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Editor: Dr Rosie Llewellyn-Jones MBE

British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (BACSA)

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Mr Peter Boon
Barn End, London Road
Blewbury, Didcot, OX 11 9PB
tel: 01235 850410
email: secretary@bacsa.org.uk

Honorary Treasurer

His Honour Anthony Bradbury
79 Stradbroke Grove
Buckhurst Hill
Essex IG9 5PE
tel: 0208 504 9581
email: treasurer@bacsa.org.uk

Editor

Dr Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, MBE
135 Burntwood Lane
London SW17 0AJ
Tel: 0208 947 9131
Email: rosiejai@clara.co.uk

NOTES ON BACSA

The Association was formed in 1976 and launched in Spring 1977 to bring together people with a concern for the many hundreds of European cemeteries, isolated graves and monuments in South Asia.

There is a steady membership of over 1,200 (2016) 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 building up the Records Archive in the India Office Collections at the British Library; and many other projects for the upkeep of historical and architectural monuments. 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 the condition of a relative's grave etc. BACSA also publishes Cemetery Records books and has published books on different aspects of European social history out East. Full details on our website: www.bacsa.org.uk

Founded by the late Theon Wilkinson, MBE

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Mr Christopher Camaghan
42 Rectory Lane
Kings Langley
Herts WD4 8EY
tel: 01923 267458
email: membership@bacsa.org.uk

THE ABANDONED CEMETERY OF SULTANPET

The death of Tipu Sultan in the last Anglo-Mysore war of 1799 led to a number of significant changes in the south Indian landscape, including the establishment of a large British cantonment at Bangalore. But for several years before this, British troops had been garrisoned below the great hill fort of Nandidroog, in a village called Sultanpet. (see page 60) 'Pet' usually describes a settlement near a fort, and Sultan, in this case, referred to Tipu, the former Sultan of Mysore. Naturally, a number of deaths occurred, not only among the British officers, but their wives and children too. (The idea that garrisons were all male communities is a persistent one although frequently disproved by the graves of women and children, as in this case.)

A recent communication to the Editor from Mr Siddharth Raja, a lawyer whose home is in the Nandi Hills, has led to the story of the small Sultanpet Cemetery and a discussion across three continents with the input of BACSA member Professor Barry Lewis in the USA. Mr Raja is a self-confessed avid history enthusiast, whose love for local history led him to set up a heritage walking tour company called Nandi Valley Walks. One of the sites on the walks is this little cemetery which was officially abandoned by the British High Commission in August 1963, along with many others in the subcontinent which were left to 'revert to nature'. There the story may have ended had it not been for the initiative of Mr Raja, Mr Prashanth Prakash and other local residents, who rightly see it as a valuable asset, helping to inculcate in visitors 'a sense of historical appreciation and understanding'.

There are twelve identifiable tombs in the cemetery, only five of which still have their granite inscription tablets in place. The earliest of these reads as follows: 'Sacred to the memory of Lieutenant Colonel Ridgeway Mealy who departed this life at Nundydroog on the 19th September 1805 Aged 44 years.' We can glean a little more about the colonel from the internet. He came from an ancient Welsh family which claimed descent from the Prince of Glamorgan. He was given the rank of Major in 1800 and was stationed at Fort St George in Madras for some time, before returning to Britain. A year before his death Mealy came back to India and was 're-admitted to the Madras establishment'. What he was doing at Nandydroog is not stated, but we can surmise he was in charge of the garrison there. A double memorial to him, and to a relative, the Reverend Pearce Mealy, was sculpted by John Flaxman in 1807 and may be in Bangor Cathedral.

Professor Lewis has been able to track down some of the descendants of those buried at Sultanpet, including those of Lieutenant Mealy. He tells us, correctly, that 'the mere fact we can talk with living relatives does make the people buried at Sultanpet seem more real and less like archaeological artifacts'. Other named graves are those of Elizabeth, wife of William Prichard, who died on 1 August 1807, and Major John Edward Gabriel of the Wallajabad Light Infantry, who 'departed this life on the 25th of March 1815'. Sadly the Major's last child, Jane, was born two months after his death, in May 1815, but survived to the ripe age of ninety.

Mr Raja tells us that through the efforts of local people the cemetery now has a permanent boundary wall made of stone, bricks and cement and a pucca metal fencing across the entrance with a lockable gate. Many unprotected cemeteries in the subcontinent are threatened by 'land-sharks' - the graphic term for illegal developers, which is why local interest is so important. It is hoped in the coming months that the Sultanpet cemetery will be neatly landscaped with demarcated paths laid out and the graves themselves signposted with relevant information. This is exactly the kind of initiative that BACSA hopes to support. Meanwhile, visitors to the area might like contact Mr Raja at nandivalleywalks@gmail.com

MAIL BOX

Four years ago *Chowkidar* published an article about the old Narinda Cemetery in Dacca (vol. 13, No. 2). Written by BACSA member Charles Greig it describes the largest and finest tomb there and one that has the distinction of being painted by the artist Johann Zoffany in 1787. It had stood next to a small channel of water from the Baraganga river. In his article, Mr Greig noted that the brick and stucco tomb was in poor condition 'being slowly strangled and pulled apart by creepers'. Plans were then afoot to restore the tomb, headed by BACSA member and Area Representative for Dacca, Mr Waqar Khan. Unfortunately these have come to nothing. Neither the local church authorities nor the British High Commission seem concerned that within a few years this splendid structure will collapse unless it is competently restored.

The Editor visited the site late last year and found further significant deterioration, with fallen finials lying on the grass. Some of the inscribed tablets from other old tombs, which had been embedded in the interior of this monument, have been recently hacked out. Present day Dhaka (today's spelling) does not have a lot going for it in terms of

surviving old buildings, although it is an ancient city that was the one-time capital of the Nawabs of Bengal. The only information we have about the tomb itself (*see page 60*) is that Bishop Reginald Heber reported after a visit in 1824 that it marked the resting place of one 'Colombo Sahib' and his family. Because this sounded like a Portuguese name it was assumed the family may have originated in Goa, the capital of Portugal's Indian empire. But recent thinking in Dhaka, and my own observations, are that the tomb is more likely to commemorate an early Dutch trader from Colombo in Ceylon, where the Dutch East India Company had established itself by the mid-seventeenth century. Certainly the tomb, even in its battered condition, resembles some of the Dutch tombs of Surat, which are characteristically two-storeyed, with a dome, and small free-standing finials, decorated with chevrons and *guldustas*, or flower buds. The Dutch and Portuguese were rivals in Ceylon and India so perhaps it is not fanciful to imagine that when the latter were expelled from Bengal in 1632, by the Mughal Emperor, a few enterprising Dutch traders saw an opportunity to expand northwards. At all events, this extraordinary structure, one of the oldest in Dhaka, certainly merits preservation and BACSA has offered to part-fund restoration work if local apathy and obstruction can be overcome.

BACSA member Cynthia Versaci Lloyd carried out an extensive tour in south India last year in search of the graves of her relatives. It is clear, from her detailed and useful reports that her family was deeply connected with the subcontinent. At Kodaikanal Cynthia found the graves of her aunt, Beryl Myra Lloyd, her paternal great-aunt Mary Isabel Grimes, and her paternal great-grandmother, Sophia Isobel Grimes, née La Nauze. Sophia's tomb is in good condition and we can see from the inscription on the base that she died on 25 January 1906. (*see page 61*)

Travelling north to All Saints Cemetery at Coonoor, (surely one of the most beautiful cemeteries in India), the graves of two babies were found. These were the children of Colonel Henry Charles Wright and his second wife Margaret (née Darling). Colonel Wright was the paternal great-great uncle of our correspondent. He died in April 1932 in Cannes, a month short of his 97th birthday and was one of the last veterans of the Indian Mutiny. What tales he must have told of events that had happened 75 years earlier! He later became Commissariat Officer to General Sir Frederick Roberts during the Second Afghan War. During his retirement in England he was known as 'the dancing Colonel' because of his fondness for impromptu dances and balls. A great character.

Chowkidar has been following the story of Peter Bankes, who, against all odds, has found the grave of his father, Peter Robert Sandham Bankes, who was shot in the Chin Hills in November 1943 (see Vol. 14, No. 2). Previously recorded as buried in an isolated grave, Captain Bankes has now been commemorated in the Taukkyan War Cemetery, about 21 miles north of Rangoon. The simple inscription on a small new memorial reads:

Buried in Lamthang
Captain P.R.S. Bankes, MC
Army in Burma
Reserve of Officers
28th November 1943 Age 32.
Beloved Husband of Pearl and father of Peter.
Lost but never forgotten and now at Rest.

Mr Bankes adds: 'This has now resulted in my father having two memorial inscriptions, the other one being on one of the pillars in the 'unknown graves' section! In fact the Commonwealth War Graves Commission will be arranging for the current Cemetery Register to be replaced with a revised version, and eventually his name will be erased from the column when the panel on which he is mentioned is replaced.'

Talking of Burma, the long-awaited new edition of *The Burma Register* was published by BACSA last year. Because so many burial registers, followed by many of the tombs themselves, have been destroyed, the original *Register*, published in 1983, was a significant achievement. Its editor, the late R.E. McGuire, with a small team, went through materials at the India Office Library and Records and contacted individuals and firms who had worked in Burma before its Independence in 1948. Contributors in Burma provided additional information. It was inevitable, however, that some names of the dead would be missed. Indeed, Mr McGuire wrote that the *Register* was not intended to be a complete inventory of those buried, and that it could only record deaths which had been reported or obtained through research. It is not therefore surprising that people have already contacted BACSA with additional information and we are most grateful to them for having done so. An updated loose sheet will be included in remaining stocks of the *Register* and members are encouraged to contribute.

For example, Jill Ford from Hertfordshire tells us that her father, Lieutenant Colonel Frank Ford, was the Commanding Officer of the 13th Battalion Burma Rifles in Taunggyi in 1942. Together with her

three siblings and her pregnant mother, the Ford family were evacuated from Burma in March of that year with the help of Philip Fogarty of the Indian Civil Service. Fogarty must have been near retirement age during World War Two, having joined the Service in 1909. He is recorded in the *Register* as dying on 30 April 1942 in China from burns received when his plane crashed. He had been on a mission from the British Government in Burma to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek. But information from David Griffiths, a forester who survived the plane crash reveals that in fact Fogarty sustained a compound fracture to the leg. Although he was rescued and nursed in the American Mission hospital in Kunming, he died from septicemia. We have also been told about the grave of Lady Pratt, the grandmother of Mr Camden Pratt who was buried at All Saints Church, in Maymyo. Ma Win, from Bassein, was the wife of Sir Henry Sheldon Pratt ICS, a distinguished judge who served at the High Court in Rangoon and was Chief Justice for two periods in the 1920s. The couple married in 1902 and had five children. Lady Pratt died at Anisakan, near Maymyo on 22 November 1935. Her tombstone, now weatherbeaten, but still legible, has the touching inscription 'Far Above Rubies'.

A mysterious murder in Penang, which was never solved, prompted BACSA member Leslie James to examine the death of John St. Maur Ramsden. Writing in the 'Penang Heritage Trust Newsletter', Mr James reports that the Ramsden tomb, in the Western Road cemetery, is in good condition. Its inscription records that Ramsden was 'killed by gunshot from an unknown hand at Caledonia, Province Wellesley on 8 June 1948'. There is also a large commemorative screen behind the altar of St George's Church, Penang. Curiously, as Mr James says, the small brass plaque at the base of the screen, which bears an inscription in Latin, does not mention the victim, only that the screen was dedicated by his parents in 1952. John St. Maur Ramsden, born in 1902, and son of the sixth Baronet, came from one of England's leading families, who became 'sugar barons' in Malaya before converting their estates to rubber in the early 20th century. During World War Two he served in the RAF and later in Royal Navy. After the war he worked as managing director of the Penang Rubber Estates Group and had just returned there after a three months leave in England.

Certainly there was political unrest and violence against foreign-owned rubber estates and tin mines at the time and a nationwide State of Emergency, which lasted for twelve years was declared in July in 1948. But Ramsden was not a victim of the insurgency, as 'The Straits Times' reported. He had been shot twice in the back of the head as he was

going upstairs in his house on the Caledonia estate at Nibong Tebal. His murder caused a sensation in England and the matter was raised in the House of Lords, where a report read from the High Commissioner stated that the police were satisfied it was in no way connected with politically-inspired crimes in Malaya. Two of Ramsden's staff were arrested, one his 'head boy' for the illegal possession of ammunition, which he claimed had been given to him by his master. The coroner's finding was that Ramsden had been 'shot by an unknown person with a double barrel gun' but that 'there is no evidence against any particular person'. It indeed seems odd that such a high-profile case should have remained unsolved after all these years.

BACSA member Tim Willasey-Wilsey has forwarded an interesting newspaper article about a Scotswoman who worked in remote areas of the North West Frontier during the 1930s and 40s. Written by Dr Raheal Ahmad Siddiqui and published in 'The News on Sunday', the article tells the story of Constance Marie Carruthers whose life changed for ever when she met and married George Leslie Mallam in Oxford in 1934. Some of the information about her comes from the autobiography by her husband, published in 2011 under the title *Thirty Years on the North-West Frontier*. But what makes Dr Siddiqui's article of special interest is that he took the trouble to visit the places where the Mallams had lived and Marie's grave in the Kalabagh cemetery at Nathia Gali. Leslie Mallam, as he was known, had been a lieutenant colonel in the Indian Army (2nd Bengal Lancers) before becoming a Political Officer on the Frontier. He later served as District Judge and Chief Secretary to the Provincial Governor in Peshawar. Returning with his new wife to India in October 1934, the couple settled down at Kohat, in the Cavagnari House, named after the ill-fated British diplomat.

Marie's contact with Flora Davidson, a missionary in Kohat was to prove decisive and she became deeply involved with the welfare of local women, particularly in the maternity and child health areas. Not surprisingly, Marie met opposition in trying to introduce more hygienic practices among the *dais*, the traditional midwives, but she persevered and a number of Mallam Welfare Centres were established where local midwives were trained. Sadly Marie became ill and was diagnosed with diabetes, which required daily insulin injections. Although diabetes had long been described by Indian physicians it seems that insulin was not available in India at the time, so the drug had to be imported from England. Leslie Mallam was posted to Peshawar in 1941, with the great advantage that the Secretariat moved annually to Nathia Gali, the summer headquarters.

It was here that Marie, who had given birth to a baby boy named Marcus in March 1944, died on 4 June of that same year from complications arising after a caesarian operation. Her coffin was draped with a Red Cross flag and carried to the cemetery by a band of Gurkha troops. The Red Cross also placed a memorial brass plate at St John's Church, Peshawar, which read simply: In loving memory of Constance Marie Mallam, Kaiser-i-Hind Medal (silver), wife of Lt. Colonel G.L. Mallam, CIE, IPS.

Dr Siddiqui visited the well-maintained Cavagnari House which is now the official residence of the Commissioner. Unfortunately the Mallam Welfare Centre was in a dilapidated condition. Run by the Red Crescent Society (the Muslim equivalent of the Red Cross), it still includes a vocational training centre. Marie's grave was found in the ill-kept cemetery and Dr Siddiqui was able to remove the undergrowth to reveal the inscription to this 'extraordinary Scotswoman who dedicated her life for the well-being of the native women.'

Changing the subject, Sarah Rutherford, a BACSA member has published a delightful little booklet on Botanic Gardens throughout the world. Of interest to readers will be the chapter on colonial botanic gardens which reminds us of the importance of these early experiments with economic and medicinal crops. Calcutta's botanic garden was established in 1787 by Colonel Robert Kyd, who is commemorated in it with a beautiful urn designed by Thomas Banks. Distinguished men followed him including William Roxburgh and Nathaniel Wallich. Teak, mahogany, sugar-cane and jute were all introduced and tried here. Details of the booklet are on page 72.

And a tailpiece from BACSA member Andrew Ward, who writes: 'I thought your readers might be interested in the following story. Long before I first set foot in India in 1954, the subcontinent had played an important part in my family's history. My great, great grandfather Ward was an American Presbyterian missionary in Madras in the 1840s, and one of his infant children, my great uncle, is buried there. On my mother's side of the family, her aunt Nancy Spencer, or Aunt Nanky as my mother called her, came to India in the early part of the last century as a Presbyterian missionary in the Punjab, where she eventually died of the ague *en route* to a hill station.

When Aunt Nanky was preparing to leave home, the local congregation had presented her with a set of twelve apostle spoons which she packed with her kit and brought with her to India. Upon her death, the mission

returned her effects to her mother, but when she opened her daughter's trunk, the spoon representing the apostle Simon was missing. In 1955, my family drove up to Kashmir to spend a couple of weeks on Nagim Bagh. Sitting down for lunch on our houseboat, my mother reached for her soup spoon and picked up what turned out to be Aunt Nanky's missing spoon. My parents debated whether to purchase the spoon from the houseboat walla. But my mother decided that Aunt Nanky, not to mention Simon, would have wanted it to continue in its apostolic progress through India.' We wonder where it might be today.

CAN YOU HELP?

Mr Drummon Corrie tells us that his third great grandfather, Charles Alfred Kellett was the Captain of the Chinese Junk *Keying* which sailed from China around the Cape of Good Hope to the United States and Britain between in the mid-nineteenth century. It was the first Chinese Junk to appear in New York. Relatively little was known about Captain Kellett until recently. (He was often confused with Knight Vice Admiral Sir Henry Kellett.) Captain Charles Alfred Kellett and his ship are the subject of Dr Stephen Davies' recent book *East Sails West: The Voyage of the Keying, 1846-1855*. 'My cousin Susan Simmons, and I' writes Mr Corrie 'have done a considerable amount of research over the last decade and we've established:

1. Captain Kellett's date and place of birth
2. The record of his earliest voyages
3. An array of records about the voyage of the Chinese Junk *Keying*
4. The record of Charles Alfred Kellett's migration to New Zealand and Australia.

Recently I've established, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Charles, his wife Jane and their three children subsequently moved to India. What's more, I discovered that his wife Jane died within three weeks of arriving in India. Charles himself died on the 10th of January 1869 and was buried in the "Military Burial Ground of Fort William in the Archdeaconry & Diocese of Calcutta." I have written to the Christian Burial Board in India, in the hope of obtaining proof of his burial in this burial ground. Sadly, they have been unable to locate it and the search has ground to a halt. I'd love to know whether you would be interested in delving into this mystery? If not, would you have contacts in India that could, would or should be interested in the above?

We can offer Mr Corrie some limited information. Although the Burial Register mentions Fort William, in fact the Military Burial Ground is at

Alipore, south Calcutta and is now called Bhowanipore Cemetery. (Burials do not seem to have taken place within the Fort itself, nor indeed in other British forts in India.) Unfortunately the majority of early tombs at Bhowanipore were deliberately destroyed in the late 1990s (see *Chowkidar* vol 13, No. 1: The Lost Graves of Bhowanipore Cemetery). However, the cemetery is unusual in that it has its original Burial Registers dating back to the early nineteenth century. The work of transcribing these records is currently being hampered by incomplete photocopies but BACSA is still hopeful this will be overcome if the records can be photographed in situ. So although Captain Kellett's tomb is almost certainly gone, his name should appear in the records for 1869. Any additional information on him would of course be most welcome.

Thank you! BACSA member Dr Rosemary Raza was very pleased and grateful for the response to her request in the last *Chowkidar* for information about British women artists in India. Seven BACSA members kindly replied and gave invaluable information. Some related to artists whose work has already appeared as illustrations in publications of the 19th and early 20th centuries, or in a journal recently published by a family member, but the additional information and paintings help open up the lives of the artists and set their work in context. One was a talented botanical painter, Anna Maria Walker, and several artists are unknown outside their families. Their illustrated albums, letters and journals demonstrate the social context in which art was created, and reflect the way in which the response of artists to India was timeless - or changing. Dr Raza hopes to make more 'finds', particularly in Scotland, which sent so many of its daughters and sons to India. Any further information will be gratefully received! rrraza@hotmail.com

BARRACKPORE AND BEYOND

BACSA member Philip Davies is a distinguished author who has written extensively about India, including *Splendours of the Raj* and the *Penguin Guide to the Monuments of India*. He has written the following article exclusively for *Chowkidar*:

While in the Calcutta, I visited Barrackpore and the Anglican cemetery, which, despite the presence of a caretaker, was overgrown and in very poor condition. The charming Gothic gatehouse is crumbling fast (see page 61) and most of the memorials are swathed in vegetation. After stripping away the undergrowth from a promising looking memorial,

the tomb of the wife of Sir Bradford Leslie KCIE was exposed. Leslie (1831-1926) was a pupil of Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Chief Engineer to the East India Railway Company. His *magnum opus*, for which he was knighted, is the great Jubilee bridge across the Hooghly at Bandel where its construction was overseen by Lt. Colonel Arthur John Barry, the nephew of Sir John Wolfe-Barry, the project engineer for Tower Bridge. Completed in 1887, it is one of the finest in India, recently threatened with demolition, but now reprieved.

Tragically, Leslie lost his wife Mary Jane Eliza in 1886, followed by three daughters and a son-in-law within three years of each other. He returned to England in 1887 after suffering from repeated bouts of malaria. Mary's chest tomb is made from solid marble with exquisite ornamental roses carved in to the surface as fresh as the day it was sculpted. Nearby stands a fine fluted Doric sandstone memorial from 1871 covering the grave of Alexander Landale, the only son of John and Ellen Dacosta. (*see back cover*) In another overgrown corner lie some random World War I grave markers managed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Following the visit, BACSA approached the CWGC, who have arranged for the markers to be replaced with sixteen conventional headstones; part of a wider programme to secure the replacement of all such markers in India by the end of the current financial year.

Calcutta: time for action

I have also been closely involved in promoting the conservation-led regeneration of Calcutta for the past 30 years, in conjunction with the British Deputy High Commission. After leading a UNESCO conference on the future of the Calcutta waterfront in October, a report *Kolkata: Time for Action* was submitted to Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, to try and unlock an integrated strategy for the future of the city. What is encouraging is that there is now a very active grassroots campaign led by the eminent Bengali writer Amit Chaudhuri, which might just generate sufficient political momentum to break through the inertia that has bedevilled previous attempts to save the city's spectacular architectural heritage.

I am writing an illustrated history of the architecture and monuments of the British Empire and Commonwealth and would be very interested to hear from any member who has good quality historic photographs of colonial buildings in India and South Asia, or elsewhere, particularly churches, government and public buildings. Please contact me at phd51@btinternet.com or write care of the Editor.

MISCELLANY

The Kaladunghi cemetery at Nainital has long been a cause for concern. It was one of five cemeteries in the hill-station, poorly preserved and on sloping ground which also makes maintenance difficult. But publicity, following a visit by Susie Gilbert, in search of her ancestors, may lead to a restoration project. Ms Gilbert found the grave of her great great grandmother, Emily Eliza Lewis who died in 1897, in the cemetery. She shared this information with a Facebook group called Nainital Nostalgia and a member of the group, Shikha Chaki, subsequently approached BACSA for help. Interviewed by 'The Hindustan Times', who published an article on Nainital's cemeteries, the Hon. Secretary Peter Boon said 'The growing local interest in the heritage of the old European cemeteries in India is a welcome development. BACSA is ready to support committed groups and communities wishing to conserve their historic sites worthy of preservation'. More publicity came with the publication of a recent article in 'The Statesman' on the Kishanganj cemetery, also known as the D'Eremao cemetery in Delhi. Written by Ronnie Smith, it lamented the decay of this historic site and quoted at length earlier *Chowkidar* research on the origins of the cemetery (see Vol. 11, Nos. 1 and 2, 2006).

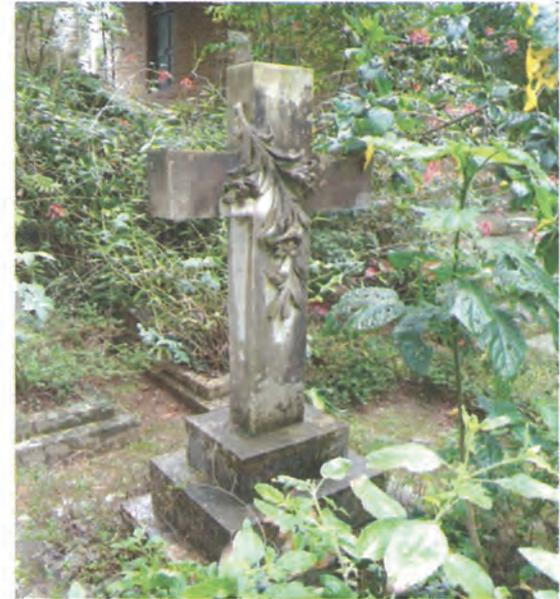
Events Officer Valerie Robinson writes: On Monday 9th November 2015 twelve BACSA members visited the Freemasons' Hall in Great Queen Street. An impressive building, its Museum houses one of the finest collections of Masonic material in the world. After a tour which included the Grand Hall, and an explanation of some of the artefacts on show, we were given a talk by Susan Snell, Archivist and Records Manager, on Freemasonry in India. Members were surprised to hear how widespread and active the organisation was, and how many distinguished members, both British and Indian, there were during the British period. After a most enlightening visit, a number of us enjoyed a delightful lunch at the Freemasons' Arms nearby.

An exhibition of paintings by Violet Digby, entitled 'A St. Ives Painter in Kashmir' is taking place at the Nehru Centre, South Audley Street, from 19 to 28 April 2016 (closed 20, 23, 24 April). Violet Digby was the wife of the Indian High Court judge, Kenelm George Digby and a gifted artist. Their son, the late Simon Digby, was a noted antiquarian collector and long time BACSA member. It was Simon's wish that his mother's paintings should be exhibited and a catalogue, based on his notes, will be available for sale during the exhibition.



above: entrance to Sultanpet Cemetery (see page 49)

below: the decaying Narinda tomb, Dacca (see page 50)



above: the tomb of Sophia Grimes, Kodaikanal (see page 51)

below: the gatehouse at Barrackpore, West Bengal (see page 57)



BOOKS BY BACSA MEMBERS

In Pursuit of the Past: Collecting Old Art in Modern India circa 1875-1950. Pratapaditya Pal

Over the last sixty years there have been numerous scholarly publications and catalogues regarding nearly every aspect of Indian Art. But almost nothing has been written about the pioneering collectors in India who started forming interesting collections of the subcontinent's Art when it was largely neglected elsewhere. So it was with excitement that Dr Pal's book was keenly awaited by Indian Art lovers and connoisseurs across the world. Sadly it doesn't quite live up to expectations despite the intriguing and often fascinating material contained within it. As we have come to expect from Marg, the book has been produced to a very high standard – it is well laid out, the illustrations are excellent and the script is easy to read. Dr Pal has divided his book into sections. He first considers the early collectors in Calcutta and then progresses to those from Patna and Benares. There is a charming section about the brilliant Russian artist Nicholas Roerich and his sons. The latter part of the book looks at the extraordinary collections formed in Bombay and Hyderabad.

Abanindranath Tagore and his brother Gaganendranath are widely regarded as among the greatest of the Bengal school painters. Abanindranath's work has a subtlety and sometimes melancholy beauty unmatched by his rivals. His brother's work is often strongly influenced by Japanese painting. Pal reveals that they were also collectors in their day. But despite some interesting anecdotes on their collecting habits, we learn rather little about the collections themselves – indeed if the few paltry items that are illustrated from their collections are anything to go by, it suggests that the brothers were unable to afford great art – even when prices were so low. On the other hand works from the collection of Ananda Kentish Coomeraswamy are world-renowned, as are his impressive publications. He was of Sri Lankan origin (then Ceylon) and came to Calcutta early in the 20th century and frequented the Tagore house. We learn fascinating details of his rivalry with other collectors in the city and how he put together one of the greatest collections of Indian paintings ever formed. But for me the third chapter on the *bhadralok* collectors of Calcutta is much more interesting as almost nothing was previously known about collectors like the Ghose brothers. 'Bhadralok' is a Bengali word which refers to highly cultured and educated gentlemen. The Ghoses were an old and distinguished family from north Calcutta and the two brothers Anu and

Ajit were professionals who spent their lives collecting. The breadth of their collections was extraordinary – it encompassed Mughal paintings and manuscripts including the magnificent *Tarikh-i-Alfi*, dozens of Rajput and Pahari paintings as well as those from Orissa and of course Bengal. His Akbar period painting of King Solomon and Animals from the manuscript *Iyar-i-Danish* is among the finest paintings of the period that exists. Similarly Ghose's Chola bronze Nataraja is superb.

On reaching the end of the third chapter, which closes the discussion on the Calcutta collectors, one is immediately aware that Pal has entirely ignored the great collectors of Anglo-Indian paintings in Calcutta. The Tagore family of Pathuriaghata were formidable collectors of art from the early 19th century. Gopi Mohun, with the help of the artist George Chinnery, assembled a magnificent collection of European paintings including many Anglo-Indian works. His descendant Sir Prodyot Coomar Tagore visited London in the early 1930s and augmented the collection with exceptional paintings by the Daniells, William Hodges, Thomas Hickey and, although unrecognized at the time, a superb pair of landscapes by Zoffany. The Kejriwal family acquired some of the collection but also bought great works by Ravi Varma, magnificent Bengal school paintings and fine early Pala sculptures. One has the impression that Pal has studiously avoided discussion of these and other collectors with British connections in the city.

On the other hand the most enjoyable chapter considers perhaps the most interesting collector in India in that period – Rai Krishnadas. He was of a distinguished Benares family and was a man of the most refined taste. He assiduously collected both Indian art and Antiquities from his early youth. He assembled a collection worthy of a great museum he himself donated his collection to the Banaras Hindu University. For anyone visiting the holy city, a visit to see that collection is a real treat. Beautifully displayed, the collection contains world renowned treasures – great Mughal works and superb sculpture from all over India. Pal rightly devotes two whole chapters to the Bombay collectors and particularly the Parsees. The Tata Brothers, Sir Dorab and Sir Ratan inherited both a sizeable business that included the famous Taj Mahal Hotel, and also a vast fortune. It enabled them, within a surprisingly short space of time - the first twenty years of the 20th Century - to put together a huge collection of over 5,000 works of every description. The diversity is staggering – they acquired the finest Indian paintings available including fabulous works by Nainsukh. In addition they bought huge quantities of Chinese and Japanese porcelain, religious objects from neighbouring Tibet, Nepal and Burma,

and three dimensional objects of every description. Pal only mentions in passing the European paintings but they include four works by Constable and other fine paintings. The brothers bequeathed the entire collection to the Prince of Wales Museum of Western Indian for us all to enjoy. The Tatas weren't alone in Bombay as formidable collectors – Sir Cowasji Jehangir with his wife favoured Mughal and Deccani paintings and formed a collection of great aesthetic merit – his early 17th century portrait from Golconda of a young Prince with a parrot has few rivals. They also bought the best Chola bronzes then available.

This book is well worth acquiring. It is enjoyable to read and certainly contains a wealth of material that one doesn't find elsewhere. One just wishes that Pal had been rather more balanced in his approach rather than concentrating on the collections he admires while excluding anything that smacks of colonialism. India would be so much the poorer without the splendid European paintings of its landscape and people. Today most of the collectors of Anglo-Indian paintings are Indians themselves and don't share the author's obvious prejudice. (CAG)

2015 The Marg Foundation, Mumbai ISBN 978 93 83243 09 9
Rs 2800 pp180

Curtain Call: Anglo Indian Reflections ed. Kathleen Cassity & Rochelle Almeida

This is the eighth and final book of a series that began in 2000. Started by BACSA members Blair and Ellen Williams, the idea behind the books was two-fold: to give a voice to the Anglo-Indian community and to raise money for poorer members of the community living in Calcutta. Over the last fifteen years a significant change has taken place, both in the way that Anglo-Indians see themselves and how they are perceived by others. One of the co-editors, Kathleen Cassity, said when she began researching her own Anglo-Indian background in 1992, resources were scanty, apart from classics like *Hostages to India* by Herbert Stark and *Britain's Betrayal in India* by Frank Anthony. Both titles are significant – Anglo-Indians were betrayed by Britain after 1947. The country mythologised as 'Home' even by those born in India, made it as difficult as possible for Anglo-Indians to emigrate. Passports were delayed or with-held, payments were demanded, and politicians were scathing about the supposed defects of these mixed-race people.

As a result, many went to Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA. Britain lost out on a group of people who were well-educated – who were teachers, nurses, administrators and engineers, and above all, British in their values. How different post-war immigration patterns might have been had the community been welcomed. In India, jobs which had traditionally been reserved for Anglo-Indians were withdrawn. Today, those who stayed in India are sharply divided into the educators, running some of the best public schools, and the very poor, dependent on charity. Few have made it in to government. This book then is both a summary of the community today and a nostalgic look back. 'After the Diaspora', 'Anglo-Indian Cuisine', and 'Scholarly Forays' are some of the sections. Humour, family stories, analysis, history and gossip are all here. Among the many contributors are academics, novelists, anthropologists, journalists and engineers. And their voices, at last, are confident. Recommended. (RLJ)

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BOOKS BY NON-MEMBERS OF INTEREST

New Delhi: The Last Imperial City

David A. Johnson

Many scholars have seen the building of New Delhi as India's new capital city primarily as an assertion of British imperial supremacy. Its architecture and design, predominantly but not exclusively, classical in form has been interpreted as expressing a belief in the superiority of European civilisation over that of previous empires, and the enduring validity of British rule in India. In this new study of the archival record of the decision to move the capital from Calcutta, and the salient features of its architectural plan and design, David Johnson argues that coercion should only be seen as half the story. The move to Delhi was also intended as a symbol and promise of government by consent, appealing to a conscious continuity with the traditions of previous empires based in northern India, and implying a downplaying of the primacy both of the commercial capital Calcutta and of Bengal, which was perceived as a hotbed of intellectual dissent and revolutionary activism. The proposed move was a bitter pill for the European commercial community to swallow and they marshalled their opposition to it with all the force of their powerful friends in London and of the English language media. But the skilful package of changes and concessions put together by the Viceroy Lord Hardinge included

the reversal of his predecessor Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal, a move to delight the Bengali intelligentsia and to infuriate Curzon himself and his influential coterie in the House of Lords. Ironically the surprise decision itself had not been open to democratic discussion or debate. Hardinge's trump card, as he believed, was that the announcement was made by the King himself in all the pageantry of the Delhi Durbar of 1911, the only such event in which a British King Emperor or Queen Empress had been present in person. British prestige was therefore seen to be at stake and the project could not have been abandoned without a major loss of face.

The idea of government by consent was predicated not on any substantial concession to nationalist demands, but in pursuit of a gradualist programme with a measure of elective representation and devolution of power to the provinces. The centre of power, embodied in the new capital would continue to be imperial. The Council Chamber, now the Parliament, was to embody the principle of government by consent, with the quasi-independent princely states, free of nationalist ambitions, accorded a prominent but largely ceremonial role.

What comes through in this book is the personal dominance of Lord Hardinge in deciding how the move should be implemented. This became clear in his effective interventions over the appointment of the planning authority, the design engineers and the architects. Hardinge's Viceregal tenure would end in 1916. He knew that unless the project was pushed ahead quickly it would be open to his successor to cancel the move. With a major war in Europe intervening, the project might well have been abandoned on financial grounds alone. Had the major buildings not already been above ground the fledgling project would not even have been the 'magnificent ruin' that some cynics predicted New Delhi would eventually become, as had all its predecessors.

The names of Lutyens and Baker share almost equal honours as the architects of New Delhi. But Johnson's account restores the names of others who were deeply influential in the planning debates even when their ideas were not adopted. Though Hardinge favoured Lutyens as the architect of Government House (later Viceroy's House and now Rashtrapati Bhavan), Lutyens was open to criticism on other grounds which were central to Hardinge's ideological concept of what the new capital should represent. Lutyens had little regard for Indian architecture which was allotted a largely decorative role, and that through the advocacy of others. Hardinge admired the work of Bhai Ram Singh of Lahore but it would have been good to have had more

information than Johnson gives us about the Indian craftsmen who were eventually involved. The gradient of Kingsway (now Rajpath), between the two Secretariat buildings which housed the bureaucracy, was the subject of a stand-off between Baker and Lutyens which Baker - with Hardinge's full support - won. Lutyens himself wryly described it as his 'Bakerloo'.

More fundamental than the individuals were the conceptual issues raised; the relationship and share of accommodation for the Indian and European staff; the scale and proportions of the public buildings in relation to the old cities of Delhi and to the new city's ceremonial space; and later the memorial to soldiers killed in the war that was fought as the new capital was being built. After 1918 the design of war memorials in Britain and across Europe became Lutyens's acknowledged forte. His All India War Memorial - now India Gate - was intended to symbolise a universal sense of loss and sacrifice by both British and Indian soldiers. It commemorated a battle for freedom, but not the freedom that after 1947 Indians wanted to celebrate, namely their own.

After Indian independence much of the symbolism of Indian's capital city had to be re-imagined. The city itself changed beyond recognition with the massive influx of refugees from Partition, and especially the division of Punjab between India and Pakistan. It has expanded exponentially, spawning new suburbs and satellite cities, and a host of new environmental problems. But New Delhi remains a place of national pride and real power, and this skilfully told story of its origins sheds light on the reasons why. (WFC)

2015 Palgrave Macmillan ISBN 978 1 137 46986 1 pp261. £60.00

The Raj at War: A People's History of India's Second World War
Yasmin Khan

Over the years much has been written about India's contribution to the Second World War, but the majority of work has focussed on the role of the Indian Armed Forces on the battlefield. Far less has been written about the impact of the war on the civilian population of India, and of those whose service, either in uniform or in support of the Armed Forces, kept them in India to support the war effort. As the author points out, however 'the war could not be based in India without infringing drastically on the everyday world of its inhabitants'. This elegantly written, well researched and beautifully crafted book throws a

clear spotlight on many aspects of life in India during those eventful years. Be prepared, however, for some very uncomfortable reading; the clarity of the spotlight is, at times, both disturbing and embarrassing. Running through it all is the political thread of independence, of the defining impact of the war on nationalist politics, and of the exposure of imperialist failings and of a consequent loss of faith in the Raj – Lord Linlithgow’s failure to consult Indian leaders at the start of the war probably set the tone for much that was to follow. Never was this loss of faith more apparent than in the perceived injustice meted out to many of the refugees fleeing the conflict in Burma. The fall of Singapore and raids on Ceylon caused questions to be asked about the supposed invincibility of the British Empire, but stories of a two-tier refugee system coming out of Burma damaged the reputation of the Raj almost beyond repair.

Divisions within Congress are explored – Nehru’s sympathy for the Allied cause in fighting fascism in Europe set against the animosity caused by the failed Cripps mission of 1942, which many within Congress regarded as a mark of British insincerity from the outset. The later arrest and confinement for three years of Congress leaders at Ahmednagar Fort left the field open for underground activists to exploit the feelings of anger surging in the country. Churchill’s animosity towards India and Indians, which the author describes as ‘showing an irrational and offensive hatred of the country’ would lead to the government side-lining any resolution of the political question as an irrelevance while prioritising victory at all costs.

But these costs were extremely high. A scorched earth policy initiated in Bengal in 1943, designed to deny an invading Japanese army access to resources, as they had been able to do in Singapore, had the effect of denying the means of earning a living for many of the poorest: the destruction of boats used for fishing and as essential transport of people and goods; the eviction of farmers and draining of paddy fields close to the many new airfields being built across the country to prevent the spread of mosquitos and flies; the slaughter of cattle in Bihar and Orissa to provide meat for British and American servicemen; or the requisition and overnight evacuation of villages and hamlets to make way for storage space, factories and housing for foreign service personnel. Not everyone suffered and for some the war was a boon: the ruling Princes played their cards well, though ultimately their support failed to prop up the existing political order. Some less than scrupulous local entrepreneurs profited from food contracts, even as Bengal descended into famine.

Others founded post-war hotel chains based on an entrepreneurial ability to provide accommodation for war-time visiting servicemen. For the majority it was far from a positive experience and some British personnel, especially those new to India, felt the pain of the locals and were uncertain about being used in aid of the civil power to put down internal unrest. Visiting American service personnel also expressed disquiet at the poverty. On the other hand, a visiting American diplomat, in reporting on war preparedness in the country, censured Britain’s failure to extract the most from its colony – in effect issuing a command to squeeze India’s people and resources much harder. The impact of the war on India’s finance is also explored; what looked like a fair deal for India turned out to be payment deferred, and the money needed for the day had to be raised in India, with the government turning to tax, borrowing, and an increased amount of money in circulation to meet the demand.

The author set out to understand the impact of the war on the home front in India, and how the Indian sub-continent itself was re-shaped by the war. As she notes in her concluding chapter, the war forced some terrible decisions and produced strange juxtapositions and unforeseen circumstances. The author acknowledges that there is still much more to be understood about the demands of war on many different kinds of people, but this book has gone a long way to unlocking that understanding and informing the debate. Highly recommended. (TMcC)

2015 Bodley Head ISBN 978 1 847 92120 8. £25.00 pp416

Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines and the East India Company
Georgina Green

First a bit of background: Valentines is a large house formerly belonging to Sir Charles Raymond and now in the care of the London Borough of Redbridge. Georgina Green is an historian who has published several books on places in the Borough including Ilford; Woodford; and in particular about one Robert Surman who was Sir Charles’ immediate predecessor as owner of Valentines. Sir Charles Raymond is an important man. He was in the East India Company’s maritime service and made six voyages between 1729 and 1744, the last four as Commander of two successive ships, both called *Wager*. Each voyage is discussed in detail and the surviving ships’ journals, that is, the ships’ Logs have been carefully studied. (The British Library reference is IOR L/MAR/B).

By using his private trade privilege Raymond was able to amass a substantial fortune. But that was only the start. His main significance for the historian of the Company is his role as Principal Managing Owner or ship's 'husband' for no less than 113 voyages between 1750 and 1788. The author is excellent at piecing together evidence of how he did this by involving friends and relatives in each investment, since it was usual for the costs of the ship to be spread among several people. It was better to have small shares in several ships than own all of one ship which might fail, by reason of wrecking, piracy, or enemy action. The author clearly categorises the risks and returns. One thinks of Pepys at the end of each year calculating his net worth. Yet many biographies – especially in the field of family history – have our ancestors in a financial vacuum. Admittedly evidence is often sparse, but it is good to see a book where this issue is tackled head-on. The charter-party agreements, mostly in the India Office Records B series at the British Library, have been trawled as well as others in the Essex Record Office.

The book also explores how Raymond spent his wealth – in a country estate on which to live (Valentines), and other property as investment, more charter-parties, and finally in banking – he was the founder of two separate banking companies. The links between the Company's bigwigs such as Raymond and the City of London are well spelled out, with patronage used to oil the wheels. The author points out that in late 18th century London there were six leading financial institutions: the Bank of England, The East India Company, The South Sea Company, and the three insurance companies (Royal Exchange, London Assurance and Sun Fire). Raymond was involved with the two trading Companies and one insurance company (Sun). The author might also have added Lloyds of London, where just like the financing of charter-parties, the risk was spread among, say, 30 Names, though I accept that evidence for this may be hard to find. The interaction of the friends, relatives and neighbours, in and around what is now Redbridge is also admirably described. The absence of private letters or diaries means that we can never know Raymond as an individual, but as a picture of the business of the East India Company and its network of Directors, Owners and Officers, the book provides an excellent description. Anybody interested in researching the Company's maritime service at this period will find this book an invaluable resource. (RSM)

2015 Hainault Press ISBN 978-0-9507915-2-4. £15.00 pp164. Sterling cheques payable to Georgina Green at Hainault Press, 24 Henry's Walk, Hainault, Ilford Essex IG6 2NR. Price including P&P in the UK is £15.00, Europe £20.00, Rest of the world £24.00

The Prisoner of Kathmandu: Brian Hodgson in Nepal 1820-43

Charles Allen

It is a splendid title for a book, but is it accurate? The author justifies it by explaining in the Foreword that although Brian Houghton Hodgson was not literally a prisoner in Kathmandu, he remained there for twenty-three years 'forced by a combination of health and politics to live a restricted life'. It is a weak argument and not the only disappointment in this eagerly awaited book. Hodgson was not untypical of his time and class. The son of a country gentleman in Cheshire, he was probably born in 1801 and sought a career in the East India Company. He hoped, like other young men, this would give him the opportunity to redeem the family fortune, his father having lost money in a banking venture. He was a star pupil at Haileybury and on arrival in Calcutta, continued his language studies at Fort William College. However, a bad attack of fever led him to the hills, and through various recommendations he became Assistant Resident at Kathmandu, when only nineteen.

Initially unhappy and isolated, he was advised to be patient and to learn all he could of Nepal, and gradually this he what he did and what he is known for today. With the help of local people he began to collect Sanskrit manuscripts and was perhaps the first of the 'Orientalists' to realise that Buddhist literature, completely eliminated in India, still existed in Nepal. He hired local artists to draw Buddhist shrines and with the help of savants started to interpret the various Buddhist schools of thought. At the same time he began a study of native birds and animals and was soon contributing to learned journals, notably that of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta. Later, on becoming Resident, he was not adverse to meddling in internal Nepalese politics, which eventually led to his downfall and exile from Kathmandu. The place haunted him for the rest of his long life. It should be a fascinating story, but it is very dryly told, often wandering too far away from its subject. Surprisingly there is no index which makes referring back difficult. Poor editing means that errors were not questioned – on page 265 Dursley is not only mis-spelt, but placed in Gloucester, not Gloucestershire as it should be. Page 172 refers to the *Calcutta Englishman* newspaper – presumably *The Englishman and Military Chronicle*. As a long time admirer of the author, the reviewer finds this latest book both hurried and at times unsatisfying. (RLJ)

2015 Haus Publishing ISBN 978 1 910376 11 9. £20.00 pp288

SHORT NOTICES

Delhi – unknown tales of a city

R.V. Smith

A delightful book by the man who probably knows Delhi better than anyone. Who could resist chapters headed 'Diwali by Candlelight' or the 'Mystique of Dak Bungalows?' Highly nostalgic and beautifully written, it adds a rich dimension to the city. 'Graveyards of Delhi' looks at prominent Muslim tombs including that of Shah Alam I, son of Aurangzeb. Poetry, cuisine, Christmas celebrations and ghosts, some of them European like the dreaded *feringhi bhoots* are all included in this very readable medley.

2015 Roli Books, Delhi ISBN 978 93 5194 125 5. Rs295 pp209

Wings of Empire: the Forgotten Wars of the Royal Air Force, 1919-1939

Barry Renfrew

Surprisingly the story of the RAF in colonial air campaigns between 1919 and 1939 has not been told before. Of particular interest in this well-researched and written book is the first use of the newly-formed RAF in Mesopotamia, followed by campaigns against tribes on the North West Frontier. Pilots were astonished to find hidden valleys previously unknown to British foot soldiers, and airmen unlucky enough to be shot down were treated with courtesy as guests who had dropped in from the skies. Pathan tribesmen quickly constructed underground air-raid shelters, but obviously there was wide-spread condemnation of the bombing of Frontier villages. Recommended.

2015 The History Press ISBN 978 0 7509 6507 1. £25.00. pp288

Margaret Fraser's India Letters 1820-1826

ed. Randolph Vigne

These are the letters of a young wife and mother, writing to her family in Scotland and their letters to her. Margaret Mackenzie married the Revd William Fraser and travelled to India in 1820. Margaret dwells entirely on family matters and acquaintances, and although she travelled to Benares, via Chunar, no description of her exotic surroundings escapes from her pen. A nicely produced and illustrated booklet of family history.

2015 Instructa, London. Available from the editor at: Instructa, 10 Carteret Street, London SW1H 9DP. randolphvigne@gmail.com
£10 plus £3 p and p UK: £5 p and p abroad. Pp80

Botanic Gardens

Sarah Rutherford

Wide-ranging and of interest not just to botanists or gardeners. See this Chowkidar, page 55.

2015 Shire Publications, Oxford. 978 0 74781 444 3. £7.95. pp64

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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, U.P. India. Mr Advani will invoice BACSA members in sterling, adding £4.00 for registered airmail for a slim hardback and £3.00 for a slim paperback. Sterling cheques should be made payable to Ram Advani. Catalogues and price lists will be sent on request. Email: radvanilko@gmail.com

The Editor's email address is: rosieljai@clara.co.uk



The tomb of Alexander LandaleDacosta at Barrackpore, West Bengal. (see page 58)