



Raja of Travancore's Elephants

Trivandrum in Kerala by L.H. de Rudder

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Presentation:

Manuscripts should be typed in Century 13.5pt, double spaced. Quotations should be typed in 11pt, single spaced and separated from the text by a one-line space. References should be given as footnotes, using the 'insert footnote' function, and used sparingly. Illustrations should be supplied as JPEGs and full details of provenance given.

Front cover: Lithograph, the Raja of Travancore's elephants at Trivandrum in Kerala by L.H. de Rudder after an original drawing of May 1841 by Prince Aleksandr Mikhailovich Saltuikov published in 1848. © British Library Board.

See inside back cover for membership, subscription, and general enquiry details.

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THE JOURNAL OF THE FAMILIES IN BRITISH INDIA SOCIETY

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EDITORIAL:

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

We have just lost our greatly admired Queen Elizabeth II and, all over the Commonwealth, watched the intricate traditions of the British displayed on our TVs, the warm backstory of Her Majesty, and welcomed a new monarch we know so well: His Majesty King Charles III. What an amazing time to be part of the Commonwealth and, indeed, the world.

I have recently taken over as the editor of the FIBIS journal and I am really honored to have been accepted by the trustees for this role.

I am a former journalist, TV scriptwriter and media adviser to many governments in Victoria, Australia, and, more importantly, I have been researching all my family history lines for 37 years. However, as you will all no doubt agree, the last line has proved to be the most interesting of all: the British Indian one.

My grandmother's lounge room was surrounded by figurines of elephants and now I know exactly why.

I am Australian living in Melbourne but so editing the journal from such a distance from the trustees has been easy thanks to the internet.

I would like to thank the trustees for entrusting me with this task and for their considerable experience and guidance in helping me complete my first journal.

The contributions within I found fascinating and I hope you do too.

If any have anything to contribute, please get in touch. The guidance for contributing can be found on the inside front cover of the journal.

Sally Gibson

RANIKHET A TOWNSHIP OF BRITONS WHEN THEY RULED INDIA:

By: Dr. N. C. Shah.

During their rule in Kumaon (India) from 1814 to 1947, the Britons established new townships, like Dalhousie, Mussoorie, Landsdown, Chakrata, and Ranikhet. Among these, the most prominent and important one was Ranikhet, also known as the Queen of the Hills. During the British period, it was the most popular hill station in India. This article is about the history and the military and administrative officers, barracks, bungalows, churches, cemeteries and bazaars as reminders of the British rulers.

Ranikhet Cantonment and its township

Ranikhet township as a cantonment or permanent military station, came into existence in 1866, when General Sir William Rose Mansfield (1865–1870), then Commander in Chief of the Indian Army, sent Major Lang of the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers to locate a place in the Kumaon hills in Uttarakhand where the British troops could be stationed.

It seems that Major Lang had an aesthetism because, after a long survey in Kumaon, he selected a hilly ridge full of pine and cedar trees, where there was a very small hamlet with crop fields under the name of Ranikhet (meaning ‘a queen's field’). The whole Ranikhet area was purchased for only Rs. 13,024 (then about £152 sterling) from the villagers.



LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM ROSE MANSFIELD, 1865. NEW COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMY IN INDIA.

When Lord Mayo, the 4th Viceroy of India (1869–72), visited Ranikhet for inspection, he was so fascinated with the grandeur and serene beauty of the place that he planned to shift the summer capital of India from Simla to Ranikhet and to establish a railway line. However, the whole plan could not be materialised because, in 1872, Lord Mayo was assassinated by a Pathan, Sher Ali, in Port Blair, where he was on a visit for prison reforms.

General, Sir William Rose Mansfield (1865 to 1870). (Source: website) Commander-in-Chief of India.
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Lord Mayo (1869-1872, Viceroy of India (Source: website)

Broadly speaking, Ranikhet Cantonment was formed of three major hill ridges—the Ranikhet or Alma Ridge, which on the West ends with Kumpur (now Lalkurti) forming the highest point of Ranikhet at 5500 feet above sea level; in the east, adjoining to the Ranikhet ridge is the Dulikhet hill, which extended up to Upat (Golf link). Where Ranikhet joined with Dulikhet hill, there was an undulated portion, which was prepared for a large open ground known earlier as Dulikhet ground or Pologround, as polo used to be played there by the British army members. Now, it is known as Somnath Ground. Furthermore, in the south, the Ranikhet ridge joins the Mall Road ridge, which in turn is adjoined to Chaubattia hill (6000 feet) through Jhoola Devi (an old temple). Here, pilgrims on their way to Badrinath on foot coming from plains used to stay for siesta after climbing the steep Bamsew Hill. The north-west portion of Ranikhet and Chaubattia is completely open and an amazing panorama can be seen of the Himalayan range.



A bird's-eye view of Ranikhet showing the bazaar area, at the top with a stand of trees Kumpur and, below it, the Transport Depot.

The visit of Prince Waldemar of Prussia (Germany), Jhoola Devi:

Pilgrims on foot would visit Badrinath and Kedarnath shrines via the Ranikhet-route. Prince Waldemar's party passed through a little sanctuary, Joollega Devi (May 28), and took a siesta.

At that time, the town of Ranikhet did not exist, but they passed through the fields of Ranikhet and Dulikhet (a village). The first foreign visitor to Kedarnath and Gangotri was the team of the Prince of Prussia, along with his travelling physician and scientist, Dr. Hoffmeister. They were en route to Kedarnath in 1845. In the same year, Dr. Hoffmeister was the first botanist and scientist to visit Kumaon and Garhwal, which the historians writing the history of Kumaon, Atkinson (1883), Walton (1928), and Nevill (1904) and the botanists studying the area were unaware of Ranikhet becoming a cantonment in 1869, and the administration of the town was entrusted to a cantonment magistrate, who was an army officer with full administrative and legal powers. In 1869, Col. H. Chamberlain was appointed as the first cantonment magistrate. He had with him the Divisional Forest Officer to take care of the forest in the cantonment. A police officer was to keep law and order in the cantonment.

The first official building built in Ranikhet was the Royal Treasury, which opened on April 1, 1869. In the *same* year, the cantonment magistrate's office and 'observatory' were built, where daily meteorological observations were recorded. Later, it became the residence of the executive officer. In 1870, a post office was established and Ranikhet Military Dairy was established. Later, a dairy farm was established at the end of the bazaar. In the same year, the Royal Military Hospital was established completing in 1875. In Ranikhet, there used to be a post for the military commandant, who was solely in charge of the troops stationed here. When the military hospital was established, a physician of the Royal Army Medical Corps, usually a colonel or major, used to be in charge and the staff treated the military personnel. In 1906, a police station was established. Earlier, for some time, Ranikhet was also the summer seat of the Commander-in-Chief of India office, a bungalow now known as 'Ridgeway'. At that time, the bungalow was known as the Flag Staff Office.



The General Post Office at Mall Road,
Ranikhet (1970) (Photo: Unknow)



Station Dairy at Mall Road Ranikhet
(1870)

Establishment of transport depot:

There was a lot of construction work going on at Ranikhet's barracks, official buildings, churches, and bungalows. There was an urgent requirement for all kinds of people and for materials. The only transport was mule and later cart when a cart road was made. In 1872, the first-ever cart road linked Ramnagar with Ranikhet, primarily for the transport of troops and other conveniences of the new cantonment at Ranikhet. A transport depot was established at the beginning of the Sadar Bazaar road. Motor vehicles came to Ranikhet in 1920 from Kathgodam, connecting Almora.

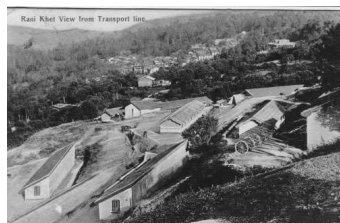


The Alma barracks in backdrop the central and western range of the Himalayas are seen (FIBIS ORG., Ranikhet) (Photo circa 1920s, according to the author)

In Ranikhet, several permanent barracks for the British troops were built in Chaubattia, Ranikhet, Kumpur, and Dulikhet. The double-storied barracks, which were built in Ranikhet in 1876, were known as 'the Alma Barracks'.

Before their construction, the troops were stationed in log huts.

Ranikhet: Transport Depot where mule carts are seen along with the mule-sheds and the store houses. See the ridge ending at Dulikhet. (FIBIS ORG., Ranikhet) (Photo circa 1920s, according to the author)



Eight churches were built in Ranikhet between 1880 and 1908. Of these, only three are functional, the rest either used for other purposes or completely ruined.



The Alma ground now known as Narsingh ground. In the picture's background, there is the St. Peter's Church the first church built in Ranikhet in the year 1880, now used by the Kumaon Regiment, where woollen weaving industry at cottage scale is running (Photo: Author in 1965.)

There were five praying houses, or chapels. Of these, three are used for other purposes by the military and two have been ruined. There were three Christian cemeteries: one in 1870, which was used by the British Army and British civilians, which is now not in use; the other, established in 1895, is in use; and the third is a Parsi cemetery with only five graves. During the British period, Parsi businessmen came from Bombay and either left or died.

Visit of Rev. James Kennedy:

It is recorded that Rev. James Kennedy and his wife visited 'Ranee Khet' in May 1869 and stayed there to 1877, when it was 'being established'. He had stated: "When we went to Ranee Khet, there was not a single house in the place. The only Europeans were two engineers and a sergeant, and they were living in their cookhouses, preparatory to building houses for themselves."

In 1913, somewhere in Ranikhet, Elsa Sandes, an Irish woman, who used to run soldiers' homes at many military stations, some in her native Ireland and others in British India, built her homes very differently to those usually found in army camps so the soldiers would not be homesick and feel more at home. The present Civil Hospital, the present primary school, and a few other buildings were known as 'Sandes's Soldier Home'. It was equipped with a big coffee shop, in which hundreds of the soldiers were fed nightly, paying for the food at cost. There were rooms where they could write letters, play games, sit around the fire and read the newspapers, and play chess and checkers. But, suddenly, she left Ranikhet and the home was left vacant, probably 1917 to 1918.

In 1917, Mr. Harkision Lall Shah (the author's grandfather), who was a Bazaar Chowdhary under the Cantt Magistrate, persuaded the authorities to open a veterinary hospital, primarily because mules were required for army transportation purposes in the absence of motor vehicles. Mr. Shah observed that the large numbers of mules hired by the army were dying despite their treatment by the indigenous traditional methods. In 1918, a veterinary hospital near the Sandes Soldier Home was established.

The last barrack was cemented and constructed under the name of the 'Jungle Barracks' for the American troops in 1942. They stayed there from 1945 to 1947. Now it is managed by the Army Signal Corps of the Kumaon Regiment

Administrative set-up:

In 1920, a post of Assistant Commissioner (Pali) was created, who used to be an Indian civil servant under the Deputy Commissioner, Almora. All legal and criminal cases, even those committed in the cantonment, and all civil areas, were dealt with by him. Earlier, these legal powers were under the Cantt Magistrate.

In 1920, the post of Sub Divisional Officer or Assistant Commissioner, an ICS, was created under Deputy Commissioner, Almora, and law and order problems were handed over to him.

It is worth mentioning here about Rai Bahadur Chiranjee Lall Sah Thulgharia, who was the brother-in-law of Mr Lachiram Sah and maternal uncle of Cand the son of Jai Sah Thulgharia, Henry Ramsay's well-known commissioner of Kumaon friend. In 1860, he was tutored at ten years of age by the father of the Amora Church, Mr Henry Budden, and was the first Kumaoni tutored by an Englishman.

He spoke fluent English, which he taught to Lachi Ram Sah and his son, Harkision Lall Shah.

Mr. Harkision Lall Shah joined the service of Cantonment in 1905 and was liked by all the officials for his sincerity and honesty, as evidenced by his testimonials. He applied for his voluntary retirement in 1920, but his application was rejected.

He applied again in 1922 and, lastly, the Cantt Magistrate, Lt. Col. Burton, was adamant his request be accepted on family grounds.

A farewell party was held for him by the residents of Ranikhet on March 3, 1922, in which all the officials and civilians of Ranikhet attended. Officials and civilians also came from Almora. It was a unique assembly of officials and civilians who were posted in the military, including the Cant. magistrate and the district's higher officers, seldom seen. The Cantt. Magistrate gave his speech in Hindustani.

After retirement, the Government of India gave him the titles of Rai Sahib and the state Government Honorary Special Magistrate. He was the Estate Proprietor and Senior Partner of the firm of Harkision Lall Bros. Ranikhet but could only enjoy this for a very short time as he died four years later in 1926.



A farewell party given to HLS Ranikhet on December 3, 1922. From left: sitting on a chair. 1 & 2 (unknown military officers) 3.K.N.Knox ICS, Asst. Commissioner Ranikhet. 4: Almora's Haji Niazahmad 5. Rai Bahadur Chiranjee Lal Sah, Almora 6. Mr. F.C.M. Cruick Shannk, I.C.S. Deputy Commissioner, Almora. Harkision Lal Shah, Chaudhari 8. Lt. Col. W. Burton, Cant. Magistrate, Ranikhet. 9.Ghasi Ram, Kapoor, President of the Farewell Party, Ranikhet, and 10, 11, and 12 unknown civil and military officers stationed at Ranikhet. Ranikhet's prominent citizens standing behind, who organised and attended the party.

Mr N. Troup purchased from the villagers the land in the Chaubattia area, which he named 'Oaklands'. Later, William Holm purchased this land, which was known as 'Holm Farm'.

This property is now owned by Mr. Lalit Mohan Upadhyay, the son of a freedom fighter and revolutionary, under the name Troup Ganj, which later was later revealed as a red-light area. The property is owned by Mr. Shridhar Prasad, a lawyer.

The other significant person was Sir Henry Horseman among the richest people in India, who was in charge of the Swadeshi Cotton Mills in Kanpur, which was established in 1937. He owned the bungalow, the Knockfierina, at Ranikhet and built two hospitals in Kanpur under: Ursula Horseman Hospital and Alice Horseman Hospital, in memory of his wife and mother. Later, the bungalow was sold to Dr. K. Kak, a famous eye surgeon from Allahabad.

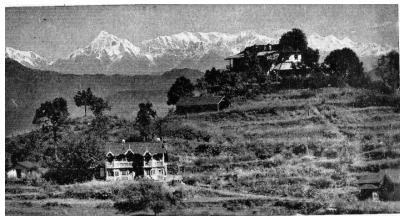
Early Indian settlers in Ranikhet:

The land in Ranikhet during that period was given on lease to the British retired civil servants to build their private bungalows in the Mall Road area. However, the Indians were given land to build upon their houses in Khari and Zaruri Bazaar areas and, in 1910, Sadar Bazaar. Over 60 bungalows were built before 1930 for summer season rentals.

Bungalows were built in British style with familiar names such as Almora, Bageshwar, and nearby or distant villages were the Thakurs, Mehras, Pathans (Mohamaddens), Joshis, Tewari's Marwari (Baniyas) and the Sahs (Gangolas, Kholbherias, Chautarias, Jagatis, Thulgharias, Chaudharis, etcetera), including the author's family, the Jagatis. They worked as bankers, contractors for building, transporters, hiring mules and horses, hard-ware merchants, grain merchants and so on.

The Bungalows and their names:

They were built with the same architecture and pattern as existed in the suburbs of London. Not only this, but the naming of the bungalows was also similar to that of castles and palaces, such as Balmoral, Rosemount, Dawn, Fairlands, Essex House, Ridgeway, Rookwood, Windy Haugh, Cleave House, Masonic Lodge, Mount Beynon and Windsor Lodge. Windsor Lodge, built at Kalika Estate by Harkision Lall Shah was named after the Duke of Windsor who visited India in 1920. The author spent his childhood there but it was gutted by fire in 1951.



A bungalow on top, was known as 'Windsor Lodge' (1925)
Husain B. Photographer



Rai Sahib Harkision Lal Shah (1878-1926) of Ranikhet, is seen with his stick-gun, a unique and rarely seen firearm

In 1924, the Government. Act of Cantonment was passed and a board of members from the public was elected. The Commandant of the stationed troops was posted as the President and the post of Executive Officer Cantonment was created, which was the Secretary of the board under the President.

There used to be a skating rink and a dance hall near Sadar Bazaar which at night became a dancehall for the European families. After 1930, the hall was converted into a cinema under the name the Rink-Talkies, which used to run only English movies, and a new cinema under the Globe Theatre was opened. Once in Ranikhet there used to be four cinema halls, which showed English movies and seldom Indian ones. Now there are none. During British times (1938–1942), a new building was constructed near Alma Ground as a cinema. Later, it was converted into a restaurant, Casanova, and then a dancehall.

On August 15, 1947, India gained independence and the majority of British soldiers left Ranikhet. A few people, mostly civil servants, were asked to stay and finish their contracts. The last station staff officers left in 1948. At that time, Capt. M.P. Kelly was in the chair. He was very liberal, kind-hearted and well-liked by civilians. He made a football team, Station A, for which he was the captain and the rest were the civilians from the bazaar. He used to play centre-forward and, if the ball came to him, he used to carry it to the opponents' goal as he was very fast.



Casanova (1938) now known as Bank Building.

The staff and the civilians connected officially with Ranikhet Station Staff Office (1947). Sitting on chair: Rai Sahib Bhawani Das Shah, coffee shop owner; D.Q. M.S. Clarkson, Jem. Sobhan Singh Negi, Head Clerk, Capt. M.P. Kelly, Station Staff Officer, General Quartermaster Sergeant M.S. Peacock, Deputy Quartermaster Sergeant Thompson, and Mr. Amir Chand Kapoor, Manager, Globe Cinema Ranikhet. In the second row, the second person is Mr. J.C. Shah, the author's uncle who was as a staff member.



The last civil Britisher to leave Ranikhet: Among the last Britishers to leave Ranikhet was Mrs. Col. Noel Barwell, who died in 1966 in Ranikhet. Her husband, Col. Noel Barwell, was a physician in Calcutta. Col. and Mrs. Barwell visited Ranikhet in 1921. Col. Barwell purchased Cleave Cottage, known as Session House from Mrs Barwell who edited the thrilling books of Jim Corbett, a famous tiger hunter of Kumaon, died in 1966 at Ranikhet.

WANDERINGS DOWN A FAMILY LANE:

By: Peter Hare

One of the great joys but also a danger of genealogy is the number of byways one can disappear down whilst tracking one's forebears. Having failed to trace my lineage back to one of the 'begats' in the book of Genesis; and having established that my English forefather at the time of the first UK census in 1810 was in Cape Town, I turned my attention to their lifestyles.

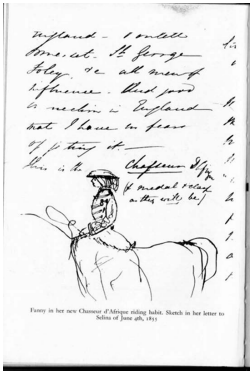
In researching the life of my great, great grandfather, Lt. Melville Hare, I acquired all the usual facts recorded by governments; but how did he live? He had sailed to India from Cape Town in 1846, joining the East India Company (HEIC) army, before transferring to the Hyderabad Contingent. He married the daughter of a Chaplain to the HEIC, and by 1855 they had two children. When the Indian Mutiny began Melville's company was ordered to join the Central India Field Force (CIFF) under General Rose and we are fortunate to have published eye-witness accounts of that campaign. The diaries of two medical officers, Lowe¹ and Sylvester², were published in 1869, but the account that catches the eye was by 27-year-old Fanny Duberly³, published in 1859.

As the wife of Captain Henry Duberly, Paymaster to the 8th Royal Irish Hussars, Fanny had already accompanied him in the Crimean War and her experiences were published in 1855 before that war was over. The regiment was thereafter posted to Bombay as part of the CIFF.

Fanny must have been quite a character being virtually the only officer's wife at the front and sporting most un-Victorian apparel.



Walking outfit on board ship.



Chasseur d'Afrique riding habit 1855 (with 'medal & clasp as they will be')



The Diary of a Lady Fire-eater Punch Cartoon of Fanny, Feb 1856

She was not universally admired; being described a lieutenant in the 46th Regiment of Foot as 'a female of whom I have the greatest horror'.⁶ Within the month however, the writer noted 'We walked up the cliff afterwards behind Mrs Duberly and party, & very nice black Trousers she had.'⁶ ! She was an inquisitive onlooker, who witnessed the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, and she is possibly the only woman to have taken part in a cavalry charge.

Fanny wrote to her sister from India on 9 July 1856 '...we [Fanny & Henry] mounted our horses...little thinking that we were to be spectators of a battle [for Gwalior]. '...imagine the pain of [me] riding on a wound, nearly three inches deep and two and a half long – with a boil on the other side.' 'Presently Mr Webster came riding with speed to order out two troops of the 8th and Blake's Horse Artillery to charge down to a village by the fort. As they started, my little horse sprang away. I sung out to Henry – "I must go!" – "Go along then!" said he, eager for an excuse, and away we went at a rushing gallop right up to the fort.' ³

In her book she wrote: 'The impulse to accompany the cavalry and artillery was irresistible: and I never, never shall forget the throbbing excitement of that short gallop, when the horse beneath one, raging in his fierce strength, and mad with excitement, scarcely touched the ground.'⁵ Lt. Bonus wrote home after riding over the battleground the day after the charge: "...to my great astonishment I met an English lady on horseback [Fanny]...I think she was a little out of place, for the plain was strewn with the dead'.⁵

Fanny's account of the marches – 1 800 miles in six months; living conditions – under canvas; and the climate were those that Melville and his fellow soldiers also endured. In July 2022 England registered its highest temperature yet - 40.3⁰ C, or in HEIC terms 105⁰ F (you don't need decimal points in 'old' terms!). The diarists mention temperatures reaching 120⁰F (49⁰ C) 'and the glaring sterile earth appeared only fit for salamanders.'¹

Six months after the charge at Gwalior fort Melville Hare was furloughed leave and died of 'melanosis' in London one month after the family's arrival there; presumably as a result of his exposure to the sun. Thankfully his 6-year-old son Charles Hare survived.

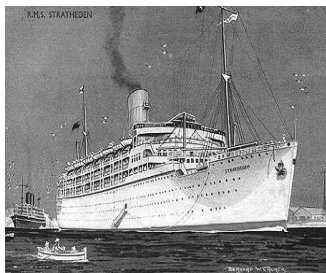
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A CEYLON CHILDHOOD:

by Michael McKeag, (Vice President and Treasurer of the North of Ireland Family History Society)

I was born in Somerset in 1944 and my sister, Jane, was born a year later. When Jane was 3 years old and I was 4 years old, the family went to live in Ceylon. We flew from London to Belfast to say farewell to our family there: the flight to Nutts Corner airport was so turbulent that everyone but the McKeags were so sick that the plane had to make an unscheduled stop on the Isle of Man to be cleaned up. Jane, in those pre-seatbelt days, had been airborne above her seat and had had to be tied down by a stewardess.



On February 3, 1949, we embarked on the P. & O. liner *R.M.S. Stratheden* from London. It was magical for a little boy, not yet 5 years of age. Ships were fascinating and shipboard life, then and on subsequent crossings, was wonderful: all sorts of activities were arranged and there were other children to play with: swimming, races (with prizes), deck quoits – goodness knows how many quoits finished up overboard – and just watching the sea was enjoyable, whether it was silky smooth or blowing a gale and impressively rough with mountainous billows.

The meals were interspersed with refreshments – beef tea for elevenses was always a tasty delight – and the daily guess as to the distance travelled since the previous day was fun. There were flying fish to watch as they raced alongside the ship. In the evenings, the Bath Steward ran the bath for us and we had to use special soap that would lather in the salty water. Lifeboat drill was compulsory for new passengers the day after they boarded. On this or subsequent voyages to and from Ceylon (as Sri Lanka was then known), we visited Gibraltar, Marseilles, Naples, Port Said (with the ‘gully gully man’ (a magician) and the ‘bumboats’ selling all sorts of goods), the Suez Canal, Port Suez, Port Sudan, Aden, Bombay and, eventually, Colombo.

On arrival, we stayed at the Galle Face Hotel, an old colonial hotel, apparently the oldest east of Suez, overlooking the sea. The hotel took its name from the Galle Face Green which is a long expanse of grass in front of the hotel beside the sea.





We and the rest of the population of Colombo used to stroll to the shore in the evening, when the heat was a little more tolerable, and fly our kites. Our large rooms overlooked the sea, palm trees and the black and white dance floor. On Boat Nights, when liners were in the harbour, dances would be held and Jane and I used to hang out of the window to watch the proceedings as the dancers waltzed outside, with coloured lights illuminating the darkness and a large cut-out of an ocean liner forming a backdrop to the dance floor.

After post-war Britain, Ceylon could not have been more different: bustling with people; women wearing colourful saris; wiry rickshaw coolies; lumbering bullock carts; snake charmers and more. Hot and humid, spectacular thunderstorms replaced British drizzle: one day in 1949 saw 11.73 inches in just a few hours.

In due course, we rented a bungalow (usually of two storeys) in 44th Lane in the district of Wellawatte – not an area patronised by Europeans. Beside the front door was a bo tree, which we were told was sacred and would cause immense ill feeling were we to remove it. However, it disappeared one night after the landlord spotted it as he did not want ‘pilgrims’ taking up residence. Two features of the beach were always worth watching the way men shinned up the coconut trees with their feet in a coir ring round the tree. The other was the fishermen’s narrow catamarans with their outriggers.



Sometimes we went to Mount Lavinia to swim – and, there, commissioned Donald Ramanayake to paint the scene, together with several other favourite views. Most of our swimming was at the Colombo Swimming Club, which was the social centre for Europeans. It had a children’s pool, a main pool, a clubhouse with changing rooms, a library, a barber’s shop and a

covered shelter where one could sit in shade; the shelter had no walls but from the eaves hung dead crows, presumably as an ineffective warning to others.



We children spent a vast amount of time at the club, running around and playing all sorts of games and leaping in and out of the pools.

We quickly learnt to swim. In the early evening, before daylight faded shortly after six o’clock, there might be a water polo match and the adults would sit and watch and sip their whiskies while the children would rush up and grab their cashew nuts and chips. Because of this environment in my formative years, water polo was the one team game I really enjoyed at school later on.

Each morning our mother went into the servants' quarters and sat at a table with the cook standing beside her as she decided on the menu and wrote it with a slate pencil on the slate. 'Cookie' went to market and prepared the food, always European except at Sunday lunch, when there was a curry. Suppiah, our houseboy, was very popular with the family (see photo right); an Indian, he had his own family back in India and was in Ceylon to earn a living for them. He cleaned the house, waited at table and generally performed the duties of a butler.



The third staff member was Podian, a lad who looked after the garden and cleaned the car. They called our parents 'Master' and 'Lady'. Sheila, our older sister who joined us later, was 'Big Missy' and Jane and I were 'Little Missy' and 'Little Master'.

It was the custom for Europeans to employ an 'ayah' to look after the children and my mother was reluctantly persuaded to employ one when we first arrived. Jane and I hated this arrangement, and it lasted only a week or so, to the whole family's relief.

A European wife's life was somewhat empty, especially if she employed an ayah: childcare, no housework, no cooking, no shopping for food, no laundry; the 'dhobi man' called and all the dirty clothes were bundled up in a sheet and taken away with a list of the items, to be brought back later, laundered. The Colombo Swimming Club, thus, acquired enormous importance as somewhere the women could meet to socialise as there was little else for them to do.

For children, there was more to life than swimming. We had school. Jane and I went first to Bishop's College. I recall little about it except that we had some lessons in Sinhalese, of which I learnt remarkably little apart from being able to count to ten. Soon afterwards, we transferred to the Royal Naval School, which I enjoyed. We learnt Latin instead of Sinhalese. On Sundays, we went to the Sunday School at St Andrew's Scots Kirk.

Parties were fun, especially when they featured a tea roller, which was a long sloping rack of rollers with sharp bends, properly used to transport tea chests but, here, used to give trays of little children an exciting ride. We were always convinced we would come off at a corner but we never did. The photo is the nearest to the tea roller. We came home with our mouths dyed lurid colours from drinking Lanka Lime, Orange Barley or red Bovanto. Scots abroad become more Scottish and there was a flourishing Caledonian Society with a Pipe Band.



Sheila's husband to be, Hugh Munro, played the big bass drum, wearing the traditional leopard skin over his kilt. Family friends played the bagpipes. I loved hearing them practice in the park. There were ceilidhs, formal or impromptu, and reels were danced and dashing white sergeants stripped the willow and we marvelled at the sword dances.

In those days, few travelled by air as it was expensive and most shipping to the 'Far East' (Asia) and Australia called at the capital Colombo. Most British children were sent back home to school: they flew to England in September, stayed with relatives or friends during the Christmas and Easter holidays and flew back to Ceylon at the beginning of the summer holidays, thereby giving their mothers even emptier days.

I thought them very sophisticated to be flying but I would always have chosen a sea voyage: there is romance attached to ships and the sea but none whatsoever associated with aircraft and the sky. One of the perks of attending the Royal Naval School was that, when a naval vessel called into Colombo, we were sometimes invited to visit it and often a party was held on it for us. So there was great excitement when an aircraft carrier, the *Ark Royal*, came. Another perk was having naval colour-blindness tests – I failed to see any patterns in those coloured dots and my result ensured I could forget any idea of a naval career as I would not be able to distinguish the port and starboard navigation lights.



Most holidays were spent up country, staying with friends on their tea estates. On a couple of occasions, a colleague of my father lent us his island, Taprobane (an old name for Ceylon), in Weligama Bay on the south coast of Ceylon for a holiday. It is sometimes called Count de Mauney's Island as he built the fine house on it in the 1920s. There is just the one house, an octagonal building with a high central octagonal hall, surrounded by the other rooms, one of which was a bathroom with a fine sunken bath – with no water.

The local population on the mainland, being Buddhist, did not kill snakes but took them to the island, thus, these first had to be cleared before the house was built. Off Taprobane is an even smaller island, Snake Island, and this is now the destination for the snakes. If there was still a concern about any remaining cobras on Taprobane, a comfort was the presence of a mongoose. One has to wade through the sea to reach the island. A daily source of amusement was watching our cook wade waist deep to shore to go to market – carrying his umbrella. The island later belonged to the science fiction writer, Arthur C. Clarke.

As Professor of Dental Surgery at the University of Ceylon, part of my father's remit was to move the school to the new University at Peradeniya, outside Kandy. In due course, in October 1954, the new school was to open for business, so we left Colombo and moved into the Professor's Bungalow in Peradeniya, just beside the school. Jane went to Kandy High School. I went to Trinity College Junior School and remember only a couple of things about the lessons there. We had to learn to do some Kandyan dancing with its intricate hand movements and, in a class in which I was the only white boy, the Ceylonese master taught us the song *My Old Kentucky Home*, which begins: "The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home, 'Tis summer, the darkies are gay". You rarely hear it sung now. Despite that cheerful first line, it is an elegy for separated slave families.

One morning, a few days later, our mother woke us to tell us that father had died during the night. Good friends had already driven up from Colombo during the night and had taken charge of the arrangements.

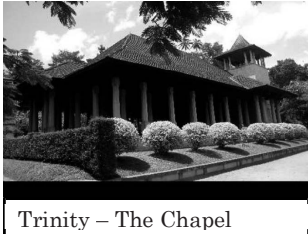
That day, Jane, 9, went to stay with the Governor of Kandy Jail as his daughter was in Jane's class at school and I, 10, went to stay with the Principal of Trinity College and his family. Jane and I did not attend the funeral that day at Mahaiyawa Cemetery. We did not return to the bungalow; the university wanted us out straight away and our mother went to stay with the friends in Colombo.

Jane and I went there, too, during our school holidays but, as Jane had four terms a year and I had three, we met only at Christmas. Jane soon transferred to the convent at Nuwara Eliya, where she boarded. I became a boarder in the senior school at Trinity, in the junior house, called the Squealery. The housemaster, a remote Sanskrit scholar, called me into his room, welcomed me to the house and then asked: "Do you use lavatory paper?" Somewhat surprised, I answered "Yes, Sir." "Then," he said, to my bewilderment, "in that case I think you should see the chaplain."

The chaplain was British and kindly supplied the necessary until I could receive supplies by post from my mother. We had to walk to the junior school to find lavatories, but we could wash at our boarding house as, outdoors, there were a few taps and sinks and a shower.

The house was one storey with large unglazed windows – mainly one large room out of which were carved two small rooms for the prefects and two for the housemaster. Furnishings were sparse: bunk beds, at the ends of which we placed our trunks, and a table with a few chairs. From time to time, the 'dhobi man' called to take our laundry. I was the only European boy in the house and, although we were supposed to speak English, most reverted to Sinhalese or Tamil. I was the only European in my class too.

The pupils were streamed according to the language of instruction: English, Sinhalese or Tamil. The house had its own dining hall (although, that is perhaps an unduly grandiose name for it). Everyone else had rice and curry but I, being European, had 'courses' specially cooked for me but not particularly to my taste. The two saving graces were bread and jam. The bread was baked on the premises and by my plate was a large chunk of hot, fresh bread, which, I regret to say, had all gone before Grace was said. I also had my own tin of jam although my enthusiasm for it waned briefly when I found half a gecko in it.



Trinity – The Chapel

I liked trying to target monkeys in the trees with my catapult but they always moved too fast. The chapel was a beautiful building constructed with carved pillars rather than walls. I recall with shivers the school barber, a cross-eyed man, who waved his cut-throat razor around randomly while cutting one's hair, holding an animated conversation with someone at the other end of the shop.

The school playing fields were on a separate site to the west at Asgiriya. Here, playing fields on two levels had been carved out of the hillside and a pleasant pavilion built. There I learnt to play rugby on what subsequently became a test cricket pitch after the two levels had been evened to become one large area and a large stand had been built. The college was proud to be the only school in the world to host Test Matches.



From time to time, I wandered into Kandy which is built by a large artificial lake, beside which is the Dalada Maligawa or Temple of the Tooth, an important Buddhist place of pilgrimage containing a supposed tooth of the Buddha. Every August, there is a spectacular festival lasting several days and culminating in the Perahera, which is a nighttime procession of Kandyan dancers and drummers and a hundred or so beautifully caparisoned

elephants; I enjoyed being part of the large crowd lining the streets and watching the Kandyan chiefs parading on their elephants.

My father had been a keen Freemason and arrangements were made for Jane and me to go to the Royal Masonic Schools in Hertfordshire, Jane to Rickmansworth and me to Bushey. And so we returned to Tilbury on April 17 1956, travelling on a Bibby Line ship, the *S.S. Leicestershire*, on which I celebrated my 12th birthday.

My mother's childhood was very different from mine: brought up by a nanny, she and her sister saw her parents briefly once or twice a day and had their meals with 'Nan' in the nursery until she was 15 years old.

My children's childhoods have also been different from mine: living at home in Belfast and attending schools as day pupils.

Did I find my childhood unusual? No. It was the only childhood I knew and so it was perfectly normal. It was the childhood of expatriate children. Following my mother's example, I wrote an account of my early childhood, of which this is an extract, for the benefit of generations yet to come. I wish that some of my ancestors had done the same. Why don't you write an account of your life?

Recently Brigid Keenan wrote an article for the *Spectator*, called 'The lifelong effects of being a child in the British Raj'.¹ Writing of her childhood in India she said: "We Raj babies remember an extraordinary Technicolor world in which monkeys, elephants and camels lived among us and not in zoos, where buffaloes grazed in fields and cows roamed city streets. Mysterious and magical things happened in this world: men dressed in skirts and big bright turbans, and the women who repaired the roads looked like queens or princesses in swathes of vivid cloth."

She quotes Joanna Lumley's childhood experiences in Malaya: "Chanting, tinkling bells, murmuring deep horns and the muezzin calling, it all seemed normal and commonplace." She also quoted Lee Langley, 11 when she came to Britain, who said: "India was fundamental to my thinking and attitude to life; to my sense of colour and smell and awareness of scale...I still remember how small everything seemed when I came 'home', small and grey and cold." I too found an English prep school, with its ordered existence, grey after Ceylon, and somewhat of a straitjacket.

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FROM WRITING FOR FAMILY TO PUBLISHING WORLDWIDE:

By: Helen Parker-Drabble

"Why it is important to share your family history"

The story of your family has value:

- It is a powerful antidote against adverse life experiences. It shows you too can overcome disaster and survive tough times.ⁱ
- Children with a strong sense of their ancestors are more self-confident.ⁱⁱ
- Sharing stories promotes bonding and helps adolescents develop a sense of identity.ⁱⁱⁱ

¹ <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-lifelong-effects-of-being-a-child-in-the-british-raj> *Spectator* issue: 27 March 2021

- Family histories can help determine, and challenge, the effect of inheritable characteristics on health.

The pitfalls and joy of saving family history for future generations:

My first attempt to share family history with my relatives was a family tree charting my ancestors up to the level of my eighth great-grandparents. Early in the process, I fell into the trap of trusting someone else's research. I discovered they had not proved the ancestral connections in their family tree.^{iv} Even after I managed to print a reliable chart, I found that my family's response to my discoveries was (understandably) lukewarm.

I turned to growing our tree, found new living relatives, and arranged a meeting in the Tank Yard, once home to my maternal grandfather. It was great fun reuniting the different branches of the family in the Bedford Hall, Thorney, 130 years after my granddad's birth. But sharing the larger tree I had printed was not the family's highlight.



From one craftsman to another; a family member explores an heirloom.



New family explores the family tree.

Being able to hold heirlooms they had never seen is what made the event. Touching items that had belonged to our ancestors reinforced the emotional connection with the past. More importantly, it created special memories with a new-found family.

The experience made me realise how little we know about what we have in our own collection. Now I collate a digital record of all the heirlooms, diaries, photographs, newspaper clippings, recipes, and personal documents that had survived in our respective collections. I had planned to save these to a USB stick. Then I remembered how the audio and film of me as a young child had been lost.

My challenge was to choose a widely accessible format, while making sure its form would be robust enough to last. Each technology I considered ran the risk it would not be understood or valued. So, I planned another printed photo album.

An advantage of this format is that it can easily include a description of each item, along with any associated stories. But it is the thought of a professionally produced photobook lasting for many more generations that spurred me on.

My next goal was to finish a legacy box for each young person in the immediate family, including:

- ancestor charts
- family trees
- family photo albums
- photo albums of heirlooms and birth, marriage and death records.

Yet, this did not feel enough. Although each of the items was valuable, they did not communicate all I wanted to future generations.

My leisure time soon revolved around treading in my ancestors' footsteps, particularly those of my grandfather, Walter Parker. I pored over archival records and binge-read social history to understand the context of my forebears. My family was now keen to know what I had uncovered, but how much I could say and what would be remembered? So, how to share?

I realised that if family historians want their painstaking discoveries to survive, we have to weave the distinct threads into a narrative – and print the result.

Writing a book – who, me?

Writing your family history can be daunting and, at times, overwhelming. Questions raced through my mind:

- How would I find the time?
- Could I cut the project down to size so it would be possible to complete?
- What would keep me motivated?
- I had not written anything before. How could I make it good enough?
- I am not a qualified researcher or historian, so why would anyone want to read a book I had written?

The answer to my question, 'Where would I find the time?' came from tutor Gill Blanchard on her Writing Your Family History course at the Society of Genealogists in London. Gill told me, during a break: "It is not about finding the time; it's about deciding what to give up." I found it was easy to give up most of my TV viewing for an activity that felt so rewarding.

Gill also showed me how I could cut my project down to size. She explained my progress would be quicker if I concentrated on one person. I chose grandfather Walter Parker and drafted a writing plan.

For motivation, I started telling people I was writing a book, if only to hold myself accountable. I pressed on despite my misgivings and frequent crises of confidence. I decided to behave as if it were possible for me to bring a book into the world. When I was ill, exhausted, or despaired of finishing, I pictured someone reading my book 200 years from now.

The challenge of how to make my writing polished enough to publish, ran alongside the whole endeavour. Feeling confident my work stood up to historical scrutiny was the hardest hurdle to overcome. But the solution to both these problems turned out to be easy: I discovered that, to go from writing for family to worldwide publication, I needed a team behind me.

You are not alone – building a team

Looking back, I realise I was as methodical about putting my team together as I was in my research. I considered my doubts and questions and, over time, sought out people who could help me.

Long before I had a first draft, I started criticising everything I wrote. I stalled. Rather than give up, I found a writing coach and editor, Vrinda Pendred, whose encouragement helped me through the inevitable setbacks. When I could not see a way forward, Vrinda sensitively shone a light on my work and inspired me to take my writing to the next level.

An epiphany led me to combine my counselling background and interest in mental health with my family history research. I considered what my grandfather could have inherited from his ancestors, and a psychological inheritance unraveled, revealing intergenerational anxiety, trauma, loss, alcoholism, and depression, common to many families. I had discovered my voice and the overarching theme of my work.

Overcoming doubt

As I came to the end of my fifth draft, I felt the manuscript was still not finished.

Doubt in my ability, never far away, returned. I questioned whether I had written a book only I could enjoy. Unfairly, I shared it with trusted friends, but I failed to ask for feedback from people interested in family history. Finally, I bounced my ideas off fellow enthusiasts and was delighted at how responsive they were to my blend of family history and psychological research. Dare I believe my book could find a wider audience than family?

I asked myself what would give me the courage to seek a publisher. Although I am an enthusiastic independent scholar, I do not have any qualifications in history or

research. So, I looked for a professional. I added a historical consultant to my team. Dr George Regkhoukos was enormously patient and encouraging. He also:

- gave me a historical perspective
- helped me focus my research
- pointed out gaps in my thinking
- referred me to research I had overlooked.

Armed with hard-earned confidence and a draft I could be proud of, I was now ready to seek a publisher.

From writing for family to publishing worldwide

When seeking a publisher, my first considerations were: would my writing find an audience and would a traditional publisher see the value in such a niche form of writing?

I found out that conventional publishers sold, on average, about 5 million adult, non-fiction print books in the United States *per week* during October and November of 2019, in the run-up to Christmas. The average traditionally published, non-fiction book sells 250-300 copies in the first year and 3000 in the book's lifetime.

Could a publisher help readers find my book? Maybe. But publishers expect authors to identify and bring their readership and undertake a lot of the marketing themselves. In the old-style publishing world, a book is usually given a press release, inserted into a brochure, and newsletter, and it then declines in sales.

The more research I did, the more I believed publishing independently would work best for me. I came to see traditional publishing as the vanity route. At best, it could reassure me that what I had created was good enough – but isn't it the reader who decides that?

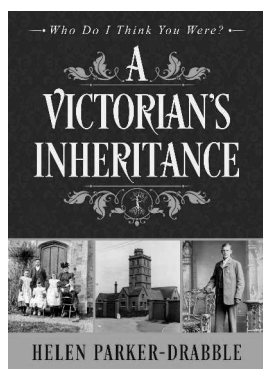
I wish I had come across the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi) at the beginning of my journey. ALLi is an affordable, professional business membership organisation for self-publishing authors (nothing to do with vanity publishing). One of the significant points ALLi makes is that, as an author, you do not need to become a specialist in every field of publishing. Instead of being uncertain, you can plug into essential, trusted advice, supportive guidance, and a range of resources that would be near impossible, and time-consuming, to create for oneself. I added more people to my team: a book-cover designer, a proofreader and an interior book designer.

As an independent author, you can seek out worldwide opportunities in print, podcast, blog, radio, audio, and eBook over your lifetime because you can keep intellectual property rights. (Top tip: according to copyright law, your heirs could

benefit 70 years after your death – another legacy.) You also know the price each book sells at, where these sales come from, and in what format. As a bonus, when it comes to your next book, you can tailor your marketing to what you have learned from your previous publication.

Once I made my decision to stay independent, I looked at two different methods of publishing: print-on-demand, where a distributor prints a book when an order is received, and e-publishing. Here I was fortunate. The consultant historian I was working with was won over by my book and started developing a software package that would make my digital family history shine. The print version was published in 2021.

It's been a long journey, but family history must be shared. I hope this article will encourage you to bring your own painstaking research to life. Whatever form your family history takes, I hope you will join me on the thrilling ride from writing family history to publication, leaving behind a unique legacy.



If you would like to read the first two chapters of *A Victorian's Inheritance* visit <http://helenparkerdrabble.com/>, scroll down, and click the button 'Your two FREE chapters are waiting'.

If you have any questions about my journey please get in touch at: helen@helenparkerdrabble.com

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The complete eBook can be purchased at [Amazon](#). You can also request *A Victorian's Inheritance* from your local library.

Interested in the Alliance of Independent Authors? For more information, click Helen's affiliate link [here](#).

Highly recommended

Vrinda Pendred is an author, publisher, writing coach, editor and proofreader. She holds a BA Hons in English with Creative Writing, a proofreading qualification with the [Publishing Training Centre](#), and has completed work experience with Random House. Find out more [here](https://vrindapendred.com/about-vrinda/): <https://vrindapendred.com/about-vrinda/>

Gill Blanchard is an author, professional genealogist, local historian, and a qualified tutor with an MA in Biography and Creative Non-Fiction. Find out more about Gill [here](https://www.writingyourfamilyhistory.co.uk/): <https://www.writingyourfamilyhistory.co.uk/>



Dr George Regkoukos is a historical consultant who can help you take your project from planning to publishing with a variety of packages. Gift vouchers are available. George also leads a team of publisher and e-learning software developers, who offer their cutting-edge service to other family historians interested in creating beautiful, engaging, interactive eBooks. Visit [here](#) for more information, or search for 'Dr George Regkoukos'.

ⁱ Copeland, L. (2020). *Genealogy Provides the Strength to Persevere: Knowing your family's past can help you get through a crisis*. [online] Available at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-lost-family/202004/genealogy-provides-the-strength-persevere> [Accessed April 2020]

ⁱⁱ Hardy, R. (2017). *Why children need to know their family history*.

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ⁱⁱⁱ Duke, M.P., Lazarus, A., & Fivush, R. (2008). Knowledge of family history as a clinically useful index of psychological well-being and prognosis: A brief report. *Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 45, 268-272

^{iv} Findmypast - Genealogy, Ancestry, History blog from Findmypast. 2020. *6 Common Genealogy Mistakes (And How To Avoid Them)*. [online] Available at: <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/blog/getting-started/the-mistakes> [Accessed April 2020]

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The Lawrence Royal Military School, Sanawar

By: Malcolm Bradbury

My family has a strong connection with both the Lawrence Military Asylum and the Lawrence Royal Military School, as I described in Journal No. 46. But the history of the school is interesting in itself. In April 1847, the Lawrence Military Asylum (LMA), brainchild of Brigadier-General Sir Henry Lawrence and his wife, Honoria, opened its doors to 14 boys and girls as its pupils, or wards, for the first time.

Sir Henry had for many years been concerned with the conditions of orphans of European soldiers of the East India Company and the British Army in India.

He relentlessly petitioned the Government of India for donations and subscriptions to build an asylum to provide for them. It was a long, hard fight, but in March 1846, the Governor-General Lord Hardinge, promised that "all would be given". Today, the school still thrives and is one of the oldest, co-educational schools in the world. It was run along military lines right from the start.

The revised rules of 1856 stated its aims:

"The object of the Institution is to provide an asylum from the debilitating effects of a tropical climate and the demoralising influence of barrack life, wherein they may obtain the benefits of a bracing climate, a healthy moral atmosphere and a plain, useful and above all religious education, adapted to fit them for employment

suitied to their position in life, and with devine (sic) blessing to make them consistent Christians and intelligent and useful members of Society.”

Boy non-commissioned officers were appointed, and the children were divided into companies, the older pupils having charge of their younger comrades. Five companies made a division, superintended by a school sergeant. The girls were organised in the same manner, with head orderlies and assistant orderlies, all under the watchful eye of matron.

They were marched down the hill to school, preceded by fifes and drums and led by a school sergeant to the schoolroom doors. Teachers stood ready to receive their charges and seat them quietly. After school, they returned to barracks in the same manner.

Discipline was rigid and masters had the power to inflict corporal punishment, though caning was reserved for severe cases of obstinacy. Between one and 12 cuts to the hand were allowed. Stealing or indecency merited flogging, which was administered by the school sergeant in the presence of the principal and in front of all boys, convened at a special parade.

The uniform was in the style of the artillery, in honour of the school's founder. Boys wore a blue coat with red facings, grey facings, grey trousers and a leather helmet. Later, modifications were made and a khaki jacket and trousers were worn with puttees and a slouch hat, as worn by Australian troops. Girls wore a jacket of drab, edged with scarlet and white bonnets and tippets. Once in uniform, the boys were required to salute teachers and non-commissioned officers and the salute was to be returned.

As for diet and daily routines, they were regular and precise. Each child was allowed a daily ration:

- meat 8 ounces,
- bread 16 ounces,
- rice and vegetables 8 ounces,
- milk 16 ounces,
- pudding extra, twice a week.

In 1853, the Governor-General Lord Dalhousie, paid two visits and was so impressed that he presented the asylum with colours: the King's Colour with Union flag and the asylum colour with a flag in yellow silk, embroidered by Honoria Lawrence herself. It consisted of the Union flag in canton with a wreath of oak leaves and acorns at its centre, mingled with the national emblems of England, Scotland and Ireland – and the words 'Lawrence Asylum' in gold thread.

The colours, duly consecrated, were presented by Colonel Mountain C.B., Adjutant-General of Her Majesty's Forces in India, in a special ceremony on Founder's Day at Sanawar in June 1853, with full military honours. The school records contain a full account of the ceremony:

"The colours were consecrated and then escorted to the front line, and received with a General Salute, the band playing. The boys then formed in open column and marched past in slow and then in quick time....after which they gave three cheers to Her Majesty The Queen, three cheers for the Founder and three cheers for Lady Gomm, wife of the Commander-in-Chief and Colonel Mountain."

In WW1, the LMA contributed valiantly to the war effort, sending boys to serve at the Front with a good number of girls as nurses, also. Twenty-five boys were killed and many more wounded or invalided. After the war, the King-Emperor was "graciously pleased to approve of the institution being designated as The Lawrence Royal Military School." The principal at that time, the Rev. G.O. Barne, a forward-looking leader, oversaw the changes. On his watch, the LMA became known as a school, rather than as an asylum.

Companies were abolished in favour of a house and prefectorial system, which was recognised as the backbone of the British public school. Boarding houses run by masters and prefects were introduced. Houses were named after the heroes of Imperial India and regular field-games became a compulsory part of each school day. Now, the Lawrence Asylum was acknowledged as a Royal School of the Empire by royal charter and recognised by the Universities of Cambridge and London.

Nonetheless, it still maintained its military ethos, with pupils wearing uniform and subject to regular drills. And the band was still at the heart of the school, led by a bandmaster seconded from the army.

The old school colours were in poor condition by then, so amid great pomp and ceremony, the Prince of Wales presented new colours at a parade in Dehra Dun in March 1922. Pupils of the school were represented, with each boy wearing his father's regimental crest in his second buttonhole. The new regimental (school) colours on this occasion were supplied by Sir Alexander Lawrence, in memory of his grandfather, the school's founder.

The colours bore the Lawrence coat-of-arms and crest, worked in silk – and the school's now-famous motto, said to be the last words uttered by Sir Henry Lawrence himself:

'Never Give In'.

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MEMORIES OF OOTY:

By: Tony Mortlock

Following on from the previous journal, Tony's reminiscences continue here...

The move from Bangalore to Ooty marked a distinct change in my life which, until then, had been passed on the Plains in the heat, either dry or humid, and relatively small gradients. Now we lived at an altitude at which one was aware of the coolness, comparative lack of oxygen, and during the monsoon (the rainy season) the extremes of rainfall.

For visitors from the Plains the freshness of the climate was irresistibly invigorating and many were tempted, on the first day, to play a stiff round of golf or game of tennis, which almost certainly led to dizziness from altitude sickness and one or more days of inactivity.

Once acclimatised to the altitude and thin atmosphere, we residents had no difficulties, though it was the medical opinion of the time that lungs and hearts should be given a break by passing some time at sea level each year. My formal schooling had started at the British Army cantonment school in Bangalore but at Ooty there was no cantonment school, so it was decided that I should become a pupil at the Church of England primary school, St Hilda's, situated above Ooty, on a hill some distance from St Stephen's church.

Before starting school, I was taken on a visit to the school. Most of the pupils were boarders, from 5 or 6 years of age which, in India, because of the length of the journeys between home and school (not infrequently 2 or 3 days and nights by train) and also the better climate there, was quite normal. Term had not yet started, so the school, other than one girl of my own age called Dawn, was deserted. Having been introduced we were told to go and play together.

Certainly, such an instruction to a boy of my age, when a girl is involved, induces immediate mental paralysis and Dawn had a streaming cold, so I had no wish "to play together" so we stood about silently looking at each other. I do not recall exactly how our conversation started, but Dawn said, either: "if you'll show me what you've got I'll show you what I've got" or it may have been "I'll show you what I've got but you must show me what you've got".

Even despite my naivety I was in no doubt as to what Dawn had wanted. As have mentioned before, I am exceedingly curious so I need not elaborate other than to say that, for me, the scene was a great disappointment. I do not know if it was for Dawn, because it was never mentioned again. But I was very relieved not to catch Dawn's cold!

My journeys between home and school at Bangalore had been by bicycle but the roads around Ooty were mostly steep and unsurfaced making them unsuitable for cycling. While at Bangalore I had continued my riding exploits, no longer by donkey with the assistance of my basket saddle, but by pony, and had become quite a competent rider. It was, therefore, decided that I should travel to and from school on horse-back or rather pony-back.

After breakfast the pony was brought to Claremont, the vicarage where we lived, by the chokra (servant), Joseph. I would mount, followed by Joseph on foot, and take a short cut behind St Stephen's cemetery, up a very steep path to join the road to St Hilda's.

During lessons, the pony was grazed by Joseph (about the same age as me) who would return to the school for me to ride home. The distance from St Hilda's to Claremont is about five miles but we moved at only walking pace so there was plenty of time for Joseph (who, like many servants in the employ of British residents in South India, spoke a modicum of English) and me to talk. It was not long before Joseph asked if I liked smoking bidis. I knew what he was asking (bidis are small hand-rolled shredded tobacco leaf cigarettes exceedingly popular with the poorer working classes throughout India and southeast Asia).

Unsurprisingly, I had never tried a bidi so Joseph told me that if I gave him a few paise (the equivalent of a few farthings) he would buy some bidis for me to try.

From that day forwards a common evening scene was of two small boys, one riding and the other on foot, heading down the hill towards St Stephen's wreathed in clouds of blue tobacco smoke. Smoking was a habit which, at that time, was probably universal among boys which continued until I left India in December 1946 when I resolved to mark the occasion by never smoking again. I kept the resolution ever since.

One morning, we children were woken by Ayah, in some state of excitement, to announce that breakfast would be different from, and later than, usual. She explained that the kitchen and all the back part of the house had been demolished due to a landslide caused by heavy rain during the preceding days. How it was achieved I have no idea but it was not long before our breakfast arrived and soon life returned to normal. Other than that, for the next few weeks, the daylight hours were filled with work people clearing away the remains of the kitchen and back premises. I say 'work people' because the greater proportion was female carrying on their heads large metal basins of soil and stone filled by men wielding tools, somewhat like large draw-hoes, which are the commonest tools in southeast India for tilling the soil, digging, excavating, or any other operation for which, in the West, a spade or shovel would be used. These instruments are called Mamtees. Only women carried away the earth and stones and only men used the tools.

The walls were rebuilt with earthen ware bricks held together with mud mortar incorporating chopped straw, which was mixed by the workers treading it in with bare feet.

The roof timbers were cut from tree trunks using long two-man handsaws, one above and the other below, the tree trunks laid on frames built over a deep pit dug especially for the purpose.

Watching the sawyers was a favorite occupation of mine but I always felt sorry for the lower man because of the sawdust which constantly fell on his face and up his nose and into his eyes. I cannot recall the names of the servants, though I frequently shared their curry, so they were all good friends.

My special friend was the 'hot water man' called the Thani Kutch, whose function was to keep the cold-water barrels in the bathrooms filled and, out of the smoky darkness of a little shed in the garden, the hot bath water heated in steel barrels over an open fire. The house had no plumbing, so cold water was ladled out of the barrel or hot water, carried in buckets by the Thani Kutch, was tipped into the tin bath.

There was quite a busy social life at Ooty as it was a favorite area which had been chosen by many people for their retirement. They wished to continue the lifestyle to which they had become accustomed; domestic servants were much less costly than in Europe, and the climate was considered to be among the best in the world. One such couple were great friends of my parents.

The custom was that all such adults were known as uncle or auntie and addressed as such. The hobby of one was cattle-breeding which, as a result, involved their ownership of several young bull calves. After lunch, Auntie asked if I would like to try riding a calf, to which I enthusiastically agreed so we went out to the paddock. While the calf was held by Aunty with a halter, I mounted and was handed the rope. Immediately, the world underneath me went mad and, although accustomed to riding more conventionally, I doubt if I remained mounted for more than a few seconds, which caused a great deal of mirth.

Life continued like this until it was announced that war had been declared. A short while later Daddy announced that he had realised there was a shortage of English-style boarding prep schools for boys who, at that stage of their lives, would normally go to England for their education, so he proposed to fill the gap by starting one. This was the start of a new chapter of my memoir.

THE INDIAN SALTPETRE INDUSTRY:

By: Ed Storey

In the mid-18th century, the masque, *Rule, Britannia!* included the line: “Britannia, rule the waves”. For the line to be in verse, the order of the words was changed. Ruling the waves required ships, with guns, with ammunition.

At the time, gunpowder was the propellant and was about 75% saltpetre (also called nitre, saltpeter, or potassium nitrate, among other names). Even today, explosive compounds are mostly made of chemicals containing nitrogen. As gunpowder came into use in Europe, local sources were used for the saltpetre, with difficulty supplying the required volume. Germany, France, and Britain all had special regulations to obtain saltpetre.

In time, India displaced all other sources and became the principal supplier of the important gunpowder constituent, both for Britain and many other countries. Here is a little about how India met this need.

Saltpetre had few uses until the advent of firearms and the need for gunpowder. India seems to have been producing saltpetre in small quantities before the 1599 EIC charter. The Dutch were apparently obtaining saltpetre from India before the British and used it as a ballast in ships instead of the useless stones.

First, saltpetre is very soluble in water and is generally not found in veins in the earth, except in some caves. Saltpetre seems to be formed by the bacterial action of organic material such as manure (a source of nitrogen), and potassium bearing soil; containing feldspar or other minerals. These are two elements that are important for the growth of green plants. As early as 1842, there were published comparisons in England of the benefits of saltpetre to promote the growth of crops, as compared to manure¹.

When initially required in Europe, scrapings from manure piles were refined to produce the required concentrations. Still, there never seemed to be enough. The details of the start of refining in India seem to have been lost to history, but the combination of people and animals with the right elements in the soil resulted in India becoming a primary source for England. Low labour costs were also very important.

Fortunately, a lot was written about the production, refining, taxation and export control. Here we will briefly look at saltpetre, as produced in India, primarily Bengal. We will begin with a summary of the refining process. This was generally a 2-step operation. The initial processing to about 70% purity was widespread, in part to minimize the transportation costs of potential soil, as many kg of soil were required to refine one kg of saltpetre. The raw saltpetre was then transported to factories in places like Calcutta where it was further purified.

We will try to avoid the chemical aspects of the refining; preferring to focus on the social issues that might be of more interest to genealogists. Many of the references are sources with more details of the chemistry.

There was a caste of laborers, called *Nunia*, who collected the soil from villages and animal pens and who performed the initial refining². Nunia would construct earthen receptacles of varying number and shapes, depending on the size of their operations. Rocks or bricks would be placed in the chambers and mats of local plants would be placed on these, to act as filters or separators. The plants might be a combination of bamboo, reeds or other grass types.

Rocks, pottery, and other materials that would not contribute saltpetre were removed from the soil and it would be carefully placed and trod upon to tamp it down. The layers were built up, with treading in between. Wood ash (which contains potassium) was often added, although the exact procedure would vary by location. Water was then added and allowed to slowly percolate thru the mixture in the receptacle, called a *kuria*. Wood ash was used in the Punjab, but not in Bengal, as there was ample potassium in the soil.

The initial fluid that is collected from the outlet of the *kuria* would often contain the highest concentration of the saltpetre; gradually becoming more dilute as more water is added. The Nunia would need to judge when to stop collecting because of the effort required to concentrate it by boiling. The remaining earth would be piled nearby. Perhaps with the addition of new village soil, ashes and the dilute water of the *kuria*. The exact procedure was often varied by the Nunia. The fluid thus collected was then concentrated, either by fire or sun. The liquid collected later in the process was often used in a subsequent batch.

The concentration of saltpetre, as well as other salts in the soil varied widely across India. In Bengal, for example, the district of Tirhút was regarded as a highly productive area³. Saran and Champaran were also productive districts. In all, there were over 200,000 square miles of promising areas for saltpetre production. Generally, the soils contain other salts, regarded as contaminants, as they can be difficult to separate from the saltpetre. Each salt has a solubility in water that varies with temperature. The Nunia needed to manage the heating and cooling of the liquid to separate out the undesirable salts.

Since saltpetre was required to make gunpowder, which was used for military purposes, the crown established regulations as to quantity and price for the HEIC⁴.

The annual quantity to be produced, the price (which differed depending on war or peace), and the container details were all defined. Because the quantities produced depended on many local workers, transportation across India, the weather, and shipment by sea, it must have been difficult to meet the requirement every year.

In 1892, there were 543 licensed refineries⁵ and over 44,000 works, producing crude saltpetre. Over 27,000 tons of refined product were shipped to Europe. Since workers were hired to build facilities, transport everything from raw soil and ashes to crude and refined saltpetre and manage the process; it was of considerable economic benefit across the country.

Comparing the amounts of refined product with the required number of works we can see that the average work produced under a metric ton of finished saltpetre.

While a work was a crude operation, utilizing local labour and minimal scientific equipment, the refinery needed a good understanding of the solubility vs temperature of both saltpetre and the undesirable salts in the crude material. Each refinery seemed to have had at least one European technical manager and possibly more. In both cases the workers needed to be able to recognize crystals of the different compounds by their shape. Accurate thermometers, hygrometers and other equipment would have had to been understood and utilized correctly.

The refining process involved heating a solution of water until it contained maximum dissolved saltpetre, along with impurities. As the solution was cooled, salts would crystalize out.

A combination of understanding the solubility characteristics and the shapes of the salt crystals enabled the refiners to obtain the optimum purity.

Even at the works, skills were needed. Saltpetre formation required sources of both nitrogen and potassium. Each region had different soils and the people in charge had to discern the correct combination of ingredients to put into the mix. Soil was tested by taste. The skills were passed down to younger employees by those with the experience.

Saltpetre is quite hygroscopic. That is, it is prone to gain moisture from the air. Since India has warm, moist areas, sun dried bricks made with soil containing saltpetre were a problem. They would degrade quickly⁶, resulting in the deterioration of the structure. Thus, the coming of the demand for saltpetre turned a problem into a source of employment.

Saltpetre was a more dangerous compound to transport than most other materials. Whilst it was not flammable directly, it is an oxidizer, and therefore would accelerate any combustion that occurred. When saltpetre was close to anything flammable, such as rice, there was always a danger. Any fire that started could quickly become very intense and unquenchable with water.

The 1851 *Indian News and Chronicle*⁷ has an account of an Indiaman quickly burning to the waterline, although this was not the only incident.

Also in 1851 the barque Ariel burned⁸. It appears that a bundle of oakum, a fairly flammable material, was deliberately set on fire in the forward hold. There was a strong effort to extinguish the fire until it reached some saltpetre low in the hold. At that time, the fire became so intense that the ship was lost. Perhaps those who set the fire did not realize that there was saltpetre in the hold.

Through the British Library website, there is an account of a fire at the East India Company's saltpetre storage facility at Ratcliffe in Shadwell, some distance, at the time, from the city centre. Unfortunately, the location was still not far enough from careless neighbours. When a barge-maker's pitch kettle started a fire, the flames spread beyond the company's warehouse, and many were left homeless.

A more detailed account may be found by simply entering "Saltpetre Fire London" into Google and selecting the response from the BL. There are HEIC facilities still to be seen in Shadwell.

The names of native saltpetre workers would be tough to find. Europeans, perhaps owners or managers of refineries might be found in the directories in Almanacs. As mentioned above, Bengal almanacs would be more likely to have people in the industry than Madras, for example. It is likely there were managers working for others in the business. Documents by those in charge have occasionally survived and provide glimpses into some of those involved.

There were also refiners located in London; probably to complete the refining process, as impurities could creep in during transport. These people often had a strong connection to India and might have been returnees from a time in the field. If you have ancestors, you are tracing, either backward or forward, perhaps you might find a connection between those in London and those on the continent.

When researching ancestors, most people will look for possible connections after finding the ancestor, rather than seek the saltpetre industry and then the ancestor. By learning more about what work our ancestors might have done, we can gain a better understanding of their lives. Fortunately, the FIBIS website has information about finding directories online for Bengal and Calcutta, the prime areas for producing saltpetre. There is a nearby chart that shows some examples.

Commonly, directories list people, their residence, and their profession. As discussed, there are several professions involved with the production, refining, transport, and regulation of the gunpowder ingredient. Directories were privately produced, and it is not uncommon to find more than one printer for a single city.

Competing directories from similar years might provide a more complete picture of an ancestor than a single issue. Reports of fires or other incidents often include the names of those in charge.

English directories, such as those of London, similarly list people in the saltpetre business. The University of Leicester has many directories online. The names of business and locations are typically included. Keep in mind that generally searches are limited by the character recognition software used, for any older directory. It is wise to check for names in any alphabetical lists instead of just relying on character recognition.

This has been a glimpse of the saltpetre activities in India. Since the solubility characteristics dictated that saltpetre was widely disbursed and required a lot of human effort to obtain a concentrated product, there were a lot of workers of all types in the business, especially in Bengal. By understanding the industry, a little, it might help to find ancestors who worked there.

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A SNAPSHOT OF THREE BRADBURY FAMILY GENERATIONS IN INDIA

By: Malcolm Bradbury

My great grandfather, Sub-conductor C.G. Bradbury, was a clerk in the Adjutant-General's Branch, GHQ India, Simla. For reasons unknown, he left my great grandmother and her two young children in Simla in 1883 and returned to England alone, where he died on 26 March 1890 at 50 years of age.

On 10 October 1884, my grandfather, Wilfred Edwin Bradbury, and his baby brother, George Alwyn Bradbury, were admitted to the Lawrence Military Asylum, as wards. He was four years and ten months old and his brother just eighteen months. Tragically, just three months later, George was drowned. It was 28 January, 1885, and the family story is that he was found dead in his bath while the amah had left the room.

My grandfather was more fortunate and remained at the school until he was 13 years old, then went on to La Martiniere College in Lucknow, where he enlisted in the Cameronian Rifles at 18 years of age.

La Martiniere is still the only college in the world to have been awarded a Battle Honour – given for the Defence of Lucknow 1857. It marks the bravery of its principal, masters and students who formed a company to assist in the defence of the Residency at Lucknow for five months during the Indian Mutiny and is proudly borne on the school's colours to this day. The college is the alma mater of my grandfather, Capt. W.E. Bradbury (1892-1898).

In 1902, then a Lance-Corporal, Wilfred joined the Thomason College of Civil Engineering in Roorkee, where he qualified as a sub-engineer the following year.

By 1904, he had been promoted to Sergeant and transferred to the Military Works Service on the British unattached list (BUL).

The following year, in Jubbulpore, he was an overseer in the Military Works Service when he married my grandmother. Children quickly followed: four sons and two daughters. After being commissioned in the Royal Engineers, Wilfred was sent to Mesopotamia (Iraq) during the First World War. He returned safely to his family at the end of it all but died in August 1922 at the BMH in Wellington, India.

By then a Captain, 43, and serving as ACRE Nilgiri Hills, his death was attributed to the arduous climate and conditions endured while in Mesopotamia. He was survived by four sons, including my father, who were all attending the Jesuit public school, St. Joseph's College in Darjeeling, which is still going strong today.

But my grandmother struggled after her husband's death and could no longer afford the school fees. So they returned to Wellington and joined the Garrison school there. A few months later, there was some news; the three boys, together with a younger brother, heard that they were to be admitted to The Lawrence Royal Military School at Sanawar, as wards. They were joined a few years later by their younger sister and later still by a stepsister. My father played the euphonium in the school band and his brother, my Uncle George, was the bass drummer.

Two years later, my father, Frederick Bradbury, only 16 years of age, enlisted in the Royal Air Force, together with five other boys. It was proudly announced in the regular L.R.M.S. ORDERS at school on December 19, 1924 - and every last detail of their forthcoming adventure was organised, in true military fashion:

1. "No.773. ENLISTMENT – The under-mentioned boys who have been accepted for enlistment into the Royal Air Force, will leave Sanawar for Bombay at 16.30hrs on Sunday, December 21st.
2. Captain C.H. Adams, AEC, has kindly promised to meet them at Delhi on the morning of December 22nd and give them breakfast.
3. On arrival at Bombay on December 23rd they will immediately report themselves to the Embarkation Commandant at the Docks, and will go on board the *H.T. Neuralia* the same night.
4. During the voyage, they will be under the charge of the Chaplain of the Troopship (Rev. W. N. O'Neill)
5. RE 1/8- per head will be provided for messing on the voyage.

6. On arrival in England, the boys will be met by a representative of the Royal Air Force who will give the instructions.

7. The following kit will be taken by each boy:

- ⇒ Greatcoat 1,
- ⇒ Serge coats 3,
- ⇒ Socks 4 pairs,
- ⇒ Braces 1 pair,
- ⇒ Stockings 4 pairs,
- ⇒ Kit bag,
- ⇒ Jersey 1,
- ⇒ Shirts funnel 1,
- ⇒ bixts [sic] khaki 4,
- ⇒ Vests 4,
- ⇒ Sleeping suits 3,
- ⇒ Underpants 4,
- ⇒ shoes 1 pair,
- ⇒ Hat 1,
- ⇒ Cap 1,
- ⇒ Belt 1,

8. Names:

- T. Dobriskey,
- G. Whitbread,
- H. Bradbury,
- C. James,
- Soowarl,
- H. Rarvey (Harvey?) aevo,

D. BARNE, M.A., C.I.E., O.B.E., V.D., PRINCIPAL.”

The boys travelled by troopship to England. Frederick didn’t know a single soul in the land, but he decided to train as an Aero Fitter at the RAF Apprentice School at Halton. When training was completed, he served king and country for 22 years and retired as a Warrant Officer Technical. His successful career in life was a tribute not only to his own hard work and strong character but, as many former pupils will attest, to the remarkable grounding and training so diligently and rigorously provided by The Lawrence Royal Military School at Sanawar.

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BOOK REVIEW (*Wally and Zizza's Amazing Journey* by Louis Vanrenen)

By: Margaret Murray

(pub.Matador 2018) pp240, Paperback £10.99, ISBN 978 1789014 716

Louis Vanrenen was born in Salisbury, Rhodesia in 1951, and spent his early years on a tobacco farm there. His parents arrived in Africa in 1947, having spent the first decade of their married life in India, though his father's family were old-time British Indians and had a long and interesting history there.

"In around 1781, a young cadet, Jacob Van Renen, boarded a ship, the *Osterly*, from Cape Town, South Africa, and headed for a new life in India. He landed in Calcutta and joined the British Indian army, rising to the rank of Brigadier General and serving all over India in the cavalry. The Vanrenen men, including my father, became officers in distinguished cavalry regiments and patrolled all corners of India for over 200 years. My father, a crack polo player, would serve as a captain in the Central India Horse. His father, Denys Henry, served in the Remounts. Many were buried in obscure graves, including Afghanistan.

The family became closely connected with Afghanistan after my great uncle, Thomas Hungerford Holdich, married Ada Vanrenen. He was in charge of the Border Commission and led expeditions to determine the borders of India and Afghanistan. This was extremely dangerous and difficult work which was highly praised by the Royal Geographic Society. Thomas retired to England eventually and became a director of that esteemed society himself.

My father also served in the border regions. His father, Denys Henry, was a skilled horseman and pioneered an estate – the famed *Renala* – near Lahore, which bred many of the horses destined for the British Cavalry along the dangerous borderlands. Even after retirement, he was a successful horse-breeder. His horses won races all over India. When Edward VII toured India in 1927, he rode a Vanrenen horse to victory in one race. After Independence, *Renala* was taken over by my Aunt Hazel. She was a tough customer who was supported by faithful Pakistani friends and managed to hold onto the estate until her final years, despite constant battles with the Pakistan authorities."

Louis Vanrenen is now an American living in Massachusetts. He retraced his Indian background and wrote the book in honour and celebration of his parents' fascinating story and the history of his wider family. It is a lively account of some extraordinary folk down the generations and spans four continents, through war and peace.

There is something here for everyone.

The book is beautifully written, illustrated and presented. The reader lives through *Renala* in winter, Gulmarg in summer and a parade of the various faces of India. The eternal lure of the East is here in abundance: romance, dreams, atmosphere, exotic sights and smells. It is available online from Matador

EVENTS & MEETINGS:

We are pleased to announce our Annual OPEN Meeting:

Date: 22nd October 2022.

Venue: The Union Jack Club, (Opposite Waterloo Station)
Sandell Street,
London
SE1 8UJ

PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY:

10.30 - 12.00: FIBIS Experts available to answer members' questions.

12.00 - 1.00: Lunch break

1.15 - 2.15: Dear Daisy – Correspondence & Memorabilia of

Lady Isabella Couchman

Bob Hindley's presentation is rooted in a fascination with the British Raj which began years ago, after hearing the BBC Radio 4 series *Plain Tales of the Raj*. Later, he purchased a long and fascinating letter from eBay, which had been sent by Francis Couchman in Calcutta to his wife, Isabella, in England. Bob was hooked - and his quest to discover more about this family began in earnest.

2.15- 3.00: Tea break

3.00 - 4.00: 'A Walk on the (Slightly) Wild Side'

Geraldine Charles, one of FIBIS' founder-members and now a hard-working, long-serving trustee, invites you to join her on a second walk on the slightly wild side of her research meanderings. It follows the very successful first "walk" which was enjoyed at last year's FIBIS conference. Who knows what we may find on this one. Bring your own chota-pegs and tiffin!

****** Please register your intention to attend the Open Meeting via the FIBIS website. Names are required in advance by the Union Jack Club, for security reasons. Numbers attending may also have to be limited, so please book early.

In view of the current rail situation at the time of writing, please check FIBIS website for latest updates before you travel.

ALL WELCOME! ADMISSION FREE!

- Donations for the second-hand book table welcomed.

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, £18 for elsewhere abroad or £12 for worldwide paperless membership. Cheques (in Sterling) should be made out to 'FIBIS' and sent to the Membership Secretary (address above).

Subscriptions can be paid/renewed online with a debit or credit card or by PayPal at <http://www.new.fibis.org/store>. For special arrangements for payment by Australian members: see below.

AUSTRALIA:

For liaison with FIBIS members and with India-related family history activities in Australia 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' and the RootsWeb India List, as well as using online searchable databases. There are also facilities for accessing LDS films via local Family History Centres. 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: Sandra Seager (email: transcriptions@fibis.org).

