives in India. For folks who lived there before about 1800, however, there are not a lot of contemporary documents to peruse. Exceptions for Madras are the newspapers *Madras Courier* and, slightly later, the *Madras Gazette*. An article describing the cultivation of mulberry trees, the raising of silkworms and production of silk may illustrate how to benefit from newspapers pre-1800.

We might be aware that the BL has an extensive collection of microfilmed copies of newspapers. In this example, we will rely solely on documents obtainable online in many parts of the world. At the end is a brief guide to obtaining some copies of the paper suitable for reading on a computer at home. For easy reference, I have copied several years of the papers onto my computer.

First, a word about silk production. Silkworms have been raised in China and Japan for centuries. There was a carefully-managed process to ensure the finest quality as well as cultural norms that gave special status to the young ladies who were involved, with the quality of the silk as their ultimate objective. Before 1800, the process was just being introduced to India and the details were not fully appreciated. As a result, the quality of Indian silk did not match that of the East or Europe. A quote from *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule, From the Rise of the British Power in 1757, to the Accession of Queen Victoria in 1837* – by Romesh Chunder Dutt, states:

"It was also coarser in quality than the Italian silk, because the people looked to the quantity rather than to the quality, and did not bestow the same care in reeling as in Italy or France. Hence the Bengal silk was more foul and uneven and "endy," having many breaks in it."

Thus, India was not destined to become a world leader in quality silk. Much silk was produced for the domestic market, however, and the lives of many workers were improved. However, the focus of this article is not primarily silk production, but rather the use of contemporary sources to learn about our ancestors, such as Doctor James Anderson of Madras.

Dr. Anderson had a long career as a medical officer in Madras as the 1774 East India Kalendar shows. He is found in many such records, up to his passing at the age of 72. What sets him apart for us is his interest in the cultivation of mulberry trees. Quality silk was a high value product and it seems he had an interest in

improving the employment opportunities for local people. Silk is actually a 3-step process and mulberry leaves are the only food the silkworms will eat. Thus it is necessary to grow the leaves, feed the worms, and unwind the silk after it has been spun. From what I can surmise, the doctor focused mostly on the trees.

This is where the local papers come to the fore. Our interest is to learn about the interactions of the tree farmers, to give us an avenue to learn about their lives. In Madras, the mulberry trees were not significant enough to warrant a book or even a journal article. Yet, there was a need to share the activities with the local citizenry. The preferred method was to publish excerpts of letters dealing with the progress and problems of their cultivation. Although the trees could be grown in the climate and soil around Madras, problems ranging from securing the groves to ensuring sufficient water supply had to be resolved.

The articles covered several years, more than I had access to. Not all copies are extant, even in the BL so the focus was on those available online, covering the period from June 1791, from the *Courier*, to February of 1795, from the *Gazette*. There was also an 1809 Gazette obituary of the doctor.

Many local and regional people receive a mention in the articles, enabling us to tell where they are located and what their interest in agriculture is. For example, from June 1791:

“Capt. Lixfeldt is asking to utilize Lascars to water trees. He is one of the few who have attended to the management of the silkworm in Europe. Some trees have perished, due to lack of water. There are however enough to provide cuttings.” Similarly: “Messrs Walker Gerke and Watson all have trees. Major Yonge’s garden also has trees. Mr. Fitzgerald as well. Most of these were from cuttings from Dr’s garden. Dr. Berry distributed a quantity of eggs. Mrs. Kinderley has been very assiduous in attending to the worms. E. Garrow from Trichinopoly writes about trees.”

No doubt they were ably assisted by local people in doing the actual work. For the people mentioned by name, the article might provide rare insight to their lives and interests.

Digital scans of the papers are not of very high quality and some words are impossible to discern. There was a mention of what might have been ants, but the text was not clear enough for me to be sure. When a letter is published, however, the name and often title or position of the writer is in slightly larger type, and quite legible.

Much of the documentation related to mulberry trees is in a supplement to the *Courier*, dated 11 June 1791. Among other letters there is one that proposes assignments for a number of people. It becomes apparent, as well, that many people had garden plots, either to raise food or as a place of peace and reflection. Further, there are a series of communications between the doctor and the Court of Directors, of which Mr. Webbe was the deputy secretary. Here we get a few more names and professions, as well as a glimpse into how the local government administers public land for the benefit of the community.

The details of transport of the eggs is dealt with in another letter, to James Colvin. It begins with an optimistic tone:

“... have so happily succeeded as to excite the public’s attention.” Later in the same letter: “Eggs, folded in a waxed cloth and enclosed in an envelope, may be safely mailed a considerable distance...” Again, several individuals are listed, as their part in the operation is explained.

At this point, I am limited by the availability the newspapers. After 1795, I have a few editions from May and June of 1799. The next years are 1803 and then 1809. More editions are available at the BL but not all online. In August of 1809, there is a review of Dr. Anderson’s work at the time of his death.

More than a column is devoted to his passing and includes a review of his many accomplishments. As far back as 1778, he began the cultivation of a few mango trees. By 1809, mangoes had become an important part of the diet of the people of Madras. In this obituary we learn why Dr. Anderson had a passion for Mulberry trees.

It seemed on his arrival in India, he was struck by the widespread famine and of diseases like Scurvy. Thus, his ongoing desire was to encourage industry, so as to help people out of poverty. Dr. Anderson’s real interest was improving the life of the native people. There is no evidence of money changing hands or of any written agreements. The principal change from raising silkworms would have been an increase in employment. The doctor was over fifty at the time of the publication and probably was not focusing on making money.

PASSAGES IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Kenneth Miln

During WW2 it was, for obvious reasons, all but impossible for Dundee jute-wallahs, based in the Indian mofussil, to take their overseas leave periods back home in Blighty. Up until 1939, it had been standard practice for jute-wallahs to take six months' home leave on completion of every three years' service in India. By 1945, my parents, John and Betty Miln, had been in India for some twenty years and were eagerly looking forward to a long-overdue return to their native Dundee. Passages were duly arranged, but at the last moment my father had to delay his departure due to mounting political tension in India. With the British Empire's demise imminent, the situation rapidly became critical and his presence at the mill was required.

However, in March 1945, my mother together with young Kenneth and baby Heather (the daughter of a family friend in Calcutta, who had decided that she would be safer in Blighty) sailed from Diamond Harbour, Calcutta, on the British India steam-ship *Valera*. A small passenger-cargo vessel of just under 5000 tons, powered by triple-expansion steam-engines from which deep, thumping sounds reverberated throughout her hull and even into the cabins. The heat was terrific as we sailed down the river Hooghly and out into the Bay of Bengal. Slight respite came from the cabin-blowers which forced warm humidity-laden air down upon the sweating occupants.

Excitement took hold as our ship heaved and swayed down the Coromandel coast towards Colombo, Ceylon, where we stopped for a couple of days in a very picturesque harbour where Arab dhows were much in evidence. Our next port-of-call was Aden, an arid, sun-baked port set in crystal waters swarming with tropical fishes and sharks: we watched from the ship's rail as small boats approached. Once alongside, the boat-men dived to collect coins thrown by deck-hands and passengers; an exercise requiring considerable dexterity and daring, as sharks could be seen circling.

Shortly after departing from Aden, members of the crew set-up a huge, box-like structure on the ship's bow. This contraption was to house a search-light to lead us, by night, through the Suez Canal and on to Port Said on the Mediterranean sea.

At this juncture, there are a number of points in need of mention: the *SS Valera* had been fitted with a number of anti-aircraft "Pom Pom" guns, which were used

on one occasion to fire at targets towed by aircraft. It was indeed exciting to see the lines of tracer-shells arcing up towards the targets. Life-boat drill was a regular event which involved strapping-on canvas lifejackets filled with chunks of cork. Lifejackets were equipped with whistles and small battery-powered red lights for locating ship-wrecked survivors at night. What a thought!

At Port Said, we were taken ashore to buy authentic Turkish Delight at Simon Aartz and to see "Gilly Gilly" men applying their skills with swapping dice under brass cups; certainly, a backsheesh (money) making exercise. On departure, we saw the impressive statue of Ferdinand D'Lesseps, builder of the Suez Canal.

Although the war in Europe was virtually over, security and discipline onboard were paramount, no lights at night, cabin port-hole covers had to be in place by sundown and cigarette-smoking on deck was prohibited: for it was still possible that an attack from an enemy submarine could take place.

During our voyage through the Mediterranean and unknown to my mother, I used to go below into the ship's propeller-shafting tunnel, to sit chatting with off-duty Laskar boiler-stokers, with whom I conversed in Hindi, my first spoken language.

The final and very exciting stage of our sea-passage was through the infamous Bay of Biscay, when I used to stand, holding-on with the helmsman, up on the Bridge. There were no health & safety regulations in those days and I had complete freedom of the ship. The only inhibiting influence came from my mother, which was infrequent enough. It was necessary for us to hold-on tightly, as massive waves of green water swept over the decks. At times, it seemed that we could not possibly survive such monstrous seas. However, we all survived the ordeal and the *Valera* docked safely at Southampton (Blighty). With disembarking formalities duly completed, we took the train to London and Kings Cross railway station. While making our way through parts of London we witnessed some of the devastation caused by enemy bombing. Although only eight years old at the time, I clearly recall being shocked by the sight of so many destroyed buildings, we never expected London to have suffered so much destruction.

After spending around six months in Dundee, details of which have been recorded elsewhere, my mother and young Kenneth, now nine years old, returned to India on the Polish ship *Batory*, a vessel of just over 12,000 tons. The ship was fully loaded with passengers and troops headed for the Far East. Although the war in Europe was over, the war with Japan still raged and the situation in West Bengal was still dangerous. I can remember hearing and seeing Japanese bombers passing over our compound at Megna, some of these aircraft were shot down near Calcutta.

On one such occasion, my father took me to see the wreck of a Japanese bomber, with the remains of the crew still in the cockpit.

We had a speedy passage back through the Med, Suez, Red Sea and on to Bombay, where we disembarked to catch the overland train to Calcutta, a full two days journey away. We were to learn later that while docking at Bombay the *Batory* had been fired upon and had sustained some slight damage to her superstructure.

Once settled into our railway compartment, which was clean and comfortably-fitted with two large berths, a small toilet room with a folding, polished brass sink unit, the tap of which was clearly marked - for washing purposes only! Drinking water was provided in a large flask, to be frequently replenished at major stations enroute. The W.C. unit was interesting in that the drop-down pipe opened directly onto the railway lines. Overhead, a pair of oscillating electric fans blew hot air around the compartment during the day and cool air at night, while slatted wooden shutters kept blinding sunlight out during daytime. Every few hours, at predetermined stations, we were served with meals and cold lime-juice. Breakfast was always porridge, followed with bacon and eggs (Indian bazaar eggs were smaller than most Blighty eggs). Lunch consisted of cold chicken, ham and a selection of local fruit. Dinner was roast chicken, boiled rice, stringy green beans followed by bread pudding and custard - all good, nourishing stuff or so I was told at the time. While my mother passed the time by reading and doing crossword puzzles, young Kenneth read American comics and assembled balsa-wood model aeroplane kits of Royal Air Force Hurricanes and Spitfires.

On arrival at Calcutta's Howrah Station, on the West bank of the Hooghly, we were met by my father who escorted us to our mill-taxi for an hour's drive out to Megna jute-mill compound, located some 20 miles North of Calcutta. During the drive, my mother mentioned that my father's jacket, which he had discarded due to the heat, felt unusually heavy. I was to learn later that my father had carried a Webley 0.38 revolver, the purpose of which, at that time, seemed somewhat obscure. It could well have been to defend us against rioters or, if things got really out of hand, to ensure a speedy exit for the Miln family, for all these events took place when civil unrest was gaining momentum towards the Partition of India in 1947!

Missionary Families in British India

Dick Wolff

When we think of the British in India, the usual images that spring to mind are those of military officers, colonial governors and their staff, railway engineers, employees and directors of the East India Company and its successor trading companies: in short, white people in authority and wielding power. During the 20th century, Christian missionaries, if thought of at all, have tended to be seen as an integral part of this imperial project. The reality for the missionaries was more complex, as the accounts of my ancestors suggest.

My book, *Missionary Lives* (reviewed in this issue [1]) took as its starting point the written memoirs of my great great grandmother Mary Crisp van Someren, born in 1828 into missionary circles in Madras. In 1848 she married a recently-ordained German missionary, Friedrich Wolff. They served in the coastal plains south of Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu. The German and British Wolff families became progressively separated from 1915, and the archive of documents and photographs (which ended up in Germany) were unknown to my parents' and grandparents' generation. The re-establishment of the connection happened quite by chance in 2002, through a common curiosity about our missionary ancestry. I remember my first sight of the photographs of my great great grandparents as if it were yesterday. At the time, I was sitting in the office of a retired Indian bishop in Tranquebar in conversation with his German-born wife. The bishop rushed in, then quickly disappeared again, since he was tending to a man who had just been bitten by a snake. (The man died shortly afterwards). The Mary in the photo looked nothing like I had imagined her — she was dark-skinned with clear, Tamil features (although it took a DNA test to confirm that it was Tamil, not Javanese, ancestry, which was equally possible, given her ancestors' seagoing involvement in the VOC). She seemed a quite different person from the 'speaker' of the memoir.

The family memoirs at the heart of the book are those of the missionary women. They seemed to spend most of their lives bearing, raising, and all-too-often burying children. There are frequent but often frustratingly oblique references to the major events taking place beyond family affairs and the mission station, so I had to do quite a bit of work to set their story in context — work which suggested that Mary's memoir was in places a little 'economical with the truth'. Either she was being less than frank about the full nature of the problems they encountered, or else her husband had shielded her from some of what was going on. Possibly it was a bit of both. Part of my quest involved finding out who my Indian ancestor was, but I had many other questions. What languages did/could Mary & Friedrich's children speak — English? German? Tamil? The answer was all three. What did they eat

and who, actually, did the cooking? I think the probable answer is, whatever the local people ate. What did travel by palanquin entail? And so on. I was also interested in the impact on the nine surviving children of living in little missionary colonies far from big urban centres, and of being separated from parents for long periods. That part of the study ended up occupying half of the book. Several seem to have been damaged by it to some extent, in varying ways.

The Lutheran missionaries were poor, and often vulnerable. The East India Company had objected to missionaries coming in the first place, and the memoirs suggest that pietistic Protestant missionaries had an uneasy relationship with imperial power structures, which Mary describes as “closed English circles, so often full of self-confidence and alienated from God”. She blames the so-called 1857 ‘Mutiny’ on the lack of Christian influence in the British military in the north. The missionaries didn’t quite seem to belong within the colonial establishment, but neither had they ‘gone native’. They seem to have kept themselves — socially, at least — within religious social circles, although this was not the case with their male children as they grew up.

From the beginning of the Protestant missions, which commenced with the work of Ziegenbalg at Tranquebar in 1706, the missionaries sought to learn and preach in Tamil, engaging with and trying to understand Indian religions at a deep level. Mary’s brother-in-law George Pope, indeed, was responsible for collating and printing — in Tamil — major Tamil scriptures, to the extent that I occasionally find his grave in Oxford bedecked with an Indian garland; there is a website (www.tamilnation.org) which carries a biography and refers to him as a ‘father of the Tamil nation’. Missionary Swartz was teacher/governor to the son of the Rajah of Trichy (Tiruchirappalli) from 1769, before moving to Tanjore (Thanjavur) where, many years later, great great grandmother Mary’s daughter Hetta became governess to the then prince’s daughter, Mooktamba. It’s true that non-Christians are referred to as ‘heathens’ in the memoirs, and there are multiple references to their living in ‘darkness’. However, I think this is rather less a reference to their lack of Christian belief than an expression of the Europeans’ objection to the effects of the all-encompassing caste system on the dalit population (who formed the majority of Christian converts) and practices such as ascetic self-torture, arranged child marriage, polygamy and widow-burning (sati/suttee). That said, at the end of the book I included a published riposte by George Pope to the Lutheran missionaries (including his brother-in-law, Friedrich) which gives a clear sense that the so-called ‘Great Enlightenment’ of the late 1700s had produced an influx of zealous missionaries from Europe whose individualistic ‘pietist’ understanding of the missionary enterprise was at odds with what had gone before, calling individual Indians to become ‘pious’ rather than trying to Christianise the culture

itself (what, in the late 20th century, became known as ‘evangelisation’ as opposed to individualistic ‘evangelism’). The ‘caste dispute’ (of which more later) created something of a fault-line through the whole missionary enterprise, and it divided the Wolff/Vansomerén family.

Elizabeth Wilde, published in the Spring 2008 issue of this Journal under the title ‘The Great Van Someren Obsession’, has researched these missionary circles. She gently teased me away from my quest for a single, native Indian ancestor, pointing out that many of the women bearing European names in fact had Indian ancestry. It’s fascinating that Mary herself writes “my beloved father was the son of Dutch parents and my mother came from a French family, both God-fearing, whose greatest ambition was to train their children for God”. Was she, or was she not, aware that neither was true? Her memoir includes a barely credible (and rather pious) account of her father renouncing his Dutch aristocratic title, but no evidence for any such inheritable title has been found. His own father was of Dutch ancestry, yes, albeit born in India, but his wife, Mary’s paternal grandmother, was almost certainly native Indian — and a remarkable woman in her own right. Mary’s mother had no known French ancestry; her maternal grandfather was probably half-British, half-Indian and her maternal grandmother wholly Indian. I think that in the late 18th century none of this would have been seen as unusual, but by the early 20th century (when Mary was writing her memoirs) it could have been a source of embarrassment.

These Indian grandmothers had fully embraced the European missionary project and European social mores, but it is hard to imagine them writing in the manner of the American missionary Catharine Winslow who, having fairly recently arrived in India after a five-month voyage in 1836, is appalled at everything around her which she sees as pitiable and Satanic. She writes in her diary [2] that she finds it “painful to be in the midst of them”. Hers is a rather tragic story. Despite her deep longing to save the poor benighted souls from their slavery to superstition, she gets as far as teaching a small Bible class in English (while her husband seems to be away most of the time) then, within 18 months, succumbs to cholera, closely followed by her infant daughter. Native-born missionary women, even though they were probably fairly constrained within missionary circles, must have been far less alienated by the world around them, spoke the language, were familiar with the diet and were more resistant to the hot and seasonally-wet climate and local diseases. They surely made more robust helpmates for their missionary husbands. Mary considered herself English, though neither of her parents was English by birth, and she never lived in England — she retired as a widow to Germany though she spoke poor German. Indeed, she only visited England four, maybe five times.

I do not know how many people were engaged in this 19th century missionary enterprise. Judging by the number of schools, hospitals, orphanages and establishments for blind and disabled people which they created, quite apart from the churches themselves, it must have been in the tens of thousands, if the many native residents who shared in and took increasing responsibility for the work are included. Many of those institutions survive to this day. At least in the south it was a truly international (and, as I have noted, to some extent mixed-race) 'community'. Not always of like-minded people, but at least people with something of a common aim — and from the earliest days, it was largely working with lower-caste Indians in local communities rather than with the Indian aristocracy and higher castes.

The all-pervading — and, for many Indians, oppressive — nature of caste created enormous tensions within the missionary movement, and within the extended Wolff/Vansomerén family. Higher caste Christians found it difficult to accept communion from an 'untouchable' European priest and wouldn't permit the shadow of a dalit to pass over them in church, let alone eat with them. For people like Friedrich's brother-in-law George Pope, thoroughly steeped in the Tamil scriptures, caste was much more than a social construct but had deep theological underpinning. It had to be challenged for the sake of the integrity of the Christian message. But others, such as the Roman Catholics and Friedrich's (Lutheran) Leipzig Mission, were willing to put up with the petty indignities and frictions that caste prejudice prompted in their congregations, seeing it as little more than the hierarchical class structure they remembered in Europe. It was a price worth paying if souls could be saved. Although Mary asserted that her husband had always objected to caste distinction, that wasn't true in terms of his Leipzig Mission practice. He was gradually persuaded by its opponents, having no doubt been stung by the very public criticism from his own brother-in-law in 1853 — until it seems to have come to a crisis of conscience in 1858. At that point, he broke from his sponsoring Leipzig Mission along with his former boss Carl Ochs, losing job and home in the process. I do not know what impact the caste dispute had on relationships within missionary social circles generally. Was there social friction between missionary families of different theological persuasions? If so, I suspect that, in time, an uneasy compromise was reached. Even when the Wolffs lost their living as a result of the dispute, Mary's father continued to support the family financially, though almost certainly he had disagreed with Friedrich's original position. Mutual obligations of family trumped such disagreements perhaps. Besides, I am fairly sure that no Christian wanted to defend caste practice actively, even though they might be prepared to tolerate it. Even today, I believe the caste issue has not gone away. The churches I have visited are exclusively dalit, and I have been told it is more likely for young couples to marry within caste but across

the religious divide, than within a religious community but across caste boundaries.

Missionaries were in it for the 'long haul'. When they embarked on the mission, they weren't, it seems, expecting a comfortable retirement back in Europe. They expected to die on the mission field. As it happened, some of the Wolffs were forcibly repatriated — to Germany, though they had British citizenship — at the outbreak of the First World War. (Friedrich — a Hanoverian — had much earlier taken on British citizenship so that his sons would not be eligible for call-up in the Prussian military). However, there came a time for most missionary families when their children had to be taken to Europe to be settled in various institutions to complete their education, and the sponsoring mission organisations seem to have tolerated their absence on leave for this purpose. In 1864, Mary's eldest boy was ready for a university education and the younger ones were just old enough to be left in boarding schools in Prussia. Nonetheless, the youngest was left behind in India for a year while her parents took the others to 'farm them out' in various places in Prussia. On their return from furlough, they had four more children, two of whom were sent to join their sisters later. The two youngest died of cholera and are buried with their father in Chidambaram. My great grandfather — the fourth surviving child — never saw his father again after being left to study engineering in Dresden, subsequently joining his older brother in London. After 19 years he returned to India as a railway engineer, but his missionary father, Friedrich, died unexpectedly, a matter of hours before he arrived for his first visit on leave from the Bombay, Baroda & Central Indian Railway Company.

I suspect that the pain of separation of parents from children was a constant theme in the lives of missionary families in India in that century, when the journey to Europe (before the Suez Canal) took 4 to 6 months. Of the nine surviving children, the daughters, with one exception, either married German missionaries or remained single. The sons and two of the unmarried daughters became fully British, although my great grandfather, who became Chief Engineer of the BCCI Railway, worked away in India whilst his wife raised their children in London, before eventually emigrating to Australia. From a rural working class background, she herself seems to have been no more than conventionally churchgoing, but the informal missionary networks in Britain were her only social and practical support. The married daughters — missionary wives in their turn — ended up in Germany on their retirement. It was one of their daughters — the aforementioned Hetta's daughter, Amalie — who took the initiative to interview her grandmother Mary and her own mother, and set down the memoirs that prompted my book. In the 1930s she also visited the Wolff homeland on the Lüneberg Heath and various long-lost relatives in England, but if my English and Australian grandparents'

generation were aware of her visit they didn't recruit subsequent generations into building on the contact.

Missionary 'Families in British India', then — at least in Southern India — were not narrowly British and colonial, as subsequent literature and history might suggest. This was a numerically-significant community, which left a remarkable legacy of humanitarian institutions, even if it failed to 'Christianise' Hindu culture. It was fully international, very multi-lingual, often mixed race and grounded (at least initially) on a deep respect for Tamil religious teachings, if not some of the cultural practices. It created a generation of 'global citizens' (Theresa May's 'citizens of nowhere?') who must have been bemused and profoundly disturbed by the bombastic, nationalistic posturing that brought Europe to its knees in the 20th century and threatens to do the same today. Whether the grandchildren of this missionary enterprise went on to play a disproportionately significant part in the reconstruction of a united Europe and an end to colonialism might be a subject for further study.

[1] Dick Wolff, 2020, *Missionary Lives. The Wolff & Van Someren Families: Missionaries in 19th Century India*, Third Edition. Published by Dick Wolff, 201pp. Available from Blurb.com. The book's review appears at the end of this Journal.

[2] *Remains of Mrs Catharine Winslow; a member of the American Mission at Madras, India, including a Journal and Letters.* Compiled for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and approved by the Committee of Publication. Published by the aforementioned Society in Boston, Depository No.13, Cornhill, 1851.

[1]The document may be found at: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Remains-Mrs-Catherine-Winslow-Including/dp/137370389X>

HENRIETTA WARDMAN

A “YORKSHIRE LASS” IN INDIA

Dr. Ernest Lucas

A family legend can be either a blessing or a bane to the family historian. It might provide a clue to something interesting or prove to be a groundless rumour. In either case, the rest of the family may not thank the historian for showing that what they have regarded as part of their heritage does not correspond to reality. One of my family legends concerns my maternal great-grandmother, Henrietta Wardman, a ‘Yorkshire lass’ who was said to have travelled from Harrogate to India to marry a man she had never met, Charles Beer. Since others had failed to track down Henrietta on the basis of the supposed Harrogate connection, I decided to start from the other end, the record of her marriage to Charles Beer, which I found in the records of the India Office Collection. This set me off on the trail of evidence which enabled me to put together the following brief biography.



Four generations: Henrietta, William, Olive, Arthur.

Henrietta Wardman was born on the 18th September 1854 in the Cavalry Barracks in Exeter. Her father, George Wardman, was a sergeant in the 15th (King's) Hussars. On the birth certificate, her mother's name is given as 'Ann Wardman, formerly Campbell'. George Wardman, his wife Anne (as spelt on the marriage certificate) and their one-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, had arrived at

Chatham from India on the ship *Trafalgar* on the 28th May, 1854. From there, they went with his regiment to Exeter. In September 1855, the regiment moved to Manchester, where it stayed until June 1856, when it went to Aldershot. It seems that Anne and the two girls stayed in Manchester, because James Henry Wardman was born in the Cavalry Barracks in Manchester on the 14th November of that year.

Things did not go well with George Wardman. From the 5th-7th October he was confined to the Guardroom at Aldershot, and then reduced to the ranks as Private. On the 1st March 1857, he volunteered to transfer to the 3rd (Prince of Wales') Dragoon Guards. That regiment was preparing to sail to India and needed augmentation with experienced soldiers. Its transfer to India may have been prompted by the unrest which preceded the outbreak of the so-called 'Indian Mutiny', which is usually dated to the uprising at Meerut on the 9th May, 1857.

George joined the regiment as a Private, No. 362, on the 1st April 1857, in Canterbury. He received 'good conduct pay' of 2d per day on top of the Private's basic pay of 2s 2d. His total pay of 2s 4d per day would be worth about £6.50 in 2000. On the 28th May he was promoted to Corporal. The regiment embarked on the *Genghis Khan* at Chatham on the 10th August and disembarked at Bombay on the 14th November. On the 15th November, George was reduced to the rank of Private by a Regimental Court Martial. The regiment proceeded to Kirkee, near Poona, but George went with a detachment to Sattara. He was there from the 8th December until he rejoined the main body of the regiment at Kirkee at the end of May 1858. From the 9th August until the 30th October he was in prison in Bombay, where he died of 'disease of the heart' on the 30th October 1858. He was buried at Back Bay, District of Byculla, Bombay. No records survive of these courts martial so we do not know what George's misdemeanours were. Since they were dealt with on the regimental level, they would not have been very serious, drunkenness being one of the commonest charges.

George Wardman's family roots were in Leeds. He enlisted in the 15th Hussars there on the 1st September 1837. The 1861 and 1871 Census returns for Yorkshire provide information about the whereabouts of his wife and children. In the 1861 Census, Anne is working as a servant and nurse in the household of James Bishop Hadley, Vicar of Staveley, a village about 20 miles north of Leeds. She is described as a widow aged 26, born in New South Wales. Henry James Wardman is also in Staveley, as a boarder with Edward Jones, a groom. He is described as a scholar aged 4, born in Manchester, Lancashire. Henrietta is listed as visiting her uncle, Henry Wardman (her father's eldest brother) at 26 Bridge Street, Holbeck, Hunslet, Leeds. She is described as a scholar aged 6, born in Exeter, Devon.

In the 1871 Census, Anne is working as a 'nurse domestic servant' in the home of Joseph Hoartley, a Justice of the Peace for the West Riding, in Horbury, Wakefield, about 9 miles south of Leeds. She is described as a widow aged 36, born in Sydney, New South Wales. Henrietta is working as a housemaid in New Wortley Vicarage, Armley, Leeds, aged 16, born in Exeter, Devon. Henry J. Wardman is a lodger with Samuel Learoyd, a master carpenter, in Spellow Grange Staveley, and is a scholar aged 14, born in Manchester, Lancashire. In the same house is Samuel's daughter, Louisa, aged 6, who married James on 1st June 1885.

There is no mention of Anne in any county in the 1881 Census. By then, Henrietta was in India and James in South Africa (see below). At some point she visited India, returning to England in 1886. In 1910 she was back in Narsapur and said to be frail. Henrietta's older sister, Elizabeth, does not appear in the 1871 or 1881 Censuses for Yorkshire, or in any county in the 1861 Census.

War Office records show that, as the son of a deceased soldier from the 3rd Dragoon Guards, James was educated at the Duke of York's School, Chelsea, from May 1867 to November 1870. He reached the age of 14 on November 14th 1870, so perhaps there was an age-limit for attendance at the school. On the 1st January 1876, he joined the 105th Regiment of Foot at Aldershot. In 1879 he transferred to the 94th Regiment of Foot, seeing active service in South Africa during the Zulu War of 1879 and the campaign against the Boers in the Transvaal in 1880/1. In about 1883 he joined the West Riding Constabulary. On his retirement he and his wife settled in Harrogate. This is no doubt why Henrietta came to be linked with that city.

Henrietta arrived in Madras in July 1876. The man Henrietta was to marry, my maternal great-grandfather Charles Henry Beer, was the younger son of George and Elizabeth Beer (b. 30/4/1847). They, together with William and Elizabeth Bowden, went out to India from Barnstable in Devon in 1836 as pioneer missionaries. They founded what became the Godavari Delta Mission and are commemorated today in the Bowden-Beer Memorial School in Narsapur, Andhra Pradesh. Education had always been an important part of the Mission's work. In 1876, Charles and his older brother, John, were running a boys' school in Narsapur as well as being involved in other forms of Christian activity. In 1873, the school had about 100 students. Charles found the teaching and administrative work of the school irksome, much preferring to be out in the villages preaching whenever he could. In 1884, his brother John's health was so bad that it was decided he should go to England, leaving the mission work, especially the school, in Charles' hands. Soon after arrival in England, John died in Exeter.

Henrietta travelled from Madras to Ellore, where she and Charles were married on the 2nd October 1876. They then went to live in Narsapur. Here, Henrietta had to start learning the local language, Telegu, so as to be able to help with the work of the Mission. However, Henrietta was soon taken up with the duties of motherhood. Elizabeth Ann was born on the 2nd September 1877. She was the first of seven children born to Charles and Henrietta, including my grandfather, William Arthur Beer. Despite the demands of motherhood, at some point Henrietta took over or re-started the girls' school begun by Elizabeth Beer. In a letter to *The Missionary Echo* dated 28/8/1891 she wrote:

'Our fifth son was born May 8th, 1890; they are all, I am thankful to say, in good health; the girls, Lizzie and Edith, are getting on in their studies in Bangalore. I had hoped to go to them this year, but the way has not been opened. The education of the three elder boys causes us no little anxiety, but we will trust and not be afraid ... Our girls' school continues to progress favourably; we have now about 70 on the roll. It is very cheering to see how those who have left cling to us, and are always pleased to see us.'

This letter also gives some insight into her own personal faith. She says,

'Though the past months of this year have been a time of trial, we have had many opportunities of proving God's faithfulness and love, and I trust that the trials have strengthened our faith, and been a means of bringing us into closer communion with Him. I have learnt more what faith is, and how good it is to trust the Lord.'

Besides the lengthy separation from her daughters and concern about her sons, the 'time of trial' she refers to included the death from malaria of another missionary, Mr. Miles, and the subsequent need to care for his wife. Other missionaries in the Godavari region had suffered badly from the same fever, and small-pox had also been a problem.

Bringing up children in Narsapur was not easy. In a letter written on 29/1/1892 another missionary, Mrs. Jessie McCrae wrote,

'Mr & Mrs Beer's two girls and five boys cause them no small anxiety, growing up in this hot climate and hot-bed of sin and idolatry'.

As already noted, disease was also a problem. In a letter dated 7/3/1893, Charles reports that cholera has reappeared and his wife and children have left for Coimbatore. That town is in the cooler climes of the Deccan Plateau and the journey there had been made easier by the extension of the railway into the

Godavari Delta. Another reason for the journey was that some of the children were to attend a boarding school in Coimbatore. In 1895 the oldest child, Elizabeth, finished her schooling in Coimbatore and returned to Narsapur to help her mother in the running of the girls' school. Natural disasters were also a hazard. In a letter dated September 1896, Henrietta tells of serious flooding in the Godavari Delta, with destruction of houses and crops, though thankfully no reported loss of life. As a result, food prices rose and in April 1897 the missionaries were involved in distribution of relief supplies of rice. Writing again on the 20th September 1901, Henrietta refers to the resurgence of cholera and other diseases following the wet season and said that they were kept busy dispensing medicines and food. She reports that 80-90 girls are attending the Hindu girls' school. She also speaks of her supervision of the Indian 'Bible-women' who visited women in their homes to read the Bible with them and discuss it. Henrietta met with these Bible-women on the second Thursday of each month, for prayer and encouragement, and for the women to tell her of any special cases of interest.

Writing on 4/1/1896 Charles says,
'My dear wife is feeling the effects of her long residence in this climate, twenty years being nearly complete since she left England.'

At some point, Henrietta's mother, Ann Wardman, joined her in Narsapur. In a letter dated 6/10/1903 Charles writes,
'My dear wife is far from being as strong as we would desire, and has had no change this year, and her mother is now getting up in years and requires nursing and attention.'

In the same letter Charles notes that,
'My third son is still in search of work; vacancies are rare, and are generally filled up by natives.'

The son referred to is George Frederick. Not too long after this letter was written Henrietta and her youngest child, Albert Theodore, must have set out for England, because a note in the magazine *The Missionary Echo* of 1904 records their presence in England. Henrietta was back in Narsapur in December 1905, having travelled there via Colombo in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). It is not clear whether she was in Colombo on the 18th September 1905 when her two sons, George Frederick and Charles Hubert, sailed from there to New Zealand in search of the employment they could not find in India. As a result of this emigration, there is now a fairly numerous branch of the Beer family in Australia and New Zealand.

For the next decade or so we have no information about Henrietta, and very little about Charles. Even today, the Godavari Delta is something of a back-water in India. It is doubtful whether the First World War made very much impact there. A notice in *The Missionary Echo* in 1918 records that, because of ill health, Charles had had to retire from all active and responsible service. He was only able to get about with the aid of a stick. A photograph of that era shows him in a wheel chair. A similar note in 1920 says that he is seriously ill and confined to bed. He died on the 9th January 1921 and was buried in the Bethany Cemetery in Narsapur. Soon after Charles' death, Henrietta visited her sons in New Zealand. She then returned to Narsapur to continue work in the Mission with her second daughter, Edith. By now, Edith was married to John Boyd and lived in the large bungalow which had been the Beer home in Narsapur since 1841. Henrietta had her own rooms in the house but usually ate with the family.

Her grandsons, Ken and Arthur Boyd (children of Edith) remember her as a strict disciplinarian who believed that children should be seen and not heard. They could only enter her quarters 'by invitation'. Her granddaughters, Grace and Doris Patient (children of Elizabeth) remember being lectured by her about 'these modern fashions' when they wore sleeveless dresses. Henrietta always wore full length sleeves and dresses. However, they also remember her as a woman of prayer who prayed with them. She loved her Bible and longed that her grandchildren should share that love. They remember her enjoying holidays at the home for missionaries in Coonoor, in the coolness of the Nilgiri Hills. She was good friends with Sir Robert Stanes, a Christian philanthropist who owned tea estates in the Nilgiris, and would get 'all toggged up' for her daily drive in his chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce. In her seventies, she began to lose her short-term memory. In 1939 she fell and dislocated her hip. She could not understand the splints and bandages, and would remove them whenever she was not being watched. Eventually, ill health led to her death on the 18th December 1939. She was buried in a grave beside that of her husband in the Bethany Cemetery. The two graves were still there, in surprisingly good condition when I visited the cemetery in January 1993.

Why did a 'Yorkshire lass' leave her home in England to go to India and marry a man she had never met? What was the link between the Beer family, with its roots in Devon, and the Wardmans of Leeds? It seems to have been a family called Midford. The witnesses at the marriage of George Wardman and Ann Campbell were J.G. and H. Midford. John Gornall Midford was a Sergeant in George's regiment. His wife's name was Henrietta (the Wardman's presumably named their second child after her) and her maiden name was Campbell. The record of her marriage to John Midford, in 1843 in Bangalore, gives her age as 14 and her father

as 'John Campbell (deceased)'. She might have been Ann's older sister, or a cousin. The Midfords did not return to England with the regiment in 1854. The writer of the *Centenary History of the Godavari Delta Mission*, E.B. Bromley, says that the Midfords met the Beers in Masulipatam (the leading town of the Western Godavari District) and became supporters of their work. In fact, John Beer married Margaret Ann Midford, John and Henrietta's second child, on the 1st January, 1866. When Charles Beer and Henrietta Wardman were married, one of the witnesses was Edwin Campbell Midford. So, it was probably the Midfords who acted as 'marriage brokers' in this arranged marriage.

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THE PERSIAN INTERPRETER

TURNER MACAN (1792 - 1836)

Keith Haines

The contemporary *Asiatic Journal & Monthly Register* reported in November 1828 that Captain Turner Macan, Persian Interpreter to the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) in India, had “arrived in Calcutta to conduct his collated edition of the *Shahnameh* through the press”. The four-volume quarto edition, entirely in Persian, was published a few months later by the Baptist Mission Press.

The *Shahnameh* (the Book of Kings), Ferdowsi’s Persian classic, which boasts in excess of 50,000 couplets, was completed in March 1010 and offers a primarily mythical account of the history of the Persian empire up to the time of the conquest by the Arabs, and remains much admired and central to Persian culture to the present day. In his introduction, Macan states that his intention was “to rescue this work from the errors accumulated by transcribers during a period of eight hundred years”, as history had caused Persia’s greatest literature “to descend to posterity more injured and defaced by errors, omissions and interpolations than any other work in existence ... abandoned to the hands of ignorant and careless transcribers”.

Following the establishment of Persian dynasties in India, the *Shahnameh* became equally popular on the sub-continent, where the Persian language was to become the lingua franca in political and diplomatic circles. It had, however, over the centuries become poorly transcribed and translated and Macan concluded that most of the Indian manuscripts had “little of the *Shahnameh* but the name”. The publication by Macan was the first attempt in 800 years to restore it as fully as possible to the original text.

The Macans in India

Turner Macan was born at Bandon, near Cork, on 30 September 1792, the fifth of seven children of Robert and Hannah Macan. Robert was himself the eldest of seven children of Thomas Macan (originally McCann), the wealthiest citizen and longest-serving Sovereign of Armagh. Upon the death of the latter in 1795, Robert and his family returned to their home, Carrive (still extant), whose front door lies twenty yards from the southern boundary of Co Armagh.

The Macans were to regard India almost as a family concern and were to offer, whenever and wherever practicable, mutual support and companionship. At least

twenty of Turner's siblings, close cousins and uncles ventured to India – the men in search of employment (in the military or administration – the latter usually succeeding exceptionally well as bankers), and the ladies as part of the Fishing Fleet in search of husbands. In his will, Robert actively encouraged three daughters to pursue this course.

Three of Turner's uncles fought in the army of the East India Company (EIC) and on 25 August 1803, in front of the tomb of Akbar at Secundra (now Sikandra, a north-western suburb of Agra) the C-in-C, General Lake, appointed the three brothers - Richard (later a highly regarded major-general), Thomas and Arthur Jacob (who had briefly succeeded his father as Sovereign of Armagh) - to important posts in the so-called Grand Army. Turner's older brother, also named Thomas, arrived in India in March 1806 as a cadet with the 8th Regiment of Native Infantry. Unfortunately, he had been assigned for training at the Barasat military academy, notorious for its flagrant indiscipline, and Thomas was killed, aged 18, in a duel on 14 June 1809.

Whilst virtually all of Turner's relations enlisted in the army of the EIC, he enrolled in the Crown forces. The contemporary Army Lists are misleading – probably deliberately. Crown regulations had stated since 1786 that no-one could receive a commission before the age of sixteen. The 1807 Army List indicates that Turner had enlisted in March 1805 in the 24th Regiment of Light Dragoons – when he was only twelve and a half years old. The *London Gazette* may have been a little more accurate when it revealed that, on 18 March 1806, he had become “a cornet, without purchase, *vice* [Francis Henry] Dawkins, whose appointment has not taken place”.

The Young Soldier

This remains a surprisingly young age and is probably the reason why the Lists never identify his Christian name. He was evidently to be placed in the supervisory care of his uncle, Arthur Jacob Macan, who had also enlisted in the 24th Regiment in February 1804 (rising to lieutenant in late 1805). It remains uncertain on which ship Turner arrived in Calcutta towards the close of 1806, or whether he visited the commodious EIC cadet barracks of Fort William “where the bugs and mosquitoes were unwelcome visitants”.

He was probably despatched promptly to the headquarters of the 24th Light Dragoons at Secundra, to don the regiment's blue uniform edged with light grey facings and gold lace. The regimental returns indicate that he had arrived by the end of 1807 but, ironically, did not meet his absent uncle until May 1809. It may be that in later years, having become acknowledged as the greatest Persian scholar

of his age, he considered it appropriate that his first posting should have been in the shadow of the tomb of Akbar who, to assist the unification of conquered India, had introduced Persian as the diplomatic and cultural language of his realm.

Intermittently between 1809 and 1812 the young recruit was given the tedious task of managing Remount Horses, although at the start of 1810 he received six months leave, probably to manage domestic affairs following his inheritance of Carrive subsequent to the pointless death of his brother Thomas. From early 1814 until late 1817 his unit was based at Cawnpore. Turner's baptism of fire - almost literally - as a fighting soldier, came a decade after his arrival in India. The 24th Dragoons participated in the siege of the fortress of Hattaras, 150 miles from Cawnpore, during the war against the Mahratta Confederacy (1817-1819). On 2 March 1817, one of its powder magazines exploded and the reverberations were heard as distantly as Delhi and Agra. Turner will have witnessed the charred and disfigured remains of 400 men and eighty horses. The positive outcome was the award of seventy Rupees in prize money.

The Persian Interpreter

Turner was back in Cawnpore in time to witness the entrance in September 1817 of the C-in-C (a post he held jointly with that of Governor-General), the second Earl of Moira, an Irishman recently elevated as Marquess of Hastings. The final annual entry in the regimental diary noted that Lieutenant Turner Macan has been "detached on particular service for the Presidency by order of the Commander-in-Chief", and from February 1818 he is listed as an "Extra Aide-de-Camp to the Most Noble Commander-in-Chief", specifically as an essential Persian Interpreter. The salary was 666 Rupees per month, around £800 pa. The appointment effectively transferred him to employment with the EIC.

The explanation for the sudden emergence of an obscure officer, from amongst thousands, to such a prestigious position most probably lies in nepotism. One of those in Hastings' retinue was the Commandant of his Body Guard, William Henry Rainey-Turner's brother-in-law (husband of Margaret Macan), who must have made a recommendation.¹ If that were the case, it was to be fully justified by Turner's subsequent scholarly fame and reputation. The latter was able to say to

¹ Most of Turner's relations and extended family in Calcutta lived in the up-market residential district of Ballygunge. Rainey's name is still preserved there in the Rainey Court Residency. The name of Ballygunge will have been redolent to all the Irish in India as almost 5200 Irish townland names begin with the prefix 'Bally'.

a parliamentary committee in 1832 that he had accompanied three Commanders-in-Chief on their tours of the Upper Provinces, was familiar with all the colonial hierarchy and knew “almost every native of rank and talent from the [river] Sutlej to Calcutta”. He also explained that “Persian, Arabic and Hindustani are the languages I am conversant in, but mostly so in Persian”. Much of his linguistic study was undertaken from early 1818 at the College of Fort William housed in the Writers’ Building, overlooking what is now Dalhousie Square. After just four months at the annual examinations and public disputation he was awarded medals of merit in Persian and Hindustani. His level of expertise was such that in 1823 he became a member of the committee established to improve the standard of language examinations sat by all EIC officers.

In keeping with his new status on the General Staff of the C-in-C, he was on 27 April 1818 appointed a captain in the 24th Dragoons. Ironically, the regiment was disbanded about this time and on 8 October 1821 he became entitled to wear the blue uniform with scarlet facings and silver lace of the recently renamed 16th Lancers. (The regimental uniform was traditionally red – except for the period 1816 to 1832). As Turner travelled with the General Staff, he was rarely with his fellow officers, but they did provide a guard of honour for the departure of Hastings (who had been replaced by Sir Edward Paget) on 1 January 1823. The Lancers also accompanied Paget’s tour of the Upper Provinces in late 1823, and participated in the siege of Bharatpur (then usually known as Bhurtpore) in January 1826. Turner Macan’s linguistic talents served four Commanders-in-Chief: the Marquess of Hastings (1818-1823), Sir Edward Paget (1823-1825) and Viscount Combermere (1825-1830). He was to return to India briefly before his death with General Sir Henry Fane (1835-1836). The importance of the role of the Persian Interpreter is reflected in two crucial military events of the mid-1820s.

Mutiny at Barrackpore

Following Hastings’ departure, his two posts were divided between Lord Amherst who became Governor-General and Sir Edward Paget who succeeded as C-in-C. The former rather rashly declared war on Burma in February 1824 which, despite eventual victory in 1826, was to prove both financially ruinous and catastrophic to military manpower. In November 1824, three regiments of Native Infantry based at Barrackpore mutinied when asked to embark as reinforcements for Burma. Barrackpore, fifteen miles north of Calcutta, had been opened in 1775 as a military cantonment. A residence had been constructed for the Commanders-in-Chief, but also used by the Governors-General. As the sepoys were culturally averse to travelling by sea, a mutiny developed, compounded by their complaints of late payment of their already-meagre pay and circulating rumours of the lethal Burmese climate.

Turner, in his role as Persian Interpreter, was sent by Paget from Calcutta to assess the situation, and he was handed a document listing four grievances. It was written in Nagri, a Hindustani script, which Turner bemoaned was “written in a most barbarous and unintelligible manner” which he felt did not present their case in the most convincing fashion. Paget, who never became attuned to the subtleties and impositions of India, would not tolerate any disobedience and ordered a brutal cannonade upon the mutineers in the parade ground. At least 200 were killed instantly and many more drowned in the Hooghly as they fled. Lady Amherst described it as “a frightful scene”. The evidence suggests that Turner had not been unsympathetic to their plight and when in 1832 he addressed a parliamentary committee he highlighted the flourishing alienation of the natives, and argued that it was time to recognise their customs and religions and to allow them a much greater role in managing their own affairs.

As he had been on active service in Burma, the Commandant of the C-in-C’s Body Guard had not been involved in the events at Barrackpore. Ralph Henry Sneyd had succeeded Rainey in 1820, when the latter had taken furlough because of the rigours of the command, and returned to Ireland, never again to set foot on Indian soil. By coincidence, Sneyd was also to become a brother-in-law of Turner Macan, as the latter married Sneyd’s younger sister, Harriet, on 14 November 1822 in St John’s Cathedral, Calcutta. Sneyd was to follow the same disillusionment as Rainey for the same reasons in 1827. By that stage, Turner was having to combine his official duties with a heavy workload on the editing of the *Shahnameh*, which was to affect his health adversely. In March 1827, Sneyd boarded the *Coromandel* to accompany his sister and Turner’s three young children home to England. Like Rainey, Sneyd never saw the sub-continent again.

The Siege of Bharatpur

As a result of the ill-advised interference in 1825 by the Resident of Delhi, Sir David Ochterlony, into the native succession at Bharatpur (or Bhurtpore), British forces were drawn into a difficult siege at the fortress which was regarded as virtually impregnable. General Lake had failed to capture it at an earlier siege of 1805, when Turner’s three uncles had been involved. Combermere, who had recently arrived as the new C-in-C, set out from Agra with his General Staff and considerable forces (led by the 16th Lancers) and on 10 December 1825 established a siege around the awesome defences which caused the Raja to be contemptuous of all efforts to dislodge him. The Persian Interpreter effectively handled all the correspondence and communications, and acted as the principal intermediary between Combermere’s camp and the native ruler, who disdained all attempts to be well-disposed towards the native non-combatants. For a number of weeks, the

walls of the fortress resisted all bombardments and mining operations until, on 18 January 1826, entrance was effected by the explosive demolition of one of the city's main towers. It caused carnage, with scenes redolent of Hattras but on a much larger scale. Ultimately there were 13000 native dead and one observer recorded: "the slain were literally lying in heaps". Another wrote: "the sight is most horrible; in one place hundreds of bodies half burnt and half alive were groaning and dying". Soon after, Turner was sent to parley and accepted the unconditional surrender of the fortress and citadel (the Lohagarh) which accelerated and consolidated the control of the British in India. It also brought an end to the war in Burma. Combermere received £60,000 in prize money; captains such as Turner were granted 4763 Sicca Rupees (around £500).

Home and Return

The regular official tours and campaigns, the lack of furlough and the arduous work on the *Shahnameh* had a deleterious effect upon the health of the Persian Interpreter. Turner sailed from Calcutta, for the first time in twenty-three years, with Combermere and all his Staff early in January 1830, with the luxury of his own cabin on board the *Pallas*. Over the next five years he found it impossible to find employment back in England. He gave evidence to the parliamentary committees evaluating the renewal of the Charter of the EIC in March and April 1832. Around this time he also acquired the most complete edition of the *Alif Layla* or *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night*, which he took to India and has since been lost.

He returned to Carrieville for a couple of years between 1833 and 1835 but, despite owning the 900-acre estate, he was not a wealthy man. The British authorities denied him any financial assistance for the *Shahnameh* and although the ruler of King of Oudh, Nasir-ud-Din Haider, donated 22,000 Rupees (around £2500) for its printing and publication, much of the cost came out of Turner's own pocket. In June 1832 he was promoted as an 'unattached major' which involved a reduction to half pay. Eventually, in 1835, his linguistic talents encouraged the new C-in-C in India, General Sir Henry Fane, to hire him as his Persian Interpreter, and on 1 May 1835 he sailed with the general on board the *True Briton*. His health was poor, but he appears to have convinced Fane that returning to an accustomed Indian climate would help to restore his failing condition. He was to be disappointed and died a painful, protracted and miserable death, probably from consumption, at Fane's residence at no.1 Park Street, Calcutta, on 24 July 1836. Fane's daughter noted that the funeral "was immensely attended by the military and sounded so dreadfully melancholy and impressive". He was buried in plot 190 of North Park Street Cemetery, now razed and built over.

Descendants

In England the Macan family had become very friendly with the wealthy brewing magnate and MP, William Henry Whitbread. After Turner's death, he became obsessed with Harriet Macan and they were eventually married at Westminster on 4 November 1845. Whitbread treated her children as his own and was exceptionally generous and well-disposed towards them. In 1839 Harriet placed an evocative marble plaque to Turner's memory in Armagh cathedral, praising his Christian virtues and asserting that: "He was unsurpassed in his knowledge of the language and literature of Persia and to him is owing the first perfect edition of her great poet Ferdousee (sic)".

Turner was never to see the social elevation of his offspring, who never returned to India. His son, Turner Arthur, married into a branch of the Walpole family and established himself in the gentry of Bedfordshire. In 1844, his elder daughter, Caroline, married Captain Charles Conrad Grey, a nephew of the erstwhile Prime Minister, the second Earl Grey; in 1870 her daughter, Maria, married the 12th Earl of Home which was eventually to make Turner Macan a great-great-grandfather of Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home. As a consequence of her marriage in April 1849 to Mark Kerr RN, the younger daughter, Jane, became Countess of Antrim six years later, living at Glenarm Castle and giving birth to ten children.

Macan is virtually unknown today and the *Shahnameh* has little currency in Western Europe. Its publication did not bring the Irishman the fame he may have anticipated, but many of the principal native rulers and scholars exhibited great sadness at the interpreter's demise. The belief that the Irishman had been the greatest Persian scholar of his age was reinforced forty years after his death. During his very crowded state visits in 1873 to Moscow, Vienna, Paris and London, Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar, sought out Jane, Countess of Antrim "when he found that she was a daughter of Turner Macan and told her what a tremendous respect all his countrymen and himself had for his memory, and that his book was one of the wonders of Persia and the delight of all scholars," he added that it was also an edition from which he himself took inspiration. The final quatrain of the *Shahnameh* is probably an appropriate epitaph for both the forgotten poet and his editor:

*I shall not die, those seeds I've sown will save
My name and reputation from the grave,
And men of sense and wisdom will proclaim,
When I have gone, my praises and my fame.*

INDIA TO IRELAND AND BACK AGAIN. AND BACK AGAIN

Robert Ringrow

This is essentially my father's story, William James Ringrow, who was baptised in St Paul's Church, Kamatipura, Bombay on 14th January 1892. According to the entry he was born on 12th December 1891 to James Benjamin, a municipal inspector, and Minnie Prudence who lived at Byculla Cottage, Foras Road, Bombay. His father, James, born 7th June 1859 in the Andaman Islands, moved to Bombay where he became the Chief Inspector of Health. The family was living in Port Blair because James's father John, born 27th January 1831, was an assistant apothecary with the 39th Regiment of Madras Native Infantry (and later as apothecary with the 16th Lancers). He was also involved with the establishment of the Andamans Penal Colony, along with Supt. JP Walker, Asst. Surgeon Alexander Gamach, 2 Indian doctors, Nawab Khan and Kurreem Buksh, 2 overseers, Mr Richardson, Lalla Muthoora Doss, and a naval guard of 50.

William's father and grandfather were both associated with medicine, as was his great uncle James Ringrow, (assistant apothecary, HM 102nd regiment), and his uncle George Chatham Ringrow, (MD house surgeon, Bai Batlibai and Sir Dilshaw Maneckjee Petit hospital, Bombay). Unfortunately for George, according to *The Indian Medical Gazette*, "while assisting at an obstetrical operation in a septic case he was accidentally punctured and died two days afterwards from the effects." However, William became an engineer. (It is interesting that, not knowing my father was an engineer I became an engineer, yet my daughter became a doctor – obviously my father and I are just blips!).

At the age of 16, William Ringrow started work with the Great India Peninsula Railway as an apprentice fitter and left not long after on the 30th April 1909, earning the grand sum of 20 Rupees per month. A few months later, we find him working for C&A Musker (1901) Ltd as an improver to the Fitting and Turning, working mainly on steam boilers, winches, hydraulic presses, electric cranes, etc., and living in 27 Ashdale Street in Belfast, Northern Ireland. It is not known why he left India to go to a distant place like Belfast but it is possible it was as a result of his work on the Indian railway. Apparently, much of the equipment used in constructing the railways was manufactured in the engineering companies of Belfast. He worked there until July 1912 when he returned to Bombay where, on the 20th September 1912, he obtained a motor car driving and workshop practice course certificate from the Bombay Motor Car Co Ltd. According to the certificate,

his driving, gear changing and tyres were “good” but his general knowledge was “far above the average”.

At the start of 1913, William returned to work on the railway, this time with the Bombay & Persian Steam Navigation Co. Ltd., as a fitter in the locomotive department. This was more lucrative employment, paying 2 Rupees and 5 Annas per day. He only managed this until October of that year when he really started his travels, working for the Bombay & Persian Steam Navigation Co. Ltd. Apparently, he had been ill and the treatment was for him to go to sea – it would either “kill him or cure him”. What he was suffering from, if anything, is unknown but from his papers he was “double jobbing” for a few days, as he was paid up to the 30th October but joined his first ship on the 25th October. Most of his time over the next few years until March 1916 was served on the *SS Homayun* out of Bombay to foreign ports as 4th engineer, with one stint on the hospital ship *SS Loyalty* as 7th engineer. The *SS Homayun* was sold to the admiralty and he transferred to the *SS City of Marseilles*, of the JRE Hall Line, as 4th engineer. In August of that year he travelled to Madras to join the *SS Talimaini* from which he was discharged in Calcutta after another foreign trip. He travelled back to Bombay to join the *SS Alavi* at the start of 1917 for a short foreign trip. (Later that year the *SS Alavi* was lost with 13 dead.) On return to Bombay, he opened a joint bank account in the Bombay Savings Bank with his mother who had remarried after the death of her husband. The account was opened with an initial deposit of 60 Rupees with 50 Rupees being withdrawn a few months later and no further transactions to the present. The money had been withdrawn by his mother, as by this time he had joined the *SS Avibuoor* to be discharged in Newcastle. From here, he travelled to Barry, near Cardiff, where he joined the *Knowsley Hall* to be discharged in Poplar, London.

It was now near the end of the First World War and William had found his way back to Belfast. Here he joined the *Ramore Head*, of the Ulster Steamship Company, on the 8th July 1918, travelling to Canada and back to Victoria Docks. The ship stayed there for a little over a week when they set sail again for Canada. Two and a half weeks after returning to Belfast for the second time, he found himself at the altar with Mary Jane Armstrong in St Mark’s parish church of Dundela, Holywood Road, on the 13th November 1918. Mary Jane was a widow, her husband of four and a half months having been killed in Flanders while serving with the 2nd Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers on the 16th May 1915. He was James Blackwood, Private. It was said that William and Mary met on the Albert Bridge in Belfast and she had said to him not to throw himself off. They set up home in Bangor and were married for 30 years with three sons – William James, Kingsley Charles and Raymond Gordon.

Three years after the death of Mary Jane, William remarried. He found himself again in St Mark's, Dundela, to marry Margaret Jane Johnston, 27 years his junior. This is the church where the author C.S. Lewis was christened by his grandfather and the church itself has many connections with the Lewis family.



Willam Ringrow beside his ship on the Baltic Sea

Although William travelled the world for forty years as a merchant seaman, to North and South America, Europe, the Middle East and the Antipodes; going from 2nd engineer to 7th engineer during the Great Depression; serving in both world wars and being torpedoed in 1942 near Barbados, it is believed he never returned to India after making Ireland his home.

He died in Belfast on 7th December 1960, having barely retired a year. I often wonder what stories he could have told me of his life in India and his travels, had he lived a little longer for me to get to know him.

Although I have a few indicators, I have not been able to verify when and from where the family came to India. The earliest Ringrow I have is William's great grandfather, John Ringrow, who was a Barrack Sergeant with the 54th regiment, married a Leonora and died in Cannanore on 16th July 1867 at the age of 63. Any information on Ringrows in India would be greatly appreciated (stickit91@yahoo.co.uk).

BOOK REVIEWS:

Gunpowder and Glory: The Explosive Life of Frank Brock, OBE. by Harry Smee and Henry Macroy, Casemase, 255pp. 2020, ISBN 1612008445, £25.

For anyone who enjoys tales of bravery and derring-do, Frank Brock's biography is an absorbing, well-written book, a great read. Brock has been compared to James Bond – a fine, good-looking and powerfully-built man, who remained cool in a tight-spot, could pilot a plane, was a first-class marksman, huntsman and all-round sportsman. But unlike 007, Frank had no Q-figure in the Secret Service for back-up. He invented his own gadgets, which were masterpieces of ingenuity and skill and were used to save his own skin as well as being deployed on special missions to save countless other lives.

Frank was a courageous man who joined the family firm of successful fireworks-masters straight from school. He gained valuable knowledge which he would put to good use during World War 1. Frank distinguished himself when he invented an incendiary bullet to fix the problem of the Zeppelins which were plaguing Britain in 1915. Then there were his Dover Flares, to outsmart the U-boats in the English Channel. But he was far more than just a creative scientist working behind the scenes. In 1918, he took part in a top-secret raid on Zeebrugge which put the enemy-held port and its U-boats out of action. The whole mission's success was largely due to the dense fog invented by 'Fireworks Brock', which entirely confounded the enemy and which was still being used decades later during WW2.

Amongst other things, the book offers a carefully-researched history of gunpowder, rocket-propelled weaponry and flight dating back to China in 1046 then to Roger Bacon in England by 1260. By 1487, fireworks had become part of the celebrations to mark the coronation of Henry V11. The Brock family's pedigree was fascinating, tracing a long line of pyrotechnic experts, going back for over two hundred years.

Frank's ancestor, John Brock, was making his living producing fireworks in Islington and giving displays in Chelsea, Vauxhall, Bermondsey, Clerkenwell and Marylebone Gardens towards the end of the seventeenth century. Later, he built Chilworth Gunpowder Mills. Brock's displays enlivened many social and sporting events: masquerades, bear-baiting, dog-fighting, cock-fighting, gambling or boxing events: even with female contestants. The book is very much a social history, outlining life in London and the suburbs from the eighteenth century onwards. As Brock's reputation grew, cities like Manchester, Hull, Edinburgh and Dublin were holding displays to mark the Golden Jubilee of George 111 in 1809 - and exotic displays were then augmented by Christmas crackers containing Brock's snaps, as well as featuring in popular theatrical productions. Their reputation passed into folklore when they became the "pop" in the nursery rhyme, "Pop goes the Weasel," in 1826. The firm's crowning glory came in 1865 with an extravagant display at Crystal Palace, as part of its "Grand Competition of Pyrotechnists" which enchanted all with roaring

Whistling Rockets and Silver Fire-wheels up to thirty feet in diameter. Such displays often took seventy men three days to prepare, but they were the biggest attraction in the whole of Britain and they brought the firm to the attention of VIPs and foreign dignitaries. Brock's profits soared. There were a few, rare accidents and fires along the way, but despite the adverse publicity, the firm weathered the storm and decided to branch out into foreign fields. Paris was first, then the Ottoman court in Constantinople in 1867. Crowds of over 60,000 continued to attend the displays at Crystal Palace. Even the Shah of Persia and Czar Alexander 11 of Russia were entranced.

By 1876, Brocks were producing displays in Philadelphia and the exciting prospect of India beckoned on the horizon. The fireworks grew increasingly sophisticated, reproducing natural wonders such as waterfalls, avalanches, volcanic eruptions, flowers and famous buildings. In 1875, 17-year-old Arthur Brock and his team took out to India around £35,000 worth of fireworks (3.5 million in today's money). They thrilled huge crowds in Bombay, Madras, Madura, Colombo and Jaipur. There are vivid descriptions with plenty of local colour contained in the contemporary accounts. Local landmarks became focal points, such as the illumination of the Taj Mahal and the 300-foot-high Rock of Trichinopoly which were highlights of their tour. It was the first of several Brock visits to India which enhanced the thrill of empire and showcased Britain's talents. The Brocks returned the following year to give lavish displays which bolstered the pomp and splendour of major events. The Maharajah of Jaipur was particularly impressed and showered the Brock men with gifts of jewels. They were persuaded to stay at the palace. They thrilled crowds at the Delhi Durbar for a full two weeks of festivities in 1903 and watched processions of bejewelled elephants, tasselled horses, princes, maharajas, ambassadors and the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, ride past in golden carriages or on painted elephants. But too many details would spoil the many surprises of this book – tales of adventure, invention, bravery and patriotism. Whatever your areas of interest, from ploys of modern warfare to the pomp and circumstance of empire or pyrotechnic wizardry - all are here to engage and delight the reader.

Margaret Murray

The Moth and the Mountain: A True Story of Love, War and Everest, by Ed Caesar, Viking Books, 288pp. 2020, ISBN 0241262313, £18.99

Maurice Wilson was not the first person who wanted to climb Mount Everest but he struggled very hard to be. He was a restless adventurer of immense courage, a determined man of action, and a World War One hero. He was also a womanizer, abandoning two marriages in pursuit of his own self-interest, and an occasional fantasizer obsessed with his best friend's wife for many years. How did such a complex individual come to be walking alone near the summit of the highest mountain in the world in 1934? Had he succeeded he would have become one of the most famous men

on the planet. His astonishing and ultimately tragic story is told in this excellent new book by Ed Caesar.

Wilson was born in Bradford in 1898 into a comfortable middle-class family that had made money in the textile industry. He volunteered for the army in 1916 and was later selected for officer training. In April 1918, as a 2nd Lieutenant in the West Yorkshire Regiment, he won the Military Cross for leading the defence of his position against overwhelming enemy odds, despite being wounded. After the war, and like many of his contemporaries, he was unable to settle back into civilian life.

In the 1920s and early 1930s there had been four unsuccessful British attempts to conquer Everest. Each one had been organized with military precision requiring vast amounts of specialist equipment and food. The events were followed closely by the world's press, stimulating great interest amongst its readership. It seems that one such article in 1933 inspired Wilson, who although he had no mountaineering experience, resolved to be the first to reach the summit but he was going to do it by himself, without all the cumbersome and expensive accoutrements of a modern expedition.

His plan was to fly to India, land on the slopes of Everest and then walk the last few thousand feet to the 29,000 feet high summit. There was a problem: he did not have a plane. So he bought one: a de Havilland Gipsy Moth, hence the insect in the book title, and named it Ever-Wrest. He managed to have its purchase price reduced as it had been damaged in an accident the year before. There was another problem: he did not know how to fly. So he had two months of intensive flying lessons and then in May 1933, delayed by a crash requiring major repairs, he left Stag Lane aerodrome in north London for India. What Wilson may not have known as he was planning his quest was that the four previous expeditions only took place after long and delicate negotiations between British officials and the Tibetan and Nepalese authorities. Any expedition had to pass through both countries, whose governments did not like their territories being traversed by foreigners. One agreement was only sealed following the donation of British weapons. The Raj did not want an eccentric British trespasser prejudicing any future diplomacy.

There was no law preventing a Briton from flying to India but Wilson was expressly forbidden by his government from going to Everest. The Air Ministry in London was told not to co-operate with him and Imperial Airways instructed not to refuel his plane. Nevertheless, by choosing an indirect route and with some charm, much luck and the odd theft of aviation fuel, he arrived in Karachi on 3rd June 1933, some 15 days after leaving Britain nearly 5,000 miles away. He flew on to Purnea in northern Bihar where his plane was impounded. He spent months there awaiting permission to fly to Everest but he was told he would not be allowed to do so.

By now it was too late in the season to attempt an ascent of the mountain, so he sold Ever-Wrest and moved on to Darjeeling, closely monitored by the authorities. There he waited and hired three Bhutias, men from Sikkim, to act as Sherpas. Despite

further warnings not to embark on the climb he slipped out of his hotel secretly at midnight in March 1934 disguised, to avoid arrest, as a Tibetan priest.

Three weeks of trekking brought them to the foot of the great mountain. After a brief stay at the Rongbuk Monastery he set out alone on 16th April, intending to reach the top on 21st April, his 36th birthday. As his progress was slow, the air too thin and his equipment too heavy, he returned to Rongbuk in order to recuperate. On 12th May he set off again with two of the Bhutias. With their loyal support he made a slow and painful ascent to 21,000 feet. On 21st May, he left his companions but returned four days later, hungry and having fallen twice. Then on 28th May he departed alone again, making little progress and experiencing hallucinations. His last diary entry was on 31st May 1934 and read "Off again, gorgeous day." His body was found nearby by climbers the following year. He had not achieved his goal.

Whether you admire his bravery or condemn his foolishness you have to respect Maurice Wilson's indomitable spirit and self-determination. The book captures all these emotions and more. An index would have been useful, and the chapters jump forwards and backwards across time in a sometimes frustrating manner. However, these minor criticisms do not detract from the telling of this remarkable tragic-comic story in a sensitive way by the author. Highly recommended.

Mike Young

Missionary Lives: The Wolff and Van Someren Families in 19th Century India, by Dick Wolff, 201pp. 2020, ISBN 9781715527297, £30.35, available from www.blurb.co.uk/b/10302044-missionary-lives

Dick Wolff has carefully collated documents written over many decades by his family members. For the family, this book has been a labour of love, to acknowledge and record the sacrifices and achievements of their ancestors. They were descended from August Friedrich Wolff (1819-1884) and his wife Mary Crisp Van Someren (1828-1906). August, born in Lower Saxony, was one of the German Protestant or 'pious' missionaries who settled in India in 1843 with the Dresdner (later, Leipzig) Mission. Mary was of Dutch extraction, though she had lived amongst the British in India all her life, and considered herself English. She was born and bred in Bangalore, but after the pair married they lived in southern India, eventually in Chidambaram. Mary wrote her own memoirs and firmly stamped her place in the family's long history. Friedrich managed to return to his homeland only once, in 1864.

It was their grand-daughter, Amalie Beck, who first started to draw together the family's history. Amalie was packed off to boarding school in Germany at seven and did not see her parents again until the age of fifteen. She herself married a missionary, her children married pastors. Thus began the family's long association with missionaries and church workers, teachers and doctors. The Lutheran missionaries survived on a pittance – a quarter of the stipend received by British missionaries – but probably it was supplemented by the kindness and generosity of others. They

weathered reports of war, revolution and counter-revolution in the homeland, and still found time to keep the wider family fully informed of news by publishing a family magazine for several years, before it was superseded by Amalie's own record of the family's history, which was completed in 1939. The family was scattered, with distinct German-speaking and English-speaking branches and their Dutch heritage largely forgotten.

Their lives revolved around the magnifying of God's love and the building of His kingdom. But their simple lifestyles could not be insulated from social and political issues. The East India Company disapproved of the whole idea of proselytizing, considering that it engendered division and unrest, so the work of missionary societies was frowned upon. Then there was the vexed question of India's caste-system. The missionaries found it difficult to deal with Indian converts who stubbornly failed to come to terms with notions of equality or to eschew polygamy. The behaviours proved to be too deeply embedded and Christian baptism was not going to eradicate such ingrained beliefs. One missionary group came to terms with the situation and showed tolerance of cultural beliefs. Others could not bring themselves to disregard what they considered to be heathen practices. This led to a schism within the Mission. The Leipzig Mission grew to accept caste division, seeing it an integral part of the indigenous Hindu religion and culture; Friedrich Wolff, with his more conservative Christian values, yet sponsored by the Mission, found himself at odds with any system which still thought of Dalits as outcasts. The result was that he and his family became estranged from the other brethren and were made homeless for a time. Most humiliating of all was the public criticism by Friedrich's own brother-in-law, the missionary and respected scholar, George Pope.

The pressures on missionary families were great. They were poor, struggling with language, climate and diet. Their elder children were often sent away for years on end, to be educated and protected from endemic diseases, while younger ones dropped like flies from infections such as cholera and typhoid. Yet, their commitment and love of God did not waver. They could not have continued without the support of a stalwart network of family and friends, especially where their children's welfare was concerned. But the lifestyle exacted a toll upon the children's well-being which cannot be underestimated. When Friedrich died, the final insult and rejection came when the Leipzig Mission declined to pay the costs of his wife's repatriation – after almost 40 years of loyal service.

Fortunately, this was a particularly literate family. They knew the value of recording events for posterity, so there was a treasure-trove of surviving memoirs, documents, sketches and old letters, even a "family and kinsfolk annual", to inform subsequent research. It has all been painstakingly gathered and is here for us to share in a fine quality, hardback edition. FIBIS members may contact the author with comments or information by emailing: dick@wolffs.info

Margaret Murray

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ROB WILSON – I was born and brought up in Zambia, formerly Northern Rhodesia. I can remember asking my father where he was born, and his answer was Jubbulpore. I didn't follow it up for a long time, but we did occasionally visit the UK and meet up with his relatives, many of whom were rather obviously darker skinned than my mother's relatives.

Then, years after coming to the UK to live, I was given my great grandfather's family Bible, which included 8 pages of handwritten records - a very valuable document! This was in pre-internet days, so my research focussed on visits to the India Office and to Berwick-upon-Tweed, where my 2x gt grandfather lived before sailing to India as a soldier.

Progress was slow, so I filled in the time between letters with research into my wife's Cornish Jelbert family.

PETER SUMMERS – Peter Summers was born in Naini Tal, the fifth generation of that surname to live in India. He boarded at Sherwood College, Naini Tal, in that beautiful area of the Himalayas, a time cut short in 1955 when the family returned to the UK. He joined the RAF as an engineer, working on Lightning, Phantom and Buccaneer aircraft before leaving and settling in Derbyshire with his wife, Pam. There he spent 24 years with Rolls-Royce on various gas turbine project teams finishing as Head of Engine Health Monitoring on the Trent 1000 in 2010. Pam and Peter are happily retired having three sons and four grandchildren in the local area.

ED STOREY – Ed Storey is about a 20-year FIBIS member, first introduced by Lawrie Butler. He is descended from the Storey (of the HEIC army) and Barrett (of Nawab support) families, as well as, perhaps, a mother of local origin. Storey lives in the US with his wife, Nancy, and is trying to better his understanding of the lives of those in Madras so long ago. Surprisingly, his ancestors in India seem to have fewer secrets than those residing in England.

KENNETH MILN – My parents were jute-wallahs who left their native city (Dundee) for India where my late father was employed at Megna jute-mills, West Bengal, for over 30 years. I was born in Durban, South Africa, where my parents took their first long leave from India. They

decided on Durban because my mother's sister and family had settled there, having emigrated from Scotland some years previously.

My primary education was undertaken at Chandernagore, India. I lived on a jute-mill compound with my jute-wallah parents and was cared for by my good Ahab Bhutia, who taught me to speak Hindustani. My schooling took place at St Pauls Public School, Darjeeling, India, and at Beckenham Grammar School, Kent, England. I then served a five years' engineering apprenticeship with a Scottish manufacturer of textile-processing machinery. From 1960, I began a progressive career in the textile industry: from technical management to general management and consultancy. I have completed consultancy assignments on behalf of The Commonwealth Secretariat, British Executive Services Overseas, The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) plus a number of private clients.

Now retired, I live with my lady wife in Monifieth, Angus. My wife, Patricia, has accompanied me on many expatriate assignments overseas, she now enjoys playing bridge and meeting old school friends.

DR ERNEST LUCAS – Ernest was born in Bangalore in 1945. His mother was a third-generation Anglo-Indian. Because his father was a British soldier, the family left India a few months after Independence. He grew up in west London, where his father worked at Hounslow Barracks as a civil servant. After a career first in biochemical research and then lecturing in Biblical Studies, he is now retired but remains Vice-Principal Emeritus, Bristol Baptist College and a Research Associate at Spurgeon's College, London. He visited his Indian roots in 1993 and 2008.

KEITH HAINES – For almost forty years, I was Head of History and Archivist at Campbell College, Belfast. Before and since retirement I have taken an interest in former pupils and local characters, many of whom found employment in India in a wide range of capacities. My principal focus is on individuals who are generally unknown but have achieved something worthwhile. I have travelled to India and Iran on six occasions following their trails. One of these is Turner Macan, who was Persian Interpreter to the Commanders-in-Chief in India during the 1820s. Full details of Macan can be found in my biography, *The Persian Interpreter: the life and career of Turner Macan*, which is available in the copyright libraries and the British Library, but has never been available for sale. (If

any further information is required, I can be contacted at keith.haines108@btinternet.com).

ROBERT RINGROW – Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Robert graduated from The Queen's University of Belfast with degrees in electrical and electronic engineering. Initially working in the aerospace industry designing electrical and avionic systems, he became a specialist in lightning and other electromagnetic effects, chairing a number of international working-groups advising the regulatory authorities. In the early-1990s, he started a department to work on artificial intelligence before moving into developing specialised conferences and courses in London. Moving back to Belfast in 1999, Robert was employed by the Mirror Group to manage the Y2K issue for its Irish subsidiaries and to manage the introduction of new technologies. Having retired, he now lives in Belfast with his wife. He has two children, both married, and two grandchildren and is involved with the Northern Ireland Family History Society.

NOTICES

KEN ROGERS/JOHN HOLIDAY

Ken Rogers would like to reach out to John Holiday, author of an article in issue 32. Ken has information concerning the same family as John was researching:

“In the course of working on the history of houses in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, I have discovered that Col. Martin’s mother lived in a house in Fore Street in the town, and that the building is still standing. I have prepared an article about the Martin family in Trowbridge, although I did not know the detail of Martin’s career in India. The article is as yet unpublished.”

Would John please contact Ken Rogers (kenrogerseasttown@gmail.com) if he would like to respond.

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS:

Members are reminded that the editor is always happy to consider articles, letters and information for inclusion in the Journal. Material should be sent to editor@fibis.org. Please quote the sources of information by including references wherever possible. Please also include a short biographical paragraph, for our ‘Notes on Contributors’ section and your home address (which will not be printed). If you are happy to be contacted by other readers, please include an email address at the end of your article.

Guidelines for formatting material can be found on the inside front cover of this journal.

SHARE YOUR STORIES:

The success of the FIBIS journal depends greatly upon your stories and anecdotes. Please keep them coming. The editor is happy to consider all articles submitted for consideration. The right of the editor to edit an article, at his discretion, is reserved, owing to constraints of space, and publication may be delayed if insufficient space is available. Deadlines for receipt of articles by the editor are: 28 February for publication in the Spring journal and 31 August for publication in the Autumn journal. If you would welcome a response from readers, don’t forget to add in your email details at the end of your article.

Please also send us a separate, short biopic. UK-based authors may request a complimentary copy of the journal upon publication, therefore please include your postal address. Overseas authors may request a PDF copy.

Material should be sent to editor@fibis.org

EVENTS AND MEETINGS – SAVE THE DATE!

AN UP-TO-DATE LIST OF EVENTS AND MEETINGS CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND AT www.fibis.org/events

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE FIBIS CONFERENCE

24-26 September 2021 at the Hawkwell House Hotel, Oxford

We continue our planning and are very pleased to announce our excellent speakers and topics. These will include:

- Professor Margot Finn: The EIC at home – Oriental influences on English country houses
- Tom Harper: Introducing the British Library's India Office map collection
- Omar Khan: Paper Jewels: Postcards from the Raj **
- Richard Morgan: The British and Dutch East Indies
- Sue Paul: A less than illustrious ancestor: unearthing less common resources to inform research
- Harry Smee: Gunpowder and Glory: a glimpse at the India visits of Frank Brock of Brock's Fireworks
- Hedley Sutton, British Library: Plain Tales from the Archives (of the India Office collection)
- Mike Tickner: Sustain to Victory – a look at truly impressive logistics during the war in Burma
- Christian Wolmar: Indian Railways

Topics may be subject to change, depending on speakers' access to the relevant records.

** This may be delivered as a recorded talk if the speaker cannot travel to the UK.

Some speakers will be available for follow-up Q/A sessions or small workshops during the event and to sign copies of their books.

As before, we plan to run supporting workshops and offer 1:1 support sessions.

For more information, to register an interest, or to offer your own help at the event, please contact Penny Tipper, events@fibis.org

DROP-IN SURGERIES

These take place bi-monthly on the second Saturday of each month.

Date	Time	Topic
11 September 2021	16:00	General
13 November 2021	16:00	Website

MEMBERS 30 TALKS

This is an opportunity for members to give a talk to other members about their research. What you talk about is up to you. If you are interested in talking at one of these sessions email valmay@fibis.org.

Date	Time	Topic
12 June 2021	10:00	Clearing the Fog – Peering Back through the Generations
14 August 2021	16:00	TBA
9 October 2021	16:00	TBA
11 December 2021	16:00	TBA

SOCIETY INFORMATION

GENERAL ENQUIRIES:

Enquiries, by post or email, should initially be sent to the Membership Secretary: Libby Rice, 71 Manor Lane, Sunbury on Thames, Middlesex, TW16 6JE. Email: membership@fibis.org.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION:

The cost of membership is £15 for the UK, £16 for Europe, and £18 for elsewhere abroad. Cheques (in Sterling) should be made out to 'FIBIS' and sent to the Membership Secretary (address above). We've also now added 'Paperless' membership at £12 per year worldwide – please see the website for details. Subscriptions can be paid/renewed online with a credit card or by PayPal at www.fibis.org/store. For special arrangements for payment by Australian members: see below.

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND:

For liaison with FIBIS members and with India-related family history activities in Australia or New Zealand contact: Mary Anne Gourley - aus@fibis.org. Members may pay subscriptions in Australian dollars (A\$35). Cheques should be made payable to 'Families in British India Society and sent to PO Box 397, Doncaster, Victoria 3108, Australia; or can be paid direct to FIBIS Westpac Account No.15-0975 BSB 032-636; quoting your surname as the Reference; or by PayPal via the FIBIS website.

WEBSITE:

The FIBIS website www.fibis.org includes nearly 2 million entries of Europeans or Anglo-Indians who lived or saw civil or military service in India. Many of these names were collected thanks to transcriptions undertaken by FIBIS volunteers (see below), and many have been incorporated from the website of Cathy Day, to whom we are greatly indebted. The FIBIS website also includes an area for members' own material: for example, the results of their own researches or interesting documents or photos in their possession. Contact the Website and Social Media Manager, Valmay Young (valmay@fibis.org), if you would like to contribute.

RESEARCH FOR MEMBERS:

Members are encouraged to place enquiries in the members' area of the FIBIS website, the FIBIS Facebook group 'British India Family History', as well as using online searchable databases. Alternatively, members should use the India Office Records, to which the best introduction is Baxter's Guide: Biographical Sources in the India Office Records (3rd edition, FIBIS, 2004). Members requiring further assistance should contact our Research Coordinator, Beverly Hallam, 32 Broughton Road, London, W13 8QW (email: research@fibis.org). FIBIS members seeking research assistance should quote their membership number.

TRANSCRIPTION PROJECTS:

Thanks to the cooperation of the British Library, and many individual contributors, large quantities of biographical data and photographs of memorials from the India Office Records and other sources have been transcribed and uploaded to the FIBIS website. These projects are ongoing. If you would like to volunteer as a transcriber, please contact the Transcriptions Coordinator: (email: transcriptions@fibis.org).



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Quetta Bazaar