



# 50

# CHOWKIDAR

Volume 9 Number 5 Spring 2002  
Editor: Dr. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones

## British Association For Cemeteries In South Asia (BACSA)

### President

The Rt. Hon. Lord Rees, QC

### Vice Presidents

Mr. V. E. Davies, OBE

Mr. R. B. Magor

### Council

Sir Nicholas Barrington, KCMG, CVO

Sir William Benyon

Sir Charles Frossard, KBE

Mr. P. A. Leggatt, MBE

Mr. G. Shaw

The Rt. Hon. The Viscount Slim, OBE

Mr. H. M. Stokes

Lady Wade-Gery

### Honorary Secretary

Mr. T. C. Wilkinson, MBE

76° Chartfield Avenue

London. SW15 6HQ

### Membership Secretary & Deputy Treasurer

Mrs. Rosemarie Wilkinson

### Chairman

Mr. A. J. Farrington

### Executive Committee

Mr. D. H. Barnard

Dr. R. J. Bingle

Mr. H. C. Q. Brownrigg

Mr. C. Carnaghan

Dr. W. F. Crawley

Mr. D. H. Doble

Miss S. M. Farrington

Mrs. M. Hywel-Jones

Mr. D. W. Mahoney, FRICS

Mr. M. J. Murphy

Mr. J. A. Payne

Mr. J. Wall (Press and Publicity Officer)

Miss C. M. Whitehead

Mr. M. K. A. Wooller

### Honorary Treasurer

Mr. J. A. Payne

### Editor

Dr. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones

## Notes on BACSA

The Association was formed in October 1976 to bring together people with a concern for the many hundreds of European cemeteries, isolated graves and monuments in South Asia.

There is a steadily growing membership of over 1,900 (2002) drawn from a wide circle of interest- Government; Churches; Services; Business; Museums; Historical & Genealogical Societies. More members are needed to support the rapidly expanding activities of the Association – the setting up of local committees in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Sri Lanka, Malaysia etc., and the building up of a Records archive in the Oriental and India Office Collections in the British Library; and many other projects for the upkeep of historical and architectural monuments.

The enrolment fee and subscription rates are obtainable from the Secretary.



The Association has its own newsletter, *Chowkidar*, which is distributed free to all members twice a year and contains a section for 'Queries' on any matter relating to family history or condition of a relative's grave etc. There are also many other publications both on cemetery surveys and aspects of European social history out East.

**Editor:** Dr. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones 135 Burntwood Lane, London SW17 0AJ

## THE MAHARANA, THE IRISHMAN, AND THE BHIL UPRISING

The beautiful lake city of Udaipur was, before 1947, the capital of the little State of Mewar. It was founded in the last year of the 16th century by the Maharana Udaï Singh and its people and rulers became the epitome of Rajput chivalry. James Tod, then a captain, was the first Political Agent in Mewar between 1818 and 1822, and his magisterial book *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* is still a definitive work. A few later histories of Udaipur have continued the theme of a proud warrior race, defying the intrusions of the Mughals and later, the East India Company. But an inscription in the little cemetery at Udaipur, tucked away in the Muslim quarter (see page 108), together with the Editor's subsequent research, have uncovered a previously unknown episode that paints an unsettling picture of events in the 1880s. Thomas Duncan Heath Lonorgan, an Irishman born in 1844, came to Udaipur 'as the strong man in a travelling circus and was retained by the Maharana Sajjan Singh as Commander in Chief of His Highness' Brigade'. The young Maharana, invested as ruler in 1876, with the approval of the British Government, soon faced a rebellion among the tribal Bhils, which was sparked by land reforms and 'census operations.'

The Bhils are a handsome and independent race of people, maintaining their colourful costumes and even more colourful traditions to the present day. But in 1880 it was reported by a British official that 'there is a great prevalence of crimes of violence owing to the lawless character of the Bheel population and their addiction to drink'. It was considered 'impossible to disarm the Bheels...the only hope is that, as civilisation increases and cultivation improves, these wild tribes will take to more peaceful ways of life'. During the autumn of 1881 there was a Bhil uprising, resulting from 'some unwise conduct on the part of the Native Durbar', and the Viceroy, the Marquess of Ripon, wrote anxiously about the fear of a 'serious general outbreak, which it might be difficult to put down'. With the British defeat in the second Afghan War a very recent humiliation, the last thing the British wanted was trouble in the Rajput states.

The British garrison at Kherwara was threatened and troops ordered up from the Bombay Presidency. The British-raised Meywar Bhil Corps, dressed initially in loin-cloths and armed only with bows and arrows, were considered unlikely to fight against men of their own race. This is where Thomas Lonorgan came in. Elevated to the post of Commander-in-Chief by the Maharana, he suppressed the Bhil uprising successfully, 'but also with severity, and on his return to Udaipur made a triumphal entry, riding in a bullock cart decorated with the heads of his late enemies, up to the palace'. The Political Agent of the day, Surgeon-Major John Proudfoot Stratton, took exception to this cold-blooded proceeding but Lonorgan was eventually allowed to retain his post.

Now given the British concern over this event, and the strictures of Surgeon-Major Stratton, you would be right in thinking that this should all be written up in the political records, and indeed it was. The index of the Political and Secret files in the Oriental & India Office Collections, compiled in 1881, was promising: 'Bheel outbreak in Meywar; Proclamation to Bheels by the Maharana of Oodeypore; Negotiations with Bheels; Settlement of terms of Peace; Terms demanded by Bheels; Agreement with Bheels, Conference to consider measure for future management of Bheels, etc.' but on turning to the relevant hundred or so pages, it was found that they had been neatly removed, probably some time in the late 19th century. Clearly the matter was considered too sensitive even for the Political and Secret files.

Thomas Lonorgan died in Udaipur on 11th July 1889, aged forty-five years, and described as a 'Drill Instructor', a very humble position compared to his previous elevated role. His wife, Mary Lonorgan is buried beside him, and I am almost more interested in her, because she is shown in contemporary records as a 'Medical Practitioner', who signed a death certificate for a European child dying in 1883; as an 'English lady appointed Headmistress of the Girls' School, Udaipur' in 1876 and as Mrs M. Lonorgan, MD, (Doctor of Medicine), medical attendant to the Maharana's zenana in 1888. Given the well-attested attempts to prevent dedicated Victorian women from practising as doctors, how did she attain her qualifications? And even more interesting is her marriage to the Irish 'strong man'. No children are recorded from this unlikely union, but don't, ever, let anyone tell you that cemetery records are 'boring' after reading this extraordinary story.

### THE CHRISTIAN CEMETERY IN KABUL

Afghanistan has been in the news recently and the first British soldiers to enter the country since the second Afghan War of 1878/80 are presently in the capital, Kabul. Ten years ago BACSA received confirmation that British graves from both the first and second Afghan wars still existed in the Christian cemetery in the Bimaru Heights, just outside the city. At that time, the cemetery was under the care of the Italian Fathers and the Italian Embassy, but this arrangement ended when the Embassy was withdrawn. Our most recent report comes from a short article in the newsletter of the International Dunhuang Project (IDP), by Victoria Finlay who visited the cemetery in April 2000. There she met the old caretaker, Mr Rahimullah, who was formerly paid by the Italian Embassy to look after the site, but who has received no money for years. Mr Rahimullah first showed Miss Finlay some of the Afghan War graves, then the graves of the hippy travellers a hundred years later, sometimes marked only with a nickname. But the real interest of course was in the grave of the famous archaeologist, scholar and author, Sir Aurel Stein, who was buried there during the second World War, in 1943.

Marc Aurel Stein was born in Hungary in 1862 and became an English citizen in 1904, as the tomb inscription records. He was perhaps the most celebrated officer of the Archaeological Survey of India, who 'by his arduous journeys in India, Chinese Turkistan, Persia and Iraq....enlarged the bounds of knowledge.' The great traveller had long wanted to visit Kabul, and although in his eighty-first year when permission was finally granted, he did not hesitate to make the long, and last, journey. Aurel Stein is not only a respected figure among archaeologists, biographers and historians, but someone who still inspires great affection today among both women and men. As his inscription rightly says, he was 'A man greatly beloved'. He never married, but was a popular and gregarious person with hosts across India and further east. He was devoted to a succession of companion-dogs, who merit an article to themselves, in the IDP newsletter, by BACSA member John Falconer, entitled 'A Dash across Asia'. Endearingly, Stein's dogs were named Dash I, Dash II, Dash III etc. the last dog, Dash VII being acquired in 1943. 'Dash the Great' (Dash II 1904-1918) accompanied Stein on the second great Central Asian Expedition in the early 1900s. Sadly the much travelled fox terrier was, in retirement, ignominiously run over by an Oxford bus.

It is hoped, that with the proposed re-opening of Afghanistan to tourism, that an up-to-date report can be compiled on the Kabul Cemetery, which is known locally as Qabr Gora (the Sahibs' cemetery), and in particular of the condition of Sir Aurel Stein's grave.

### MAIL BOX

By coincidence a number of articles and letters received recently refer to the Sewri Cemetery in Bombay. (The story of one grave is told on page 113.) Unlike the majority of European cemeteries in the sub-continent, Sewri is still open for burials, now of course, mainly those of Indian Christians. Foy Nissen, our Bombay member, has sent in an interesting account from 'The Times of India' about the annual commemorations there on 2nd November, All Souls' Day, when relatives of the departed gather to pray at the graves, to bring flowers, candles and sometimes food for the deceased.

The first Europeans in Bombay had buried their dead at Mendham's Point, Colaba, and subsequently at Sonapur, next to the Muslim cemetery and the Hindu burning ghats. But rapid expansion in the 19th century meant a third new site had to be found, and by 1867 Sir Arthur Crawford, then Municipal Commissioner, had purchased the old Agri-Horticultural Society's gardens from Bomanji Framji Cama. The site was consecrated in March 1867 and contains many graves of interest from the more recent past. Here lies the architect FW Stevens who designed Victoria Terminus for the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, one of the

finest stations in the world, inspired by St Pancras in London, but with more than a touch of Brighton Pavilion about it too. When it opened in 1882, the then Vicereine thought it 'magnificent, but perhaps too magnificent for a bustling crowd of railway passengers.' Another influential architect buried at Sewri is George Wittet, born in Blair Atholl, Scotland, and who was appointed assistant to the Consulting Architect at Bombay in 1904. He practised in the city for twenty-two years (inspite of the efforts of his French wife to get him to leave for Europe), and was responsible for over a hundred projects, including the Prince of Wales Museum, the Royal Institute of Science, most of the Ballard Estate, the Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art, the classic Gateway of India, and the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital, now known as the KEM.

It was a group of doctors from the KEM who, last August, tracked down the neglected grave of George Wittet, who had been, according to a former dean, Dr RG Shirahatti 'consigned to the godown of politically-incorrect history...he was responsible for some of our best-loved buildings, but nobody even remembers his name'. The hospital was one of Wittet's last commissions, and during its construction, there were bitter arguments between the Scotsman and the Indian doctors. Wittet had not only designed the hospital, but he also went on to specify the equipment for it, as was the custom at that time, and drew up a long list of items to be imported from England, including ordinary beds, lockers and screens, all of course, obtainable in India. But by the time the hospital was inaugurated in January 1926, the anger had abated, and Wittet was presented with a gold cigarette case. Six months later he was dead of acute dysentery. An intensive attempt by the KEM doctors to trace his relatives, for the 75th anniversary celebrations of the hospital last year has failed, but the tomb has now been identified from cemetery records, whitewashed and cleaned by these good people, and shrubs will be planted nearby. 'Nothing else is really needed' said Dr Shirahatti, 'there are already so many standing monuments to Wittet and his love for the city'. (If any of Wittet's relatives are known to members, BACSA will be happy to put them in touch with the Bombay hospital.)

Earlier burials at Sewri record less-well known Britons, including twenty-six year old Edward Mansfield, an officer in the P & O Company, who in 1891 'lost his life from the bursting of his balloon' (presumably a hot-air balloon), and the memorial to John Walsh, an engineer aboard the *Fort Crevier*, who was killed in the great Bombay Dock explosion in 1944, which was discussed in earlier *Chowkidars*. George Lawrence Gibson, Deputy Conservator of Woods and Forests in the Bombay Presidency died on 13 July 1887 aged thirty-eight, of wounds inflicted by a tigress. His mother's tribute noted 'Although attacked by the animal suddenly and unawares, he met its charge with cool courage and mortally wounded it'. Clearly there are problems of maintenance at Sewri, for it is a huge cemetery, but some individual tombs are well preserved. Every year, the memorial to

the Italian prisoners-of-war, who died in places like Kalyan Camp and Deolali between 1941 and 1946, is re-painted by officials from the Italian consulate who attend Mass at the memorial on All Souls' Day. And then there is the newly painted tomb of James Taylor, who died in 1876. The cemetery peon, Krishna Gaikwad, explained 'Foreign se koi aaya' ('someone came from abroad'), and he says there is a regular trickle of foreigners trying to track down their ancestors.

*Chowkidar* Autumn 2001 carried a short article on the discovery in the Sewri cemetery of the grave of 'Lurgan Sahib', the Simla curio-shop owner in *Kim*. Rudyard Kipling based his unforgettable character on AM Jacob, a mysterious figure, who was born in Turkey, and who died in Bombay in 1921. During the exhibition of the Nizam of Hyderabad's jewellery in New Delhi last autumn, a little more information came to light on Jacob. His full name, although it doesn't sound very Turkish, was Alexander Malcolm Jacob. The centrepiece of the magnificent exhibition, held at the National Museum, was the 'Jacob Diamond', a gem weighing 457.5 carats (nearly twice the present size of the Koh-i-noor), which the dealer sold to the then Nizam for £1.5m in 1891. It was the Nizam's failure to honour the purchase and a criminal suit, that led to Jacob's financial downfall, and occasioned his move from Simla to Bombay. Proposals are afoot to rename the diamond with something more Indian, but the curious figure of Jacob will always be associated with this spectacular jewel. Incidentally, visitors to the exhibition were faced with a two-tier ticketing system. 'Entrance fee: Indians Rs50 Others Rs500' - an unintentional nod towards Edward Said and his theory of Orientalism. But then again, perhaps a subtle Indian joke.



The Yangtze Gorge project is a hugely ambitious scheme to dam China's largest river, in the hope of preventing the devastating annual floods. Work has already begun and thousands of villagers are being moved permanently away from sites that have been inhabited for thousands of years. Another casualty will be the little-known memorial at Xintang village to a Suffolk man, Captain Samuel Cornell Plant. So interesting is the history of this adventurous man, and his equally remarkable wife, that BACSA member Rosemary Lee is gathering material on the Plants, and hopes that their story may jog a few memories.

Samuel Plant was born in 1866 at Framlingham, but no details of his early life seem to be known. He first appears as a Master Mariner in Bushire, Persia, where he was married in April 1894 to Alice Sophie Peters, the daughter of an illiterate Hertford shoe-maker. Plant had served for several years in command of steamers on the Tigris and the Euphrates, rivers well-known for their navigational difficulties. It was his skills that first attracted the attention of Archibald Little, an enterprising Scot with Shanghai connections, who became convinced that a

regular steamship could operate on the Yangtze between Ichang and Chunking. Samuel Plant agreed to accept Little's challenge to pilot his new vessel *Pioneer* up river. Early in June 1900 the attempt on the Three Gorges began. With Plant in control *Pioneer* steamed up in a week, having been held up for three days at the Hsin T'an rapids. The ship was greeted at Chunking by hundreds of junkmen, who crowded the banks to see the latest barbarian wonder. Unfortunately, political trouble along the river that was to lead to the Boxer Uprising, forced the British Consulate at Chunking to commandeer *Pioneer* and use her to evacuate expatriates from dangerous areas.

Deprived of his ship, Plant bought himself a houseboat junk and traded up and down the river between Ichang and Chunking, all the while studying the river and its treacherous rapids. He gained the respect of the junkmen, and was given the Chinese name of Pu Lan Tian by them. After trading for some years, he was approached by the Chinese-owned Szechwan Steam Navigation Co. to assist in the design of a purpose-built steamer to trade on the Upper Yangtze. The *Shutung* was built in Southampton, capable of carrying 12 first class passengers, 66 deck passengers and 60 tons of cargo. The service proved very popular and a second vessel was commissioned. In 1910 Plant was appointed Senior River Inspector in the Chinese Maritime Customs, a position he held for nine years.

On his retirement the Chinese Maritime Customs and the Chinese Government built a small bungalow for the Plants on the outskirts of the village of Xintang. The bungalow was perched on a small promontory overlooking the gorge and the rapids. Steamers on the river would salute Captain Plant by sounding their whistles. He in turn would acknowledge them with a wave of his handkerchief. In 1921 the Plants decided to visit England for a short holiday, before returning to their home in China. They were feted everywhere they stopped downriver to Shanghai. Sadly, en route to Hong Kong, on board the *Teiresias*, Captain Plant contracted pneumonia and died at sea on 26 February 1921. His wife followed him two days later. The couple were buried together in the Happy Valley cemetery in Hong Kong, where their joint funeral was conducted by the Bishop of North China, with representatives of shipping companies and the Navy in attendance. But 'the chief mourners were the two Chinese adopted daughters of the deceased', about whom no further mention can be found. The British Consulate in Chunking collected subscriptions to raise a memorial to Samuel Plant, which took the form of a 30 foot high obelisk constructed of dressed blocks of pink granite on a brown sandstone base (see page 109). The inscription, in English and Chinese, was effaced by the Red Guards in 1968, after they had unsuccessfully tried to blow it up. When the new dam is completed, the monument will be inundated, and Plant's beloved rapids will become small eddies on the surface of a huge man-made lake. Additional information would be welcomed by Rosemary Lee at The Garden House, Thames Road, Goring on Thames, Oxon RG8 9AH

### Colonel Robert Smith of Paignton

Last October a plaque was unveiled at the Redcliffe Hotel in Paignton, Devon, commemorating its builder, Colonel Robert Smith, soldier, engineer and artist, who arrived in India in 1805 as an East India Company cadet. The talented young man was ordered to the Bengal Engineers, and he was soon engaged in different building projects, including lighthouses, port modifications, and bridges, as well as work on a palace for the Raja of Murshidabad. In Calcutta he was taken into the artistic circle led by George Chinnery, and his skills attracted the attention of the Company's highest officials. In 1812-13 he was selected to travel up country with the Commander-in-Chief, Sir George Nugent, and his wife Lady Nugent, who described Smith's views of Benares, Lucknow and Cawnpore as so accurate that she recognised every place immediately. Smith's beautiful volumes of survey drawings made on a later expedition in 1814 with the Marquis of Hastings, are now in the British Library (as is his portrait).

After his distinguished service as an engineer in the Nepal War of 1814-16 Smith was sent to Penang (known then as Prince of Wales Island), as superintending officer. He found the beauty of the unspoilt island enchanting and painted many views of it, some of which are today in the Penang Museum. Officially he was working on the island's defences, but he also designed St George's Church, which still stands, and almost certainly some of the large classical houses for the spice plantation owners.

It may have been these residential projects which gave Smith the idea for his own magnificent house at Torbay, which was constructed on his retirement in the 1850s. By now, Smith had come into a considerable sum of money, and it is true to say that literally 'no expense was spared' in the construction of Redcliffe. At that time, the sea-front was simply made up of dunes and marshes, from where the local basket-makers collected reeds for their work. The substantial house was established on a red sandstone outcrop by the sea, which gave the building its name. It was constructed by a local builder, JRK Tozer of Paignton. When it was finally completed in 1864, it comprised twenty-three bedrooms, picture galleries for his Indian views, a billiard room, a large dining-room, a glass conservatory containing rare plants from India, steps reputedly oriented towards Mecca, as well as stables and outbuildings for his servants - all in an Anglo-Indian style. It was Redcliffe that was to popularise the nearby fishing village of Paignton as a resort. Innovative features in the house included the use of gas, from the recently constructed Preston Gas Works, sliding internal doors, and a plunge bath on the seaward side that filled every day at high tide. This was approached from the shore, via a tunnel, which is still in use, although the bath was washed away in a storm in the 1880s. As if this was not enough, Smith also bought a pristine site at Mont Boron, in Nice, and built himself a second vast house in the Anglo-Indian style, called, rather prosaically 'Chateau Smith'. The chateau, in turn, began a building craze at Nice. Sadly Smith did not have long to enjoy his two houses.

He died in 1873, and was buried in the churchyard at East Teignmouth, with his sister Mary, and his father. His son inherited Redcliffe, but debts forced him to sell, and the house passed through several owners, being used during the Boer War as a convalescent home. In 1902 it was sold by the owner, Isaac Merrit Singer, and opened as a hotel two years later. Colonel Smith's name persisted in local memory until the second World War, and was then forgotten. It was only with the revival of interest in Indian art and architecture, during the last twenty-five years, that the career and buildings of this remarkable man have been fully appreciated. The plaque, which was erected by the Torbay Civic Society, is thus richly deserved, and it is good to know that Smith's chateau in Nice now also has a preservation order on it. (With acknowledgments to Raymond Head)

### Tombs on Ross Island

In the Spring of 1992, *Chowkidar* reported on the Andaman Islands, that lie off the Indian coast, in the Bay of Bengal. At that time, the British cemetery on the smaller Ross Island, was derelict and we published a striking photograph of tombstones entwined in the roots of giant banyan trees. It seemed as if another cemetery was 'reverting to nature' under our eyes. But now there is good news about the site. The British High Commissioner in Delhi, Sir Rob Young KCMG, recently visited the Islands and noted that 'a great deal of work had been done by the Indian Navy to clear the jungle and restore some of the buildings. The Navy are also rehabilitating the cemetery' (see page 108). The improvement is remarkable, and many tombs have emerged in better shape than one would have thought possible. A list of the graves has been compiled and is in the BACSA archives.

### The Skinner graveyard at Hansi

Barbara Buttimer is a descendant of the Grueber family, who have long Indian connections, and she is trying to piece together a family tree for a forthcoming book. Lieutenant Richard Grueber may have been one of the European mercenaries who came to India to fight for the Mahratta chiefs, and who subsequently joined the East India Company's Army. He had an Indian *bibi*, known as Kunwan. Barbara Buttimer's great grandfather, another Richard, and 'the most elusive Grueber', is shown as a Company writer, who died sometime between 1851 and 1858. No death certificate has been found yet, and it is possible he is buried in Calcutta. Her grandfather William, then aged seven, and his elder brother, Richard, nine years old, both survived the siege of the Lucknow Residency in 1857, and Richard Grueber is listed on the 'Roll of Honour in the Defence of the Residency' at La Martiniere School where he was one of the pupils.

In search of the grave of Lieutenant Grueber, who had close connections with the celebrated Colonel James Skinner, founder of Skinner's Horse, our correspondent gamely travelled by car from Delhi to Hansi, the Skinner family seat, where some of the family, and the first Richard Grueber, are buried. It was easy to find the old Skinner house, she writes 'large but almost derelict, it was still an imposing dwelling in the area' with an entrance archway tall enough to allow a man on horseback to ride under it with ease. Before the cemetery were half a dozen *kutchas* huts, and a resident who spoke excellent English led her to the graveyard, where there is a large central tomb with a canopy over it. This was certainly a Skinner grave, but which Skinner? Possibly Robert, the brother of Colonel James Skinner, for the Colonel himself lies in the Delhi church of St James, that he commissioned (see page 109). Around the central tomb lie eight other graves 'mostly just piles of bricks, some still cemented together, that had at one time formed the support for the plasterwork that would undoubtedly have covered them and any memorial plaques. The graves were surrounded by a low wall, that set them apart from other, even less clearly defined, memorials outside. There were no name plaques on any of the graves, even the central one, to identify the occupants; they had long since been removed for other purposes. The whole area was pretty much covered with thorny growth that made walking among the graves difficult for our poorly-shod guides, wearing the universal rubber flip-flops. I was once more thankful for the sturdy fell walking boots that I wore throughout my stay in India.' Any information on the Grueber family would be welcomed, either by e-mailing our correspondent on <babs1945@onetel.net.uk> or via the BACSA Secretary.

A curious little pin or badge was shown to the Editor recently. Enamelled in blue and white, it was about the size of a two-pence coin, with a central flag, and a small crown at the top. The wording around the badge reads 'Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire' and it is dated 1916. The owner, an Indian collector, has not been able to trace it in his catalogues, and would welcome suggestions, via the Editor <llewelr@sbu.ac.uk>

### Twenty-five years of *Chowkidar*

Readers will notice something different about this issue of *Chowkidar*. We have come a long way since the first foolscap issue was produced entirely by hand, including the lengthy process of duplicating, from a cut stencil, collating and stapling. Some of our regular features have been held over, but will appear again in the next issue. As *Chowkidar* is published twice-yearly, this is the 50th edition, our Golden Jubilee issue. We congratulate BACSA, celebrating its Silver Jubilee in 2002, and look forward to many more happy years together.

## Our Golden Jubilee

A Message from the President, the Rt. Hon. Lord Rees, QC

We celebrate this year the 50th edition of *Chowkidar*, which was started in October 1977, a few months after the founding of BACSA at a formal inaugural meeting of seventy-six members at the Cavalry & Guards Club. Many have contributed to *Chowkidar* since then, but all agree, I think, that the main credit must go to Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, both for the idea and the energy and imagination which she has brought to bear on the project since then. Deeply versed in the history of the sub-continent, and in particular in Lucknow and the glittering Court of the Nawab of Oude, Rosie has brought great professional skill to all the subsequent editions of *Chowkidar*.

It is nostalgic to recall that the first issues were typed by her and run off on an old-fashioned Gestetner. The stapling was done by volunteers with a long-handled stapler, the first piece of equipment BACSA actually bought. Each issue has been a combination of short historical articles, comments and queries from members, illustrations, and reviews of oriental publications - many by our growing band of author-members.

While *Chowkidar* is in no sense of mouth-piece of BACSA, it has proved one of our most effective 'Recruiting-Sergeants', as copies are passed round by members to friend. It is pleasant to recall that APHCI, our related organisation in Calcutta, has by a charming reversal of titles, called its similar publication *The Watchman!*

I like to think that those who have a particular interest in the history and atmosphere of the Raj, and in the exploration of its fascinating by-ways, will turn to *Chowkidar* and BACSA's other publications, just as earlier generations have turned to Kipling's works.

Shabash *Chowkidar!* Shabash Rosie!

Among those seventy-six present at the Inaugural Meeting on 13 October 1976, held at the Cavalry & Guards Club, the following are still happily with us, and most, even more happily, as BACSA members:

Mr C Allen, Mr AC Brock, Mrs ME Busk, Miss N Clayton, Mr RM Clemence (Royal Garhwal Rifles Association), Mrs C Coldwells, Mr JS Curl, Mr VE Davies, Miss E de Bourbel, Mr R. Desmond (India Office Library), Lt Col. PJ Emerson (4th Indian Grenadiers Association), Mr AJ Farrington (India Office Library),

Mrs J Hugh-Jones, Col RC Jackman (2nd Kings EO Gurkha Rifles) Ashiq Qureshi (representing the Pakistan High Commission) Mrs C Langdon-Davies, Lt Col CHT MacFetridge, Mrs E McKay, LT Col IA Macmillan (17th Dogra Association) Mr & Mrs AP Mercer, Mrs JA Pateman (Friends of Highgate Cemetery) Maj PT Prentice (7th DEO Gurkha Rifles) Mrs D Pullen (Society of Genealogists) Mr J Rayment (Federation of Family History Societies) Mr P. Rees [now the Rt. Hon Lord Rees, President of BACSA], Mr RK Renford, Mrs MA Reynolds, Mr J de C Stevens Guille, Miss E Talbot-Rice, (National Army Museum) Mr & Mrs TC Wilkinson, Mr WRT Wilkinson, Mrs K. Wilcox.

Three members were invited to write short articles to this jubilee edition, illustrating different facets of BACSA, seen both here and in India. Our first contributor, Vincent Davies, now in his 99th year, has been with BACSA since Day One, as nominee of the ICS (Ret'd) Association, then as Chairman for a number of years, before joining the Council and being appointed Vice-President two years ago.

### 'How I became involved with BACSA'

As long as the British were in India, those that died serving in the forces had their own cemeteries, usually in Cantonments of important towns or strategic areas such as the North-West Frontier. These were very well looked after by the Military Engineering Services (MES). The large majority, apart from the Army, had no special place for burials and their cemeteries, large and small, were scattered throughout the sub-continent. These were maintained by the Public Works Department (PWD) of the Government. The Railway Board cared for railway colony graves.

On Independence, in 1947, the new Indian Government washed its hands of the previously maintained MES, PWD and railway cemeteries. Some cemeteries of particular historical interest passed into the care of the Archaeological Survey of India. Many others were 'abandoned', in the official jargon, although protected from vandalism, until they 'reverted to nature'. The cemeteries thus became friendless for the next thirty years, until there was an awakening of responsibility among some of the old India hands, leading to the formation of BACSA.

My own involvement came through contact with a very old friend of mine in Orissa, the Raja of Kanika. He wrote about a visit he had made to Calcutta and how saddened he had been to see so many British graves and cemeteries abandoned, particularly the great South Park Street Cemetery which was completely overgrown and neglected, and how it appeared that the British were doing nothing to care for them.



*left: the little cemetery  
at Udaipur (see page 97)*

*below: Ross Island cemetery  
(see page 104)*



*right: Samuel Plant's Yangtze  
obelisk (see page 102)*

*below: the Skinner cemetery and  
church, 2001 (see page 105)*



On the strength of this, I discussed the position with an old friend from my Bihar days, Gedge Danby, who lived in Milford-on-Sea (Hampshire), and by a complete coincidence lived almost next door to Rosemarie Wilkinson's mother and so I was put in touch with Theon and my long twenty-five years' connection with BACSA from its conception, to its present position, began.

From the start, there was the realisation that it was too late to establish any formal control of cemeteries through government agencies, the remaining course open to us was to try and influence the local people to regard these British cemeteries as part of their heritage too. And thus began a slow and gradual process of recording and writing about those who left their bones in Asia and of helping financially those local cemetery committees prepared to take an initiative in preserving and caring for them.

### BACSA's Treasury

I first became aware of BACSA when I came across a copy of *Chowkidar* while browsing in the SOAS Library in 1987. I noticed that the names of the Council and Executive Committee contained some that I associated with Calcutta, particularly that of John Comyn, with whom I had sat on the Committee of the Calcutta Rowing Club; he as Secretary, I as Treasurer. I clearly had to join BACSA, although I had never really given great thought in my years in South Asia to the British cemeteries and had not made a particular point of investigating them, except when in a hill station such as Dharmasala or Nainital. Nevertheless, I do remember that during my first posting to Calcutta I became marginally involved in 1953 or 1954 with a group that were attempting the restoration of the South Park Street cemetery. Some rather architecturally unsympathetic repairs were made to the tomb of one of Calcutta's late 18th century beauties, possibly that of Elizabeth Barwell but more probably, Rose Aylmer.

However, in 1987 I did not anticipate becoming the third in line of BACSA Treasurers, all named John - John Comyn, John Quick and myself - each one of who could include service in India within their CV. It was Mrs Molly Henry who first offered her services as Treasurer at the Inaugural Meeting on 13 October 1976 and who volunteered to take charge of the BACSA finances, which amounted to £50.50, collected at the meeting. Molly Henry was the daughter of Sir Miles Irving ICS, whose misfortune it had been to be appointed Deputy Commissioner at Amritsar in March 1919. She remained on the Executive Committee until her retirement in 1983. John Comyn was appointed Honorary Treasurer in 1978 when BACSA's aims were appropriately modest for a new venture. The annual subscription was then £2 and it was thought that a total of 600 members was the maximum that could be efficiently administered.

In the early years the policy of funding cemetery projects was to appeal for donations for specific projects, rather than for open-ended general purposes. Since 1984 a US dollar account has been looked after for us by Dr William Trousdale, at that time a Curator of the Smithsonian. This account is used to hold sums paid to BACSA in dollars and avoids the costs of converting transactions into sterling. That this account is with the Wells Fargo Bank provides considerable amusement, in view of Wells Fargo's past involvement with the 'Wild West'.

A year earlier it was considered that a rupee account would be to our advantage, so that the proceeds for BACSA's publications sold in India could be held there and used for project grants. Four years of fruitless correspondence served to show that the Exchange Control Department of the State Bank of India would be unlikely to approve the opening by BACSA of an account in India. Nevertheless, an ability to fund projects locally was made possible when at the March 1990 meeting it was agreed to donate amounts from time to time to a Trust Fund with the East India Charitable Trust, the income from which could be used to provide grants to projects that have BACSA's support.

Old Calcutta hands might take pleasure from seeing in the EICT's account, that we are in the company of such names as the Calcutta Light Horse Fund, St Mary's Home, and Tollygunge Homes. We have also on occasion received the assistance of the offices of the British High Commissions or the British Embassies who have held funds for us from which they have provided grants, as required, to approved cemetery projects in various countries.

The majority of grant payments, however, are made directly from Britain, in some cases not always entirely successfully. Mail Transfers often caused great problems and have been known to take many weeks. In recent years we have adopted the practice of obtaining from the State Bank of India, a bank draft drawn in favour of the beneficiary's account which is then sent on by registered post and avoids the local collection charges that arise when we use our own bankers. An additional advantage for the Treasurer is that the SBI is user-friendly and, if necessary, I can talk with the people at the London branch of the State Bank who are handling the transaction.

At the end of BACSA's first year, in 1977, the total balance sheet was £702.20. Subsequent annual accounts show how BACSA has progressed financially since its inception, with the balance sheet now standing at over £150,000, and providing evidence of the extent to which the Association has been successful in achieving its charitable aims and objectives.

John Payne

## BACSA and India

I first came in contact with BACSA when, working in Assam and trying to get information on the history of the tea industry, I visited the Dibrugarh cemetery. Buried here from the 1800s onwards were tea planters (mostly), Scots, army officers, salt merchants, priests, civil servants and the odd railway officer. It was a slice of history not only of the tea industry but of upper Assam itself.

I joined the Railways in 1965 when, owing to a change in pattern of traffic and traction, marshalling yards and running sheds were shrinking. There were still large railway colonies, frozen in an earlier time frame. The Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association was still functioning and a Carr and a Putman still on the footplate. There were rows of stone bungalows with derelict gardens, churches, masonic lodges, bowling-greens, railway institutes with sprung dance-floors, bars, billiard rooms and libraries of 1930s love stories. Then there were the cemeteries with fascinating inscriptions on headstones. An Area Traffic Superintendent born in Scotland, an ex-British Army Traffic Inspector or a retired Loco Foreman, son of someone described as 'late indigo planter, Balia'. A whole way of life passing away, and with vandalism in the cemetery, the very identity of these railwaymen would vanish unrecorded if not unsung.

My first reaction on reading the aims of BACSA was that it was a quixotic enterprise - to preserve graves numbering two million, with many others scattered alongside railway tracks, on sea beaches and in forests. A small organisation run by a team of dedicated volunteers, on a shoe-string budget, trying to lobby the authorities and encouraging local participation in whatever preservation was possible. However, reading *Chowkidar* one was surprised at the hard work put in and the successes achieved.

What is the position on the ground now? A depressing one, conditioned by the vandalism in cemeteries in large towns. The one organisation in India which could make a dent in the problem, the church, is for good reasons, generally unable or unwilling to provide any lead in this matter. The approach of BACSA is the only practical one in large towns. Cemeteries can be preserved here only by involving the authorities, INTACH and the ASI. In other locations, local institutions and volunteers, with BACSA's help and support, do produce results.

What more can be done? Perhaps BACSA should maintain a higher profile through its web-site. Ooty has a system of collecting a one-time payment per grave from relatives for maintenance. This could be suggested elsewhere. Advantage could be taken of the nascent heritage movement to encourage large organisations, like the Army, the Railways and others who have cemeteries on their properties and have set up heritage committees, to include cemeteries in their ambit.

Pressure on the ASI and INTACH will have to be kept up. I was delighted to see an ASI notice in Kydganj cemetery at Allahabad last month. At many small locations, where real estate is not the issue, cemeteries require only some repair, a wall and gatehouse, provided of course, some local support is forthcoming in maintaining a chowkidar. I am an optimist, and without glossing over the seriousness of the problems, believe that BACSA's efforts may yet save this portion of India's heritage.

SK Pande



## The Passionate Botanist - the story of Leonard John Sedgwick

In January 2001 BACSA member David Morphet and his wife were in Bombay, visiting the Sewri cemetery, in the company of Foy Nissen, a long time BACSA member. The cemetery contains the grave of Mrs Morphet's grandfather, Leonard Sedgwick, ICS, who died in Bombay in 1925. Sedgwick was the founder of the *Indian Journal of Botany* in 1917 and a significant plant collector. Thousands of his specimens are held at St Xavier's College, Bombay, while others are in the Natural History Museum in London. The Morphets found that the grave was in poor condition, the cemetery having suffered encroachment. With the help of Foy Nissen, they were able to purchase a new plot close to the cemetery supervisor's office, where a new memorial slab was erected. David Morphet has prepared some biographical notes on this interesting man, which he has kindly passed on to BACSA, and which present a vivid portrait of the man and his times.

Leonard Sedgwick, who was always known as Jack, was born in Bristol in April 1883, the youngest of four children. His father, Roger Buttery Sedgwick, had worked in Bombay with the merchant company Killick Nixon, and two of the Sedgwick children had been born there. On his mother's side there were strong Indian connections too. His maternal grandfather, Nathaniel Brindley Acworth had been in Madras, probably as a merchant, and a great uncle had had a distinguished career in the ICS, and had founded the first Leper Asylum on the outskirts of Bombay.

The young man was educated at Uppingham, where he excelled in sports, poetry, the Classics, and music, having a fine tenor voice. It was here that he began collecting plants, and this first collection is now in the Leicester Museum. A scholarship to Pembroke College, Cambridge led to him graduating with a First Class degree in the Classics Tripos in 1905. With his family's Indian connections, it was natural that he would try for the ICS, and on passing the stiff entrance

examination, he embarked for Bombay in October 1906. On arrival he was immediately posted to the Satara District as Assistant Collector, and he set about learning Marathi, the regional language. He was soon appointed too as Magistrate 3rd Class, with the power to sentence up to one month in prison and impose a fine of up to Rs50. (Magistrates 1st and 2nd Class could impose proportionately longer sentences and heavier fines.) It was during his appointment in Thane, near Bombay, that Sedgwick discovered some rare mosses during the rainy season, and his name was given to a new genus of moss, *bryosedgwickia*, or Sedgwick's Moss.

He married Agnes Winifred Guidera, a woman of Irish descent in 1911, and their first child was born the following year. Sedgwick continued to follow a demanding administrative career, including a short spell as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council, while at the same time pursuing the calling that was obviously dearest to his heart. His intellectual and domestic life flourished. Learned articles by him appeared, he was elected a Fellow of the Linnaean Society of London in recognition of his botanical work, and three more children were born. In the early 1920s he was based in Poona as the Provincial Superintendent of Census Operations, and his last posting was as acting Director of the Bombay Labour Office, with a coveted second-floor flat on the Malabar Hill peninsula. Although by now the couple's four children had been sent home to London for education, the Sedgwicks must have felt that life was good to them.

But tragedy struck suddenly on 28 May 1925, as the couple returned from a visit to the hill station of Mahabaleshwar, perhaps on another plant hunt. A tree had fallen across the road during a torrential monsoon storm, and 'after crawling around this obstacle' Sedgwick's car engine stopped dead. He was forced to push the car, with the help of a servant, a quarter of a mile, in 'appalling rain', and although he managed to restart the engine, the episode left him completely exhausted. He was already going down with fever, which turned to paratyphoid. He died in St George's Hospital, Bombay on 27 June, at the early age of forty-two. To general surprise, it was found that he had left a mere £67, and his widow, with four young children, had only her Indian Government pension to live on.

A photograph taken shortly after his burial in Sewri Christian Cemetery shows a handsome memorial with a fine granite Celtic cross, lead lettering and an iron chain around the grave. The lead and the chain have long gone, and the cross fallen. Now the new memorial tablet reads simply 'Leonard John Sedgwick 1883-1925. ICS Administrator and Botanist. Died in Bombay 27 June 1925.' Travelling in his footsteps last year, the Morphets learned a good deal about this gifted man, 'not least his passionate attachment to botany, and about the India in which he served'.

**BACSA BOOKS [Books by BACSA members. These can be ordered via BACSA, at no extra cost to the purchaser and will be sent with an invoice.]**

**The Indian Heir: David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre** Nicholas Shreeve

This work completes a fascinating quartet by the author on the prominent personae of the former principality of Sardhana, near Meerut, his earlier publications being *Begam Samru*, *Dark Legacy* and *From Nawab to Nabob* (the latter reviewed in *Chowkidar* Vol. 9 No 3, Spring 2001). The given names of the subject of this book are a pointer to his background - David Ochterlony after his putative godfather, the then Resident of Delhi, Sir David Ochterlony, a personage rightly held in great esteem by the Begam Sombre (Samru); Dyce, after his father George, the Anglo-Indian son of Major General Alexander Dyce and his Indian mistress; and Sombre after his adoptive great-grandmother, the Begam, and thus her heir, he being the only surviving male descendant of the Begam's husband, Walter Reinhard, known as Sombre, on account of his visage and demeanour.

On her death he was cheated of much of his inheritance and though, still extremely rich, he was faced with a traumatic transition in society, in north India, particularly Calcutta, from princeling to half-caste. He was ensnared into marriage by an aristocratic arriviste, when he came to England in pursuit of his rights. He became the first Anglo-Indian MP in Britain (for Sudbury), but was thereafter the victim of relentless prejudice and snobbery and was unseated, his new wife then having him remorselessly seized and declared a lunatic. He escaped across the Channel, and travelled all over Europe, urging his cause.

Returning to England under guarantees of liberty, having submitted an evocative and emotive petition in 1850 to the 'Lords Temporal, Spiritual and Commoners' assembled in Parliament, with the hope of having the declaration of insanity set aside, he however died a painful and suspicious death a few days before his case was due to be heard. His last Will, in which he understandably disinherited his wife, was immediately challenged and set aside on the specious grounds that he was still insane when he made it. His wife (who had almost immediately remarried) was sequentially awarded his fortune. In the handling of his legal case by the authorities concerned, it can truthfully be said that the law is an ass.

To conclude, this book is a labour of meticulous and objective research on a man whose tragic ending has cast a shadow over the history of Sardhana. He was neither as mad or bad as his wife and her family wanted the English authorities to believe. If anything, he was only a little trivial, but ever-generous. Being married to her would have driven anyone mad. His 1850 petition alone is an indictment of life with a ruthlessly acquisitive incubus. The author had rightly invoked John

Webster's 'Fortune's a right whore' for his subject's sufferings in his earlier work *From Nawab to Nabob*. Highly recommended. (SLM)

2001 Bookwright ISBN 0 948395 07 9, obtainable from the author at 20 Maltravers Street, Arundel, West Sussex BN18 9BU £15 including postage & packing pp178

#### **Agra Cantonment Cemetery** Robin Volkers

This is a huge book, in every sense of the word. It's spine is one and a half inches thick (yes, we do still use imperial measures here), it took five years to come to fruition, it covers every burial within the cantonment cemetery, and four smaller ones near and within the Agra Fort, and is the painstaking work of one man. Like most mad ventures, the idea of recording all existing graves and checking the existing burial registers in Agra, was born out of an impulse. On a sunny Indian morning early in 1996, the author tells us, he set out with a pen and a piece of paper, which was quickly filled. Five years later he had twenty-two notebooks worth of inscriptions. The cemetery 'is a pleasant place, not at all gloomy, and often possessed of considerable beauty...wildlife is abundant, butterflies galore, many different birds, once a family of six jackals, a few rather nasty looking iguanas, and also the odd snake'.

Christianity came early to Agra, brought by the Jesuits in the late 16th century, and there are two Catholic cathedrals. In the cantonment areas the presence of many Irish soldiers led to the construction of St Patrick's Church, with a distinctly Irish flavour, although the present day congregation is drawn mainly from people from south India, and Mass is celebrated in Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi and English. The earliest extant English grave in Agra, and indeed in the sub-continent, is that of John Mildenhall, who died in 1614. The cantonment cemetery was established almost two hundred years later, the earliest burial being that of Thomas Gardner in 1804. Not unusually, the consecration ceremony took place years later (1836), and a separate plot was subsequently consecrated for Catholic burials in 1845. As the need for burial space grew, a third consecration in 1892 was necessary. An analysis of the inscriptions shows that the cemetery also contains non-Conformist and Baptist burials, and more recently, those of Indian Christians. The handsome Gothic gateway was restored recently, by a private donation made through BACSA, but damage by cattle and goats unfortunately continues, as well as theft, and vandalism. Robin Volkers' timely records thus become even more valuable. Only a flavour can be given of the inscriptions themselves (there is a fifty-page index of names) - 'Sacred to the Memory/of/John Mackerness Esq/East India Company/who died of cholera/in the Fort of Agra/on the 23rd July' [rest unreadable], but the author's research shows that the year of death was 1857, and

that John Mackerness, aged thirty-nine, was Assistant Engineer in the Railway Department. Ignatious Isaac D'Mello, born in 1860, and who lies in Plot 3010, was a chemist in Agra, who died in 1934. He married a widowed lady, Ada Mabel Hawes, nee Ryper, in 1907. The importance of this book to genealogists will of course, be immense, but this is also a useful insight into the civil and military history of Agra, and a tribute to the dedicated workers who continue to maintain the site, despite setbacks. (RLJ)

2001 BACSA 0 907799 76 0 £22.50 plus postage & packing £3.00 pp671

#### **Children of Colonialism: Anglo-Indians in a Postcolonial World** Lionel Caplan

The author is an academic at SOAS. It was in 1974, when he was visiting Madras (now Chennai) researching Indian Christians, that he first met members of the Anglo-Indian community, a mixed-race and culturally composite population, which had emerged out of the European encounter with India and which still retains a distinct identity, despite being reduced in numbers by emigration. In the author's words, his 1974 meeting was then 'only fleeting, since they were not considered, nor did they consider themselves, as belonging to the Indian Christian fold.' He subsequently began research on Anglo-Indians for this book during visits between 1991 and 1999. He posits the human drama of their contemporary world, as shaped by both colonial and post-colonial circumstances. Even though at the micro-level, the author focuses on the Anglo-Indian community of Madras and its precincts, as a result of his travels he extrapolates his deductions to the whole community in India, particularly Calcutta. The author rightly postulates that essentially they are the descendants of the initial offspring of unions - formal or casual - involving British and European men on the one side, and local women on the other. Apart from British patronymics, there are also Portuguese, French, Dutch, Danish, Hanoverian and other European surnames, many over the decades being anglicised. The author thereafter elaborates how the Anglo-Indians are the inheritors of a diversity of national, ethnic and caste backgrounds. Like other similarly constituted groups in the colonial context, they were 'subject to a frequently shifting set of criteria that allowed them privileges at certain historical moments and pointedly excluded them at others'.

This alternation was especially evident in the context of employment opportunities: in the early colonial period, relatively free; from the end of the 18th century, excluded from many governmental civil and military services; from the middle of the 19th century allowed favoured but restricted access to positions of intermediate responsibility in central government sectors (railways, telegraphs, customs, and so on); then from the early years of the 20th century inevitably

exposed to competition from the wider Indian society in all areas of what they deemed to be their 'traditional' employment. These latter developments exacerbated the extent of the poverty among those Anglo-Indian males who chose to opt out of further education. However, as their women increasingly and competently entered the workplace, they somewhat mitigated the hardship of the concerned families. The very institutions in which they were educated, though offering high standards of education, and originally designed for them, latterly came to be seen by many comparatively poorer Anglo-Indians as only needing to provide minimal literacy and numeracy, resulting in a steady diminution of their number in such institutions. In the post-Independence period, they have to survive in a very competitive economic climate as perforce the scheduled and backward classes comprise the bulk of the more disadvantaged contemporary Indian society requiring upliftment. Those who do compete, after completing their higher education, are among the country's elite.

Some of the many fascinations of this work are the interweaving of the history and topography of Madras, including its various Christian churches and congregations, as well as detailed notes, accompanied by an extensive bibliography. To conclude, an impressive and empathetic analysis of the Anglo-Indian community in India today, which is recommended not only for scholars, but for general readers interested in ethnicity and sociology. It however needs to be re-emphasized that by spurning higher education the unemployed or under-employed Anglo-Indian youths are trapping themselves in some sort of irresolvable netherland. The word 'if' is always central in 'life', and more so for the Anglo-Indians in August 1947 - 'if' only the then British Government had also offered the subsidised £10 passages on the troopship *Empire Windrush* as was later offered to West Indians from March 1948 onwards. But this was a conscious decision then, according to documents in the Public Records Office at Kew, because it was thought that Anglo-Indians had 'the defects of both races'. (SLM)

2001 Berg, Oxford 1 85973 531 2 £42.99 plus £2.95 postage pp261

**Tombs in Tea: Tea Garden Cemeteries, Sylhet, Bangladesh** John Radford and Susan Farrington

The intention of this excellent book is to record burials of all the tea-growing areas in present day Bangladesh and the oldest cemetery in the district, namely that in the town of Sylhet. Tea cultivation began in the 1860s, in the valleys of Luskerpore, Balisera, Manu/Doloi, Lungla and Juri, through which the old Assam/Bengal railway was built. Although tea-growing is comparatively recent, the valley cemeteries, are, as the authors point out, unique in being confined to one particular industry. Life on the tea estates was hard in the beginning, and the

cemeteries show evidence of many deaths at an early age. Conditions began to improve with the appointments of junior doctors and midwives on each estate, and the provision of a central hospital, costs being borne proportionately by the estates. This book does not attempt a history of the tea-industry (although one of the illustrations shows the formidable 'Ransome' tea-rollers and tea-driers). It is a well-researched catalogue of the valley cemeteries, with digressions into the Surma Valley Light Horse, an analysis by age of the 198 known burials in the tea garden cemeteries, and full inscriptions, where they still exist, telling of individual tragedies. In the compound of the old Kalighat church (now converted into a residential bungalow), lies Ada Jane Graves, the wife of Edward Mumford, who was killed in an earthquake on 8th July 1918. In the well-maintained Kajuricherra Cemetery is a memorial to Ramsay Hunter, Manager at Amrailcherra who died on his way home in July 1896, and was buried at sea. Nearby lies Alexander Muirhead 'drowned at Patrakhola Ghat on 27th July 1890, aged twenty-seven years'. His white marble stone and ornamental cross were 'erected by his brother planters'.

The Sylhet cemetery reflects European occupations other than tea, and its handsome pyramid and box tombs house the earliest burial, that of William Robert Raitt, died in July 1801, aged sixty-one years, and about whom, unfortunately, nothing else is known. East India Company officials, their families, soldiers, doctors, padres, and 'box-wallahs' are all here, together with their infant children. This short volume is a valuable addition to BACSA's growing number of 'records' books, throwing light on an often neglected area of the sub-continent and its former inhabitants. Recommended. (RLJ)

2001 BACSA 0 90 7799 75 2 £7.50, plus postage & packing 50 pence pp96

**Books by non-members that will interest readers. [These should be ordered direct and not through BACSA]**

**The British Humiliation of Burma** Terence Blackburn

Although Burma was once a great empire in south-east Asia, ultimately it was no match for the British forces in the 19th century. Urged on often by the European mercantile community, British forces were in conflict thrice, in the words of the author, with the 'medieval' Burmese. As a result of encounters in 1824 - 26, and then 1852, territories with vast material resources were absorbed, culminating in the entire country being annexed to the then Indian Empire in 1886 and remaining as a Province of India until granted the status of a separate State in 1937. The author paints an absorbing sketch of the then Burmese Court over the years, where

diabolic intrigues and sudden deaths pervaded the gilded splendour. During all the confrontations with the British, Burma was under weak kings, dominated by ruthless queens. The respective personalities on both sides are etched with much acuity, including the Burmese generals Maha Bandula, the Elder and the Younger, as also a review of the rivalry between the French and the British in Upper Burma.

Burma (now Myanmar) is a country the author has never visited because of his dislike of flying; this is nevertheless an enthralling account, some of it based on previously unresearched archival material, much of it in Britain. The author's fascination with the Anglo-Burmese Wars, and in finding inconsistencies between official accounts, newspaper reports and correspondence at the time, gave him encouragement to write the present book. Thus his extensive research of the period covers both the English and Indian (including vernacular) press. Just one example of the many gems - on 24th March 1853 the 'Friend of India' (today's 'Statesman'), commented on General Henry Godwin and his desire to march to the capital Ava, because he detested the navy, and resented reliance on it. He said that if Ava was to be attacked, it should be done in the proper way, by troops marching there from Rangoon, some 600 miles, as had been done by General Archibald Campbell in 1826 and not by sailing in boats. This newspaper succinctly commented, 'he appears unable to get beyond the idea that everything done or omitted to be done by General Campbell ought to be done or omitted to be done by General Godwin'. How true that observation was: always fight the next war just as the previous one was fought. Till very recently, almost an axiom in military planning.

This book contributes to our understanding of how the final blow was dealt to the Burmese kingdom in 1885, including the exile, till they died, of the Burmese royal family (King Thibaw and Queen Suphayarlat) to Ratnagiri in western India. The Mandalay palace had been looted in 1885 of many of its fabulous treasures (some remaining objects were also auctioned in 1886). What was the fate of the treasures buried within the palace grounds? Those listed in this book alone are today valued at well over five million pounds. The author valiantly found the time to locate an enormous number of these Burmese objects held in many of the museums and institutions in Britain, Europe and America. Many museums were involved, some of the objects being graphically illustrated in this book, adding to its fascination. Compact books on large subjects are a challenge to write. This excellently produced, profusely illustrated and well-researched book meets that challenge. (SLM)

2000 Orchid Press, Bangkok. Distributed through Kodansha Europe Ltd. 95 Aldwych, London WC2B 4JF tel: 0207 304 4095 ISBN 974 8304 66-3 £15 pp166

## Members Addresses

On your envelope, you may have noticed a new form of address label. This has been produced for the first time on a computer data base. Should there be any corrections to it, please let the Secretary know.

Your address will not be passed to any other institution or commercial organisation.

Under the terms of the **1998 Data Protection Act**, you have the right to object to this use of your personal data.

## Notes to Members

1. When writing to the Secretary and expecting a reply, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.
2. If wishing to contact a fellow-member whose address is not known to you, send the letter *c/o* Hon Secretary who will forward it unopened.
3. If planning any survey of cemetery MIs, either in this country or overseas, please check with the appropriate Area Representative or the Hon Secretary to find out if already recorded. This not to discourage the reporting of the occasional MI noticed, which is always worth doing, but to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

\* Books from India: where prices are given in rupees, these books can be obtained from Mr Ram Advani, Bookseller, Mayfair Buildings, Hazratganj PO Box 154, Lucknow 226001, UP, India. Mr Advani will invoice BACSA members in sterling, adding £3.00 for registered airmail for a slim hardback, and £2.00 for a slim paperback. Sterling cheques should be made payable to Ram Advani. Catalogues and price lists will be sent on request.

**back cover:** Illustration from "Tombs in Tea", reviewed on page 118.

