



# CHOWKIDAR

**40th Anniversary**

Volume 14 Number 6 Autumn 2017  
Editor: Dr Rosie Llewellyn-Jones MBE

## British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (BACSA)

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### 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 1,100 (2017) 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](http://www.bacsa.org.uk)

Founded by the late Theon Wilkinson, MBE

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## THE MAN WITH TWO TOMBS

*The Editor writes:* On a particularly bleak afternoon in February this year a young Bengali friend and I visited the Kensal Green cemetery in north London. We had gone there to find, and pay homage to, the tomb of Dwarkanath Tagore, grandfather of the better known Rabindranath Tagore, the polymath poet, artist and musician of Calcutta. It was an afternoon of Gothick weather and perfect for visiting a cemetery – wild winds swept fallen leaves across the tombs and bent the cypress trees into haunting shapes. Without a guide and seemingly no-one to help us, we walked the entire length of the cemetery. On the way back to the gatehouse, we passed a huge monument quite unlike anything else in the cemetery. It is described by Historic England as a ‘Portland stone base supporting a coffin chest draped with Casement’s cloak and topped with his bicorn and sword, all under a stone canopy supported at each corner by an Indian bearer’. (*see page 136*) It was the four Indian bearers that caught our attention – handsome turbaned men with moustaches and long hair, standing solemnly with their hands clasped across their chests. Clearly they were guarding a person of great importance, with Indian connections, but it wasn’t Dwarkanath Tagore.

Research seemed to establish that this was the tomb of a very grand man indeed – Major General Sir William Casement, Knight Commander of the Bath. After a distinguished career in the Bengal Army, Sir William became a member of the Supreme Council of India. He died on 16 April 1844 and was buried the following day. The Kensal Green monument is listed as a Grade II\* tomb and in need of some repair. It was only after further investigation that doubts began to arise. A brief biography indicated that General Casement had died in service at Cossipore, now on the outskirts of Kolkata. It was almost impossible to repatriate or even transport corpses at that period. We therefore made the assumption that burial must have taken place in Bengal and the question now was whether the actual tomb still existed and if so, where was it? Rapid detective work in Kolkata established that a handsome tomb, though without the Indian bearers, stood in the Lower Circular Road Cemetery there, near the entrance. (*see page 136*) I must have walked past this tomb dozens of times without reading the inscription, which is given in full in the *Bengal Obituary*. Sir William, it tells us, ‘who after 47 years and 6 months of distinguished service, partly in the field, partly as Secretary to Government in the Military Department and finally as a member of Council, when about to proceed to his native country crowned with well merited honors and distinctions, was swayed by a sense of duty to accede to the

pressing instance of the Governor General in Council to defer his departure from India; a step which exposed him to the attack of the fatal malady which terminated his valuable life on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of April 1844 in the 64<sup>th</sup> year of his age. In him the Government of India has to regret the loss of an able and upright adviser, the Army of a steady friend, and the community at large of one of its most valued members. His afflicted widow records this tribute to his public merits.' The 'fatal malady' was cholera. Historic England and Kensal Green Cemetery have been informed that what they have is a fine memorial to Sir William, but it is not a tomb.

And what of Dwarkanath Tagore, the original reason for our pilgrimage? His plain tomb lies very near the gatehouse with the simple inscription of his name and the date of his death, 1 August 1846. He was an extraordinary man, an entrepreneur who bought up coalfields in Bengal and proposed a rail line to Calcutta. He founded the Union Bank and established the Managing Agency of Carr, Tagore & Co. which dealt in indigo, sugar and opium. A landowner of great estates, and a close friend of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dwarkanath visited England twice, where he met Queen Victoria and became 'very popular with the European ladies', including Mrs Caroline Norton, the poet and society hostess. He certainly sounds like a lot more fun than his grandson, Rabindranath, who is said to have burnt Dwarkanath's papers and played down his grandfather's role in the opium trade. For those who wish to visit Dwarkanath's tomb, the grave number is 6247, then continue along the Centre Avenue for the Casement memorial on the left.

## MAIL BOX

Paddy Willis writes that his first visit to India was in search of the grave of his grandfather, Captain Thomas Harman Keble, a grandfather he had never known. In a moving article entitled 'My journey of 7,000 km and 83 years' Mr Willis says a sepia photograph of Captain Keble, smart in his uniform, fascinated him as a child 'mute yet deafening in its sorrows'. Tom Keble joined the local infantry regiment, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot East Kent (The Buffs) at the start of the 1914 war. He served in Gallipoli among other places and after the war became a regular soldier. He joined his regiment in Burma in 1932 and in January 1934 he was appointed Staff Captain, Ambala Brigade. His wife and young children remained in England and sadly they never saw him again. Captain Keble died suddenly of heart failure in the Ambala Cantonment hospital in October 1934. His death cast a permanent shadow over the family – 'I felt genuine sorrow not to have known him - this handsome,

loving man's life was cut short in his prime and all we knew was that he was buried somewhere in India, a foreign land, and no member of his family had ever visited his grave.' When an opportunity to visit India arose Paddy jumped at it and identified a likely burial place in the cantonment cemetery at Ambala. By chance, over the internet, he found a local man, Mr Deepak Jain who replied offering help. Paddy was actually met at Ambala railway station by Mr Jain, accompanied by his old college tutor, Dr Malhotra and other friends who were 'caught up in this crazy Englishman's quest', as Paddy puts it. The group went first to the Sirhind Club where Captain Keble had written letters home to his family, describing the same rooms and verandahs that still exist today. Then on to the Military Hospital close to where the Captain died 'just days after the garrison returned from spending the hot summer months in the hills at Kasauli'. Paddy admits his heart sank as the group drove towards the cantonment cemetery when he saw the height and density of the undergrowth. 'This ten-hectare site, for which there was no graveyard plan and which dates back to the 1850s, was not about to give up its ghosts easily.'

Deepak Jain and Dr Malhotra had already been in touch with the local priest, the Revd. Arnist Massey, who had unlocked the cemetery gates and had also brought some colleagues with him. A team of eleven people, armed with the photograph of the gravestone sent to Paddy's grandmother, set out and within less than two minutes a cry went up. 'I turned to see the inscription that I knew so well *Captain T.H. Keble, The Buffs, Died 12<sup>th</sup> October 1934*. Words cannot describe the flood of emotions that arose at the sight of this simple grey marble headstone...as I knelt to touch the stone I realised I had come empty handed. I had nothing to offer to mark my visit. Just then these dear and extraordinary people, who had supported my quest to close a chapter on eighty-three years of a family's grief, handed me a simple bouquet of lilies and carnations that had thoughtfully been purchased on my behalf. The lump in my throat just grew bigger. Still reeling from this extraordinary turn of events, under the scorching midday sun, I made my peace with this man I have never met...I told him he could be proud of his children, his grand children and great grand children and I told him I loved him. There was calmness about this place, for all its wildness and I scraped up some earth from his grave to return to England.' 'What made my first journey to India the more remarkable has been the deeply spiritual experience of my trip to Ambala and the kindness shown to me there.' (see page 137)

The tomb of Mary Rebecca Weston and her baby at Dagshai has been mentioned so many times in past *Chowkidars* that it really ought to have its own page. This will be positively its last appearance and it is good to end on a happy note. Mary, née Delanty, was the wife of Dr George Oswald Weston and the couple had married at Rawalpindi in April 1892, when Mary was nineteen. Dr Weston worked for the Royal Army Medical Corps, and Mary worked alongside him as a nursing officer. The couple were clearly fond of children and longed for a child of their own. In the meantime they adopted Maude Delanty, Mary's young niece. On one of her walks in Dagshai, Mary is said to have met a holy man, a *pir baba*, who sensed her sorrow at her inability to conceive. The *pir* gave her an amulet, promising that her wish would be fulfilled if she wore it. Within a few months, Mary was pregnant, but tragically she died in childbirth in 1909 after an agonising labour. Shortly before her death Mary told her husband that she sensed an angel standing behind her with open wings, to guide her to heaven. Dr Weston performed a post-mortem caesarean operation on his wife, and laid the stillborn infant in its mother's arms. He photographed the sad scene, sent the images to an English sculptor and in due course received a beautiful life-size marble tableaux of the three figures which was erected over the grave.

The memorial was so striking that it had an impact far beyond the cemetery in which it lay. A poem in Urdu addressed to Mary Weston was written and the belief grew up among local women that by breaking off a small piece of the marble memorial as an amulet, they too would become pregnant. The tomb became known as 'Mem ki Kabr', or the memsahib's grave. Over the years this naturally led to the figures becoming mutilated and by the beginning of this century the whole thing was a sorry, shapeless lump. In May this year Dr Anand Sethi, founder and curator of the Dagshai Jail Museum, reported that 'thanks to the generosity of friends, Dagshai neighbours, alumni of the Army Public School, Dagshai and our own contribution, we managed to collect money in excess of what we had planned for' towards restoring the tomb. A master craftsman from Kolkata, Mr Tapan Paul, was tasked with rebuilding the memorial based on what was left. Working from old photographs, he used marble chips, Plaster of Paris and fibre glass, creating moulds to replicate the missing features. Before the work started Dr Sethi, described as 'an engineer by profession and a historian by passion' had made huge efforts to trace any surviving relatives. After a long search, with the help of British friends, he found Elizabeth James, the daughter of Maude, the little girl adopted by the Westons before the tragedy struck. Georgina Weston,

whose father Philip, was subsequently adopted by the bereaved Dr George Weston has also been traced, and the two women are planning to visit Dagshai this autumn. A roofed cage has been placed around the restored tomb to prevent any future desecration. May she rest in peace now. (*see page 137*)

BACSA member Phillida Purvis has sent us a report of her south Indian visit with some striking photographs from St Thomas's Church at Ooty. Too tall to photograph in its entirety is the splendid memorial to William Adam, who died at Ooty in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Adam, who was related to the architects Robert and James Adam, spent much of his life in British politics. His first foray into Indian affairs came in 1853 when he was appointed Secretary to Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay. Returning home he was elected MP for the Scottish constituency of Clackmannan and Kinross and he served under Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell and William Gladstone. Rather late in life, at the age of 57, Adam was sent back to India as Governor of Madras, taking up his role in December 1880. By May of the following year, he was dead. The inscription on the remarkably well-preserved pillar reads: In Memory of the Right Honorable William Patrick Adam of Blair Adam N.B. Governor of the Presidency of Fort Saint George. Died at Ootacamund May 24<sup>th</sup> 1881. Aged 57 years. Erected by Order of the Government. (*see page 138*) There are a couple of interesting things about the wording, including the initials N.B. which stand for North Britain, a term to describe the border area of England and Scotland that was already becoming obsolete. The 'Presidency of Fort Saint George' was a curious anomaly too, dating back to the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century when the Madras Fort was home to the Governor, the factors and writers of the East India Company. And surely it was unusual for the Government to order a memorial to be erected over a tomb? Adam had married in 1856 while in Bombay, but little is known of his private life. He was counted amongst the 'great landowners' of Great Britain and Ireland for his acres in Scotland and he was a member of three of London's best Clubs – the Athenaeum, Brooks and the Reform. Obviously a clubbable man, who must have hoped to return home, but instead met his death in a south Indian hill station.

#### **CAN YOU HELP?**

Not all the queries that come to *Chowkidar* are concerned with graves or cemeteries. A wide range of questions demonstrates not only how diverse BACSA's membership is, but also that there is really no other place where such questions can be asked with the expectation that they might well be answered. So we make no apologies for these eclectic queries and first up is Mrs Moore's Soldiers' Home in Wellington.

Allan Frost from the Wellington History Group in Shropshire tells us that he has received several enquiries from people wanting to know where the Soldiers' Home was, and whether it still stands. The questions came after a postcard of the Home, a one-storeyed building, was offered for sale on eBay. BACSA member Mrs Joy Rebello is the Secretary of the local History Group, and as it became clear that Mrs Moore's Home was not in Wellington, Shropshire, but several thousand miles away in Tamil Nadu, south India, things began to fall into place. We were able to tell Mrs Rebello something of the Homes' history. Soldiers' Homes were initiated by Elise Sandes, an evangelical Christian philanthropist who lived in Ireland. She believed that young soldiers, far away from home, needed a place of comfort where they could go for a cup of tea, read the newspapers and above all to meet a motherly figure. All the Homes were run by married or widowed women. Elise had set up a number of Homes in Ireland, and the idea was soon copied in India in the large cantonment towns of Murree, Quetta, Meerut, Lucknow, Rawalpindi and Wellington.

The Homes were modest bungalows set in their own gardens, and they were funded through donations. It is not clear whether the army contributed towards the costs or if it was purely a charitable, civilian enterprise. Elise wrote: 'I try to make my Homes not institutes or clubs or mission halls, but in the truest sense of the word 'HOMES' that any Christian mother would allow for her boys, I feel free to have for my soldiers.' Elise was affectionately named the Mother of the British Army and on her death she was given a military funeral, a rare honour for a civilian woman. At Independence all the Homes were closed down. There was no further need for them as the British troops went back to their own homes. *Chowkidar* would be interested to know if anyone has further information on the Soldiers' Homes in India and whether any of the bungalows still stand today. Elise Sandes' motto and her good intentions have not been forgotten either. The YMCA in central Delhi still advertises itself today as 'a Home away from Home' with a Christian ethos.

One of the most sensational books published in 1856 was not a novel, but a true story, or so the author William Knighton assured his readers. *The Private Life of an Eastern King* was purportedly the lowdown on one of the kings of Awadh (Oudh), Nasir-ud-din Haider, and his short but scandalous reign. The publication of the book came at a highly convenient moment as the annexation of Awadh by the East India Company was being mooted. It swayed public and Parliamentary opinion towards seizing the kingdom, which led, with grim inevitability to the Mutiny the following year.

But who was William Knighton? Born in Dublin in 1823, he was educated in Glasgow and as a young man travelled to Ceylon to work on a coffee plantation called Ruminacudee, near Kandy, that belonged to his uncle. According to one of his descendants, Judy Urquhart of Edinburgh, William became isolated and bored at Ruminacudee so he moved to the capital, Colombo. Here he was appointed headmaster of the Normal School, that is a teachers' training school which taught the norms of education. He was also elected the first honorary Secretary of the Ceylon branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. He wrote two books about his early life – *Forest Life in Ceylon* and *Tropical Sketches*.

From Colombo he moved to Calcutta to become Professor of History and Logic at the prestigious Hindu College, and it was here that he became world famous with the publication of *Private Life*. He was later appointed by the Governor General to the Oudh Commission where he served for eight years from 1860. A second book on the Court at Lucknow was published in 1865 entitled *Elihu Jan's Story or the Private Life of an Eastern Queen*. Elihu Jan had been a maid servant to the Queen Mother of Awadh before the Mutiny and she was subsequently employed by William's first wife. (He married his second wife, Charlotte Drake, in 1883.) After his retirement from India William continued his literary career and interests, becoming vice-president of the Royal Society of Literature. He died at St Leonards on Sea, on the south east coast of England in 1900. Judy Urquhart has been unable so far to find a portrait of William and is also seeking further information about his time in Ceylon and his uncle's coffee estate. Replies to the Editor please.

A request for help has arrived from Jennifer Carter in Australia who hopes readers can help. She writes: For many people the First Afghan War (1838–1842) is synonymous with disaster. It conjures up a defeated army straggling eastward from the city of Kabul through the snow-filled winter passes—an event famously recorded by Lady Florentia Sale, one of the more notable survivors, in her Journal, and by Lady Butler in her painting of Dr William Brydon arriving before Jalalabad (entitled 'Remnants of an Army'). There was much more to the war than the Retreat, however, although an event that lasted barely a week in January 1842 overshadows the actions of the previous three years. The book I am currently researching will deal mainly with the lesser-known events of the war, the soldiers who manned the outposts, and (rarely) the wives who were game enough to join them. I am writing to ask whether any BACSA members have forebears who participated in the First Afghan War and would be willing to share their

stories as known through letters and journals, or by family tradition. These people may have been stationed at Kandahar, for example, or at the various small outposts throughout Afghanistan such as Ghazni southwest of Kabul, and Charikar, gateway to the beautiful Panjsher valley in the northeast. They may have been garrisoned on the other side of what passed for a border, in Baluchistan and Sind. Brothers, sisters, parents, sweethearts, friends... may have kept up a correspondence from India or 'home' with soldiers of the Army of the Indus, or those who stayed on in Afghanistan after 1839 either as soldiers or civilians. There may well be other aspects I haven't even thought of, and I would be very appreciative of any kind of information at all. My email is: rc.jmc@bigpond.com

Belinda Wright, the well-known founder of the Wildlife Protection Society of India and former member of Project Tiger, found time recently to photograph an unusual two-sided memorial which stands prominently in the bazaar at Jabalpur (formerly Jubbulpore) in Madhya Pradesh. In very good condition, the inscriptions on either side read as follows: To the memory of the Officers of the Central Provinces, who sacrificed their lives to their duty in the struggle to save life during the Great Famine of 1896-97 this monument is erected by their friends and fellow-countrymen in England and India 1899.

Oswald George Arthur ICS Depy. Comr. Jubbulpore  
Charles William Burn ICS Depy. Comr. Damoh  
Alan Colquhoun Duff ICS Depy. Comr. Jubbulpore  
George Alfred Jones ICS Asst Comr Raipur  
Charles Octavius Leefe PWD Exve Engr Raipur  
Henry Hamilton Moore ISC Lieut 14th MI  
Henry Erasmus Norman ISC Lieut 2nd MI  
Henry Halstead Priest ICS Comr Jubbulpore  
Henry Reginald Byrne Sherwood CP Police AOSP Damoh

The great famine began in the Bundelkhand area when the rains failed in the summer of 1896. It spread rapidly into adjoining areas and its effects were felt as far away as Rajputana and Bombay. It is estimated that as many as a million people may have died from starvation and epidemic diseases. Although most of the casualties were within British India, the Government of India was unable to deal with hunger on this scale. Famines were endemic in the subcontinent before Independence, stretching back to the days of the great Mauryan Empire and culminating in the great Bengal famine of 1943. There have been none since Independence.

But the Jubbulpore memorial raises a number of questions: how did the officers named above meet their deaths? These were fairly prominent personnel, mostly Indian Civil Servants (ICS) – Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Executive Engineers from the Public Works Department and a member of the Central Provinces Police. Were any of them killed, or did they fall victim to disease or accident while touring the affected areas? The initials 'ISC' after the names of Henry Moore and Henry Norman have not been identified either. They do not stand for the Indian Signals Corps which was not established until 1911. So *Chowkidar* would welcome ideas on the men commemorated here and further information on their role in the great famine as well as an explanation of the initials ISC.

'The power of *Chowkidar* is indeed awesome' wrote one impressed BACSA member Barry Gregson after he received an instant response to his query about General John Augustus Fuller, the soldier turned architect who built much of Victorian Bombay. Mr Gregson had been unable to find a portrait of John Fuller, nor his burial place. Within minutes, it seemed, of *Chowkidar* arriving, Professor Ronald Chalmers was able to provide a copy of the death notice that appeared in the *Leeds Mercury* of 10 October 1902. This showed that General Fuller's funeral took place at St Jude's Church, Kensington, followed by his burial at Brookwood Cemetery, Woking via the Necropolis Station at Waterloo. And Henry Noltie from Edinburgh added that a portrait of the General appeared in a 2002 book entitled *Bombay Gothic*, by Christopher London.

## ANNIVERSARY CHOWKIDAR

This year marks not only the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BACSA, but of *Chowkidar* too. The first meeting of the self-styled 'Friends of European Cemeteries in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh' was held at the Cavalry & Guards Club in Piccadilly on 13 October 1976. The provisional title 'Indo-British Association' was adopted but this was modified into the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia at the next meeting on 30 March 1977 at the National Army Museum in Chelsea. The first *Chowkidar* was first published in the autumn of that year after Theon Wilkinson, BACSA's founder, invited your Editor to put something together based on the letters and reminiscences that were flooding into his home in Chartfield Avenue, Putney where he lived with his wife Rosemarie. BACSA has a number of distinguished authors among its members and we invited one of them to write something for this special edition. Andrew Ward responded with a haunting story:

## WHY CAWNPORE?

I am sometimes asked, albeit with decreasing frequency, how it was I chose to write about the special horrors of the 1857 uprising for my Mutiny history, *Our Bones Are Scattered*. The uprising at Cawnpore claimed the lives of almost an entire European community. It commenced with the siege of Wheeler's Entrenchment with its low mud walls and battered barracks, and proceeded to the massacre at the ghats, the slaughter of women and children at the Bibighar, and the exponential horrors of British reprisals that claimed the lives of thousands of Indians. I concede that my account, *Our Bones Are Scattered*, makes for harrowing reading, but until recently I was not able to answer 'Why Cawnpore?' to my satisfaction.

In 1954, after I had just turned eight, my father accepted a job as educational consultant to the fledgling Government of India. Our family first sailed from New York to Southampton aboard the *SS United States*, among whose amenities was a movie theatre. One afternoon I ducked in to watch the Marlon Brando version of *Julius Caesar*. I think I must have had a distrustful disposition even then. But it was a trait that set like concrete as I watched the depiction of Caesar's assassination at the hands of his ostensible friends and colleagues, all of them heaping praise on 'Mighty Caesar' while at the same time drawing out their daggers and cutting him down. We took the P&O *Strathmore* the rest of the way to India and disembarked at Bombay. At first, and to some extent ever afterwards, India made me uneasy. We landed only seven years after Independence and the ghosts and the protocols of the Raj were still potent. Suddenly throngs of adults were treating me, an eight year-old kid from Chicago, with inexplicable deference. They dove to the ground to fetch a dropped napkin, laid out my clothes every morning, whisked me to the front of the line at the bookshop, and called me Chota Sahib. Besides spoiling me rotten, these courtesies filled me with dread. Why were they treating me like a prince? Didn't they resent me deeply for my wealth and privileges? What were they up to? Where were they hiding their daggers?

My imperial anxiety eased off until 1957, the centennial of the Mutiny of 1857. My older brother brought home books and pamphlets about what the Government now approvingly called the First War of Independence, with illustrations depicting the massacre of my predecessors, the British. My darkest suspicions reasserted themselves when I learned that the very thing I dreaded had already happened.

So, I told myself, they hated us after all, and at any moment our fond bearer Sriram; or Ameya our scholarly cook; or even our driver, Peter John, who wore his hair like Elvis and kept up with the latest American slang, might rise up and murder us in our sleep. We lived in what were then the outskirts of New Delhi, and behind our house lay a dairy farm on a couple of weedy acres that local people employed to relieve themselves. Next to this was a collection of recent huts and tents where refugees from Partition lived. One Saturday morning I had just donned my Cub Scouts uniform when a crow alighted on a branch in the backyard. I had been given a Diana pellet rifle the Christmas before, but with the admonition that I was never, ever to fire it without adult supervision. But that cawing bird seemed to be heckling me intolerably, and who would ever find out if I were to shoot it?

So I went to my closet, fetched and loaded the gun, stepped out onto the verandah, and, taking careful aim, missed the crow entirely. But, as it flapped off derisively, a cry arose from beyond where I had aimed, and up stood an elderly widow, clutching her head with both hands. I couldn't move as the drama unfolded below me, but continued to stand in my Cub Scout uniform with my rifle in my hands, unable to countenance that I had just shot an old lady in the head. When the widow staggered back toward the hutment, its residents began to swarm about, led by the old lady's son. After scanning the vicinity, he caught sight of me with my rifle and shouted, 'Dekho! Chota Sahib!' and led his neighbors across the field and over our compound wall, whereupon, convinced that by disobeying my parents I had doomed us all to massacre, I retreated into my bedroom and reloaded.

In the end our bearer calmed the mob, and my mother came out to placate my victim's family, following them back to examine the old lady and treating what turned out to be a grazing wound with iodine and band-aids. Satisfied, her son magnanimously told my mother, 'Never mind, Memsahib. We were boys once ourselves,' and escorted her back to our house. I caught hell, of course, and never saw that rifle again. Nor have I touched one since.

We return to the States in 1959. Decades go by, and after turning to writing I find myself drawn to the subject of imperial massacres: the Alamo, Isandlwana, Khartoum, Custer's Last Stand, and the Mutiny, of course. I even proposed a book that would be a survey of all such 19<sup>th</sup> century collisions between ruler and ruled, but I chose to write in detail about Cawnpore instead. But I had not, I am ashamed to say, linked it all together until three or four years ago, when I was in my late sixties.

I was scanning some pictures from my family's India album and came upon a snapshot I must have taken of the view from my verandah. There, to the right, was the assembly of refugee tents on a barren field, with the rooftops of two army barracks beyond. It must have been taken before the encampment became a hutment. Nevertheless, it was, of course, the mirror image of Wheeler's Entrenchment, or at least the image I had of it when I wrote about Cawnpore. So apparently I didn't choose to write about it. I really had no choice. And I suppose I was able to wade through all those horrors because, as a child, I had already imagined far worse.

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A day after Andrew Ward's article was received, BACSA member Mark Probett sent photographs of a little known, but important memorial at Kanpur (formerly Cawnpore). Mark has a personal interest in the site, because his great great grandparents and six of their children were massacred here. He has visited the area several times, paying his own tribute to the uneasy dead that lie here. Because the site of Wheeler's Entrenchment is within the army cantonment, access to parts of it are understandably restricted. After six years of seeking permission from the Ministry of Defence to visit a particular memorial, this was unexpectedly granted on compassionate grounds. The area has been thoroughly refurbished and the wild undergrowth of a few years earlier had disappeared. The military authorities deserve praise, Mark says, for taking an awful lot of time and some real expense in refurbishing what is essentially a British grave site. The recently restored memorial stands above the Sepulchral Well, just south of the Entrenchment. (see page 138) Standing on one of the stone arms that supports the pillar with its Celtic cross is a small Greek cross. This was one of several such monuments erected by different regiments as the horror of the Bibighar massacre sank in.

The inscription on the restored memorial reads: *In a well under this cross were laid, by the hands of their fellows in suffering, the bodies of men, women and children, who died hard by during the heroic defence of Wheeler's entrenchment when beleaguered by the rebel Nana. June 6<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> A.D. MDCCCLVII.* This was not the infamous well into which the massacre victims were thrown at the end of the siege, but the place where those who died during the siege were unceremoniously interred. There was no opportunity to bury the deceased in a makeshift cemetery, as there had been at Lucknow during the siege of its Residency. As Mark points out, the soil during June 1857 was iron-hard, and a father who had to bury his infant daughter 'had great difficulty scratching out a small grave with his knife for her'. The dead of Cawnpore were simply thrown down a disused well and the burial parties had to risk their own lives every night as they ventured outside the entrenchment. The dead were wheeled along an improvised barrier consisting of discarded vehicles while a small group maintained a

a covering fire. It is estimated that as many as 350 people were entombed in this disused well. At the foot of the memorial is a quotation from the Psalms, which gave Andrew Ward the title of his book: *Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth. But our eyes are unto Thee, O God the Lord.*

Among those killed in the final massacre at the Bibighar were Jessie Seppings and her two small boys, both fair-haired lads. Jessie's husband had already been killed with other British officers at the Sati Chaura ghat after a false promise of escape downriver. Jessie's little boys were said to have been the last victims on 16 July 1857 as they ran around the well in a vain attempt to escape being cut down. One of the boys dropped a favourite toy, which he had vainly clung on to - a simple box containing two small wooden balls. Mark takes up the story: While the sweepers were stripping and dumping the poor women and children down the Bibighar well, a large crowd had gathered to watch, as one would expect in India. Two Hindu men who knew the Seppings boys, but could do nothing to save them, scooped the toy up and next day, probably to save their own skins, presented the toy to General Havelock's men, who in turn handed this on to the General. He arranged for it to be returned to the Turnbull family, who were Jessie's people. The box has been handed down in the family and is now the treasured possession of Hamish Turnbull in New Zealand.

Not surprisingly there are a number of reports of ghosts seen at the site of the Well. Dogs in a nearby garden cottage started behaving oddly 'watching and following the movement of the screen doors as if some unseen figure were crossing the room' and there were mentions of small, fair-haired, spectral figures in motion around the Well. Whether you believe in ghosts or not, Cawnpore is still a haunted city to many: not only to the British and Eurasian communities that lost relatives, friends, and loyal servants and sepoy; but also to the exponentially larger number of Indian men and women whose ancestors were killed in reprisals. Until fairly recently a large banyan tree stood in the Nana Rao Park (formerly the Memorial Well Gardens). It was from the branches of this tree that men suspected of being involved in the massacres were hanged, their innocence or guilt hardly considered in the fevered climate of revenge. A moving poem in Hindi is inscribed on a nearby plaque which speaks eloquently of the tears shed by the tree as another man met his death on its branches. It is a place for reflection, just as the restored Sepulchral Well is today.

## BENCOOLEN CEMETERY

BACSA member Patrick Wheeler visited the island of Sumatra late last year and reported that there is good news and bad from the former British enclave. 'To take the bad first, it seems clear that some of the Cemetery has been built over when comparing the present situation to the plan contained in Alan Harfield's booklet. [*Bencoolen: the Christian cemetery and the Fort Marlborough Monuments*. Published by BACSA in 1985.] Most of Division II has buildings on it, such that the numerous graves located by C.J. Brooks in *English Tombs and Monuments* in 1918, but not associated with any name, have disappeared beneath houses and gardens.

The good news is that the cemetery is looking very tidy and well cared-for. Every sign of the undergrowth shown in Harfield's photographs has disappeared and has clearly been cut away. The individual tombs are completely free of vegetation and the grass had been freshly cut at the time of our visit. Repairs to memorials are incomplete but all inscriptions are clearly readable having been rather gaudily delineated with gold paint. This actually proves quite effective as the photographs will show. There was a family of gardeners in evidence, but it is not entirely clear that anyone pays them. The Department of Culture in the Bengkulu province is said to be responsible for the cemetery, but our guide thought that they showed little interest in it. On the right hand side there is an impression that a house and its surrounding yard is encroaching onto the space occupied by the tombs of Edward Atkins and Thomas Whittenberry, the latter 'Who departed this life the 28 th August 1802 aged 18 years.' (see page 139)

One major surprise was the complete absence of any sign of the tomb for Major Charles Porteous. The tomb may well be there but, if so, the plaque has gone. Considering how few Europeans go to Bengkulu it is a credit to those concerned that the cemetery has been so well cared for, albeit in a slightly reduced state. In addition to the tombs that I have recorded there are several Dutch tombs as well. All in all the picture is a positive one for this cemetery. Alan Harfield's prediction that it may by now be entirely lost, is thankfully not the case, and I would think the future looks hopeful. Within the cemetery grounds there is a large memorial to all those companies and individuals who subscribed to a restoration of the cemetery in the late 80s and early 90s, and which prominently records the contribution of BACSA. The inscription is cut in black marble and will last for generations!

One of the fascinating aspects of Bengkulu is its association with Thomas and Sophia Raffles, and the frenetically active life that they lived there. Of particular interest is that four of their five children died there and are supposedly buried in this cemetery. Their whereabouts seem to have been unknown for many years. In line with the main entrance arch of the cemetery, but a little to the left, is evidence of an old brick path now almost completely grassed over. This runs in a straight line across the main cemetery space. When standing on this, and turned to the left, there are visible three small tombs, probably of children. There is a bush in exactly the right position for a fourth which could have been placed there when a similar such tomb completely disappeared. The spacing between them is even, and their situation would have been prominent in early times, as would be fitting for the children of a Lieutenant-Governor. Could it be that these three (four?) small graves belong to Léopold, Stamford, Charlotte and Flora Raffles or is this just fanciful conjecture? Perhaps, but to me at least it remains a possibility.'

## MAIL BOX EXTRA

In January this year Brigadier Bruce Jackman, late of the Sirmoor Rifles and his wife returned to India. Both had been born there when their respective fathers were serving in the Indian Army during the second World War. The Jackmans were celebrating their Golden Wedding anniversary, but they also had a more sombre reason for their visit, which was to find the little grave of Susan, the infant sister of Mrs Jackman who died in 1940. The family had an old photograph of the grave and the inscription on it read: 'In Loving Memory of Susan Richmond Mainprise-King. Age 11 months Died 27 December 1940. Love sees more bright than moon or sun. All the heaven of heavens in one little child.'

Susan was born on 5 February 1940 in the Military Family Hospital at Trimulgherry and sadly she died in the British Military Hospital at Secunderabad. BACSA suggested British Library records might be able to help identify the grave and although the Library's Burial Registers did record Susan's death, it gave no hint of which cemetery she was buried in. So the Jackmans hired an agent in Hyderabad who greeted them on their arrival in India with the good news that the grave had been found in the Secunderabad Cemetery at All Saints Church, where she had been christened. The cemetery was very overgrown, but labourers hired by the agent had stumbled across it and were able to compare what they had found with the old photograph.



*above: Sir William Casement's memorial, Kensal Green Cemetery, London (see page 121)*

*below: His tomb in Lower Circular Road Cemetery, Kolkata (see page 121)*



*above: Paddy Willis at his grandfather's grave, Ambala Cemetery (see page 122)*

*below: Mary Weston's restored tomb at Dagshai (see page 125)*





*above: William Adam's tomb at Ooty (see page 125)*

*below: memorial over the Sepulchral Well, Cawnpore (see page 132)*



*above: the tombs of Edward Atkins and Thomas Whittenberry at Bencoolen (see page 134)*

*below: Major Pinkney's destroyed tomb at Jhansi (see page 141)*





above: Indian Independence Day 15<sup>th</sup> August 2017 is celebrated inside the Scottish Cemetery, Kolkata. BACSA member Dr Neeta Das, the conservation architect in charge of restoration writes: 'A national event in a Christian cemetery, by the Muslim community, organised by Hindu consultants and workers.'

(continued from page 135) 'As you can imagine,' writes Brigadier Jackman 'it was a very emotional moment for my wife when we got there and put garlands on the headstone and scattered flower petals around the base. The black-lead lettering on the inscription had largely been worn away, but the inscription was clearly visible, and the base had crumbled a bit. We have arranged for the headstone to be repaired and the lettering to be redone. So ended a wonderful mission to start our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary year.'

BACSA member Christopher Penn experienced a different kind of commemoration for a relative who died in India when he visited Ooty in Tamil Nadu earlier this year. Christopher's distinguished great grandfather was ATW Penn, an English-born photographer who lived most of his life in south India and is best known today for his sensitive portraits of the Toda tribesmen in the Nilgiris. Christopher was on a lecture tour in south India earlier this year and he tells us what happened.

'I had the funniest experience in Ooty when sitting in my room at the Savoy Hotel. I suddenly heard a rat tat tat on my door and the manager came in with a small delegation. "Mr Penn" he said, "it is an honour to have you staying with us. Would you please plant a tree in memory of your great grandfather?"' 'I should be honoured' Christopher replied and 'at 12.30 the next day the tree arrived, the hole was dug and the tree planted with much ceremony and dirty hands. In India, the land of contrasts, some things take forever and some, like this are miraculously quick.' It is such an excellent idea to commemorate Britons who died in the subcontinent by planting a tree in their memory that BACSA hopes this will catch on and we would urge people who go there in search of an ancestor's grave to consider the donation of a tree from a local nursery to plant at a suitable spot.

Sadly, not all the news about European graves and cemeteries in South Asia is so positive and we would be painting a false picture if we didn't sometimes have to report the destruction of old tombs. A heartfelt plea came earlier this year from Mr Oliver Fredrick, a journalist on the *Hindustan Times*. He sent graphic and disturbing photographs of the demolition of Major Francis Wingrave Pinkney's isolated tomb at Jhansi. Mr Fredrick told us he 'came to know that a few local goons along with some influential people are trying to demolish the grave. And the local administration, police and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) officials seemed helpless as no action has been initiated from their end. It's really painful to see the officers doing nothing against the sheer illegalities.' It is painful for us too. BACSA has never advocated that *all* old European graves should be preserved in India, this would obviously be impossible, which is why we emphasise the importance of recording what we can, while we can. But when the ASI seem incapable of protecting a tomb that they themselves have deemed worthy of note, then the situation is indeed depressing. (see page 139) Major Pinkney was the first Commissioner of Jhansi after 1857 and was awarded the Order of the Bath in 1860. He was one of the East India Company officers who was asked to gather information about the Mutiny of 1857-58 which was published in the *Narrative of Events* series. Although the tomb is now virtually gone, he is commemorated by a simple but elegant memorial in St George's Cathedral in Madras which reads: 'Sacred to the memory of Major Francis Wingrave Pinkney C.B. of the Madras Staff Corps and Commissioner of Jhansie, who died at Jhansie on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1862. He was a most gallant soldier, and able administrator, a most affectionate brother, and beloved and respected by all who knew him. This tribute of affection has been placed to his memory by his attached sister, and her husband.'

BACSA's Jaipur-based Area Representative, Mr Syed Faizan Raza has sent a detailed report on the Phulera cemetery, or as the British called it, Phalera. 'It is' he tells us, 'a small town in the Jaipur district and hosts an important railway junction and a lively market. It is not far from the world-famous Sambhar salt lake, considered as the largest saline water body in India. Jean Bothwell's historical novel *White Fawn of Phalera* depicts this very town and weaves the love story of Carey Douglas and Steven Marsh. I made a visit to this bustling town on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2017 to record the inscriptions of the local European cemetery. It is being maintained by a nearby church (Sancti Joseph) and is in excellent condition unlike other cemeteries spread across the Indian subcontinent. The church, which is ornate yet rugged and robust in design, shimmers like a bright oasis in the midst of the arid region. The gated cemetery is well-protected by the boundary walls of considerable height.' Among the inscriptions recorded are those of John Bennett, Late Loco Foreman, B.B. & C. I. Ry (retired), died 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1908, aged 63 years, 2 months and 25 days; James Dominic Behan, born 4<sup>th</sup> August 1861, died 10<sup>th</sup> September 1903; Sergeant E. Manchip, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Warwickshire Regiment, died October 1<sup>st</sup> 1923 and Constance Yolande Rogers, died at Phalera on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1940 aged 67 years. There are also a number of infant deaths including Cresswell and John the two dearly loved children of George and Amy McMullen, who died at Gudha on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February 1892 aged 2 years and 4 months respectively. A complete list of names collected by Mr Raza is available from the Editor.

### **THE TURKISH TOMBS OF BELLARY**

Mme Yvonne Matignon Gonsalves, BACSA's Area Representative for North Karnataka has uncovered a curious and tragic story of the first World War. 'It goes back to 1957' she tells us, 'when as an adolescent I discovered two lonely marble tombs, one decorated with a sculptured marble turban, lying in the dry earth and the other a flat marble slab, both with inscriptions in what I took to be Persian, near the landing strip (which is now a small airport) about 15 km from Bellary. My father informed me this was probably the last resting place of Turkish prisoners-of-war who were interned by the Government of India during the Great War. Years later I mentioned this to a Turkish diplomat and when I returned to the site a few years ago I found to my astonishment, instead of the dead dry fields where lay the Turkish tombs of yore, there was now a flourishing 'garden of paradise' where a granite path led to a marble stele next to the two Turkish tombs which had not been moved, but were now in the middle of the 'Garden of Allah'. Indian and Turkish national flags were flying in the incense-perfumed wind.'

Further research has established that the marble stele records: 'Here lie the Turkish martyrs brought to India in 1918 as prisoners of war during World War I from the Suez Canal front where they had fought. God bless them all.' The inscription is repeated in Turkish and the site is now officially called the Turkish Martyrs Graveyard. The graveyard's local caretaker, Haji Sahikh Adam, told how 2,000 Turkish PoWs were sent by the British to be interned in Allipuram Jail. Until the 1980s hundreds of graves were reported here, but their granite tombstones were pilfered and much was destroyed during the airport expansion. Of the two remaining tombs, one is that of General Agha Pasha Abdussalam, from the Ottoman royal family who died on 21 April 1918. Local historians are puzzled by the large number of deaths and there is some talk of 'a trigger-happy British officer' in charge of a working party of prisoners, though it is more likely that the Turkish soldiers were victims of the post-war influenza pandemic which was estimated to have killed up to 40 million people worldwide.

### **NOTICES**

BACSA member Philip Davies has been researching for many years the lives of two remarkable but forgotten Englishmen who, he says, deserve to be remembered as among the most courageous and resourceful heroes of the Burmese Front. One of them, Roy Pagani, survived after escaping from Dunkirk, from Singapore and from the Death Railway and was eventually reunited with his wife. The other, Major Hugh Paul Seagrim GC, DSO, MBE was known as the T.E. Lawrence of Burma. Seagrim was commissioned into the 19<sup>th</sup> Hyderabad and took the option of joining the Burma Rifles, serving first in Malaya then in Burma with a Karen company. He became deeply attached to his men and when the Japanese invaded Burma, he stayed behind to inspire and lead the resistance forces in the Karen hills. When a campaign of arrests and torture was mounted by the Japanese in their efforts to capture him, Seagrim surrendered on 15 March 1944 in response to the message from the Japanese saying that if he did so, they would cease reprisals on his men. Taken to jail in Rangoon, he and seven Karen members of his party were sentenced to death. On 2 September 1944 they were executed by firing squad in the Kemmendine cemetery on the outskirts of Rangoon and were buried in a common grave. After the war, their remains were re-interred in the Rangoon War cemetery. Seagrim's George Cross citation (awarded posthumously) reads in part: 'There can hardly be a finer example of self-sacrifice and bravery than that exhibited by this officer who in cold blood gave himself up in order to save others, knowing well what his fate was likely to be at the hands of the enemy.'

Mr Davies writes that Hugh Seagrim 'tall, commanding and charismatic, made a lasting impression on all he encountered, including the Japanese. Military maverick, guerilla leader, SOE secret agent and Christian mystic, he was an intensely spiritual man in search of the ultimate meaning of life. With the Bible in one hand and a tommy gun in the other, he so inspired the Karen people that over 70 years later he is still revered as a saint in the far-off hills of eastern Burma, although at home he has been forgotten.' Now it has been arranged for a permanent memorial to Major Seagrim, which is being erected in the Anglican Cathedral at Rangoon. It will be unveiled at a Memorial Service to be held on Remembrance Sunday, 12 November 2017 and anyone in Rangoon at the time is welcome to attend. We look forward to receiving a photograph of the memorial in due course and Philip Davies' new book *Lost Warriors: Seagrim and Pagani of Burma* will be reviewed in the next *Chowkidar*.

**Imperial India: Find your Ancestors** is the title of a 14-day tour from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2018. It is led by your Editor and will trace the history of the British Raj from its last capital in Delhi to its original capital in Calcutta. Visits en route will include Meerut, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Serampore and Chandernagore. The tour is organised by Indus Experiences, the long-established tour company based in Harrow. The group is limited to a maximum of 18 people and the cost is £3,885 including flights. Indus Experiences says: 'We know that people on the tour may have specific requests and family graves to visit. We encourage you to let us know about these in advance, so we can research and incorporate them into our visits. A donation of £25 per person joining the tour will be given to BACSA.' Please contact the company for booking and further information: on 0208 901 7320 or email: [yasin@indusexperiences.co.uk](mailto:yasin@indusexperiences.co.uk)

#### BOOKS BY BACSA MEMBERS

**Indian Forester, Scottish Laird** **H.J. Noltie**  
**and The Cleghorn Collection: South Indian Botanical Drawings 1845 to 1860** **H.J. Noltie**

It is perhaps unusual for two books to be reviewed together. However, Henry Noltie of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), has written these volumes as companion pieces, even though they can be enjoyed independently of each other. Henry has worked for many years as a botanist at the RBGE. He has a wide knowledge of South Asian plants, and is very familiar with the herbarium and archives at

Edinburgh. Consequently he is particularly well qualified to write about a significant nineteenth century botanist like Hugh Cleghorn (1820-95). In his introduction he says that his prime motive for writing on Cleghorn was to further elucidate the history of the botanical collections at the RBGE, but there was an additional, academic, purpose. That was to investigate the original and creative ideas about the history of conservation put forward by the well-known historian, Richard Grove, particularly in his book *Green Imperialism*. Henry Noltie argues strongly for examining chronologies and documents in detail – from which he concludes that there is limited justification for Grove's case that Cleghorn and his colleagues should be seen as early environmentalists; his view is that the conservation efforts of the nineteenth century surgeon-botanists were dictated mainly by a desire to make sure that economic resources were exploited efficiently. The balance in the title *Indian Forester, Scottish Laird* is significant: although Cleghorn made his reputation in India he was only forty-seven when he retired. Unlike many of the Scottish-born botanists who worked in India but retired to southern England, Cleghorn spent his twenty-seven years of retirement as a Scottish laird and public figure, based at Stravithie, his family's estate near St Andrews. Henry Noltie brings both the spacious house and modest estate to life very well, and makes clear that what he did in his retirement was significant, showing how a provincial laird related to intellectual life in Edinburgh and London. The book starts in a traditional way by explaining Cleghorn's family background and the process of Scottish medical training. Like most nineteenth century botanists in India, Cleghorn went out as a surgeon in the East India Company's Medical Service. However, he soon developed an interest in India's plant life, and his career gradually moved away from medical responsibilities. Before he retired from India in 1867 he acted as Inspector-General of Forests and he was one of the founders of the Indian Forest Service.

*Indian Forester, Scottish Laird* is illustrated, though in some cases the quality of the pictures leaves something to be desired. However, the companion volume, *The Cleghorn Collection*, is beautifully produced and a remarkable bargain for anyone with an interest in Indian botany. Although it is full of fine botanical illustrations it is much more than a botanical coffee-table book. Cleghorn was not an artist himself but he employed several talented people who produced illustrations for him. *The Cleghorn Collection* starts with an excellent summary of the history of western-style botanical painting in India, and of the schools and castes involved in producing the drawings. The book also has a chapter on the importance of the Madras School of Art and its role in

training artists in western techniques from the 1850s. By circuitous routes most of the Cleghorn's botanical drawings ended up in the herbarium at the RBGE, filed in botanical order with the herbarium specimens, so Henry Noltie has had to devote much time and effort to identifying Cleghorn's drawings and cataloguing them. Putting them together and reproducing them in *The Cleghorn Collection* has, however, been well worthwhile: the drawings have detailed notes, giving the names of the plants in various languages, an account of their uses and a summary of where they grow. Those who know India will spot many old friends – teak, water lily, tamarind, red cotton-tree, pomegranate, neem, pepper and coffee, to name but a few.

Writing *Indian Forester, Scottish Laird* was a challenge because Cleghorn left no diaries and not many letters. However he comes over as a diligent man with a satisfying public career that brought him wealth and status. As was the case with many colonial servants his personal life was less happy: he married late and his wife was sickly. She did however come from an enterprising and well-established Scottish family, the Cowans, and the book sets out in detail the connections she brought, as well as making it clear how important were shared religious values amongst the Scottish professional classes. Cleghorn's close relationship with his in-laws compensated to some extent for his disappointment in his own siblings who were less worthy and dutiful than he was.

In his introduction to *Indian Forester, Scottish Laird* Henry Noltie discusses whether Cleghorn was 'important' enough for a biography. But he rightly justifies the effort by making it clear that objective history must be based on detailed research, and we can only assess the overall effect of British imperialism by looking at the work of the doctors, scientists, engineers and missionaries, and their networks, as well as the soldiers and administrators. The Indian Forest Service is still a very important organisation; it was no small thing to have been one of its founders. We can therefore conclude that these very carefully compiled volumes make a valuable contribution to the history of colonial science. But they will also be of interest to anyone who wants to understand more about the Scottish role in the British imperial project, because they place Cleghorn so firmly and expertly in his Scottish setting. (AT)

*Indian Forester, Scottish Laird* 2016 Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh ISBN978-1-910877-10-4 £15.00 pp324  
*The Cleghorn Collection* 2016 Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh ISBN 978-1-910877-11-1 £20.00 pp176

## BOOKS BY NON-MEMBERS THAT WILL INTEREST READERS

### **Silver: The Spy Who Fooled the Nazis: The Most Remarkable Agent of the Second World War** Mihir Bose

Mr Mihir Bose is an unusual polymath, publishing books on cricket and football and the world of business, as well as biographies. In that connection he has described the life of his namesake (to whom he is not related) Subhas Chandra Bose, who went to Germany (and later Japan) during the war to further Indian independence, and in the process founded the Indian National Army. Mihir Bose's researches of course covered the episode where Subhas Bose crossed India and Afghanistan to make his way to Germany. His guide was a young man called Bhagat Ram Talwar. The present book is the life and career of that young man, also known as a spy under the name of Silver. And a very remarkable story it is too.

Silver was an unusual Indian in that he was a Hindu born and brought up in the North West Frontier Province speaking Pashtu. This fluency in the local language was a major reason why this unknown young man came to be shepherding Bose across the inhospitable landscape. Silver had another qualification for his future career in addition to his quick wits and his ability through his knowledge of Pashtu to make himself inconspicuous in Afghanistan and the adjacent tribal territories. He was a member of a Communist cell called Kirti, mostly confined to the Punjab. This accounted for his strongly anti-British feeling. Bose as an affluent Bengali found the journey tough going and he also lacked the streetwise guile of his guide. But Silver went first to the Germans, who were not very helpful, and then to the Italians who were. As a result Silver got Bose safely on his way to the border with the Soviet Union (at this time still bound to Nazi Germany by the Non-Aggression Pact). From there Bose went onto Berlin, met Hitler and eventually went to Japan where he was killed in a plane crash.

This meeting with the Italians landed Silver the job of spying for them. This entailed gathering information about India, about any signs of disaffection or mutiny in the army, the strength of military units in India, etc. The Axis powers seem to have been astonishingly ill-informed about India and Silver stepped into the breach to supply the information they needed. All this came naturally enough for a young Communist while the Non-Aggression pact was in force. But when Hitler invaded Russia and the Pact was at an end Silver through his

Communist contacts was 'turned' to spy for the Soviet Union. This meant continuing his good relations with Italy and Germany but feeding them duff information in return for whatever he could get out of them to pass to his new friends in Russia.

An unexpected result of the end of the Pact was that whereas before Russia might have been expected to wish to foster Indian independence, after the end of the Pact, Russia and Britain were allies trying to defeat the Germans. So Silver also found himself spying for the British. In the latter stages of the war, his German contacts passed him on to Japan. So Silver ended up spying for Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and Britain – for the last two as a double-agent. This must surely be an all-time record. It also gives an interesting and decidedly oblique view of some aspects of the progress to Indian independence. The volte-face by the Indian Communist party is a good example. The tissue of lies created by Silver is quite amazing and there are moments of rich humour. The story is well researched, well written and well constructed. The story goes with a swing. However there are two black marks for the publisher. The map on page 6 which shows the route taken on his various journeys into and out of Afghanistan is quite useless, even with a powerful magnifying glass. More serious is that a book with full scholarly apparatus and bibliography lacks an index. Apart from these blemishes, the book must be very strongly recommended. (RM)

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**Challenge in Chitral: The remarkable story of the relief of the Chitral garrison, 1895** **Michael Dudding**

The siege and relief of Chitral occurred in 1895 at the high noon of the British empire. The events combined all the ingredients of classic imperial Victorian drama: the beleaguered garrison, the heroic defence, the noble strivings of the gallant forces battling through the savage mountain passes of the Hindu Kush to effect a relief; all taking place in the shadow of the great imperial bogeyman of the Raj, the Russian bear.

There have been other books written in the past on the siege and relief of Chitral and even on some of the principal players (*Much Sounding of Bugles: The Siege of Chitral*, 1895, John Harris, Hutchinson 1975; *The Unlikely Hero: George Scott Robertson*, Dorothy Anderson, The History Press 2008; *Chitral Charlie: The Rise and Fall of Major General Charles Townshend*, N.S. Nash, Pen and Sword 2010, being among the relatively recent).

However, the focus of these was more upon the campaign or its principal characters, rather than its backdrop. The author of this book gives a detailed description of the various events that took place in the decades that preceded the campaign in order to provide the reader with a better understanding of the reasons that led up to it in 1895. While the book is not an in-depth examination of the larger and far greater canvas of what came to be known as the 'Great Game', it does examine, in considerable depth, the interaction between Britain, Russia and Afghanistan commencing from the 1860s and the imperial British policy that evolved in the late nineteenth century as a result. The book also provides a narrative account of the operations of the Chitral Relief Force from Peshawar in the south, as well as the advance of Colonel Kelly's relief column from Gilgit in the east. It covers the disaster that befell the small force advancing along the Reshun Road at the Koragh Defile, apart from the events of the siege itself. The author acknowledges the lack of a countervailing perspective to the narrative, which is based solely upon available British accounts. There are no works that record the point of view or experiences of the people of Chitral or of the other local participants. Recourse could have been made to records of the Jammu and Kashmir State and its forces to provide at least a part of the Indian side of the story, but this has not been done. The author has however made an attempt to be balanced in his analysis of events and personalities. His sympathetic review of the motives of one of the main opposing protagonists, Sher Afzal, is a case in point.

The role of Indian soldiers is acknowledged by noting awards of the (Indian) Order of Merit for gallantry in a number of engagements. However, the summary of awards misses out this important decoration altogether. The Order of Merit was then the Indian Army's equivalent of the Victoria Cross and the following numbers were awarded during the Chitral operations: defence of the fort 33 (including one advancement to the 2nd class); disasters at Reshun and Koragh 27; relief columns 22. The large number of awards bears testimony to the fierce nature of the fighting and the bravery of the troops. An epilogue provides a brief sketch of subsequent developments in the region and traces the fortunes of the principal personalities involved in the campaign.

The book is very much focused on its subject but the author could have added greatly to the story by fleshing out certain aspects of it. For example, there is no mention of the substantial media impact in Britain of the siege as it unfolded. This is said to have had an influence on Townshend's subsequent decision to hole himself up with his Division in the town of Kut-al-Amara during the First World War with disastrous consequences.

There are four useful appendices that list the leading personalities involved, provide a handy timeline and give the ORBAT of the Chitral Relief Force. There is a fairly extensive bibliography, but historians will be disappointed to note that there are no endnote references in the text. In addition, the lack of adequate detailed maps detracts from a work of this nature where constant reference has to be made to place names by the reader. The two maps provided (showing Central Asia and the route of the two relief columns) do not entirely serve the purpose. Likewise, the three sketches of the positions at Chitral, Chalkalwat and Nisa Gul (pgs 116, 144 & 145, respectively) are too small to yield details to the naked eye.

While analysing the causes of the disaster at the Koragh Defile, the author's assertion that the Indian Army in 1895 did not have much experience in fighting against the tribes on the North-West Frontier is not entirely correct. In the preceding 35 years, there had been some 45 recorded actions against tribes on the western frontiers alone, from Baluchistan to Hunza, excluding the Second Afghan War. This includes the Hunza-Nagar campaign of 1891 and Chilas 1893 within the Gilgit Agency itself. While admittedly there were some parts of the army that had more exposure to frontier warfare than others, there existed adequate expertise as well as knowledge, within the military and political establishment, to effectively deal with such situations.

The author is also mistaken in stating that a clasp "Malakand 1895" to the India Medal was instituted for service across the frontier between 2nd April and 15th August 1895 (p.241). Events were covered by the award of two clasps only: "Defence of Chitral 1895" (3 March -19 April 1895) and "Relief of Chitral 1895" (7 March -15 August 1895). A clasp for "Malakand 1897" was instituted three years later and awarded to the defenders of Chakdarra and Malakand as well as the members of the relief force from Mardan, but that, as the saying goes, is another story. The Kashmir troops involved in the operations received an additional bronze medal instituted by the maharaja which bore the clasp "Chitral 1895".

These minor quibbles aside, the author has produced a well researched book that will be of use to readers with an interest in the Great Game and in the evolution of British imperial policy in Central and South Asia in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It may even interest scholars of modern South Asia in gaining a better understanding of how imperial policies shaped the borders of their homelands over a century ago. (RTSC)

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## **Britain's Anglo-Indians: The invisibility of assimilation**

**Rochelle Almeida**

Rochelle Almeida, a professor at New York University, is the first to shine a spotlight on Britain's Anglo-Indian community, and in particular the 'First Wave' created between the Partition of the subcontinent in 1947 and the tightening of UK immigration rules in 1962. Her fascinating book is in many ways a sad reflection on the problems of identity. In British India, the census of 1911 and Act of 1935 defined Anglo-Indians as the descendants of a European father and Indian mother, and they have always been marked by their European names, western dress and use of English. They underpinned the Raj in their allocation of jobs in many areas such as the railways, posts and telegraphs, and the police. Yet they were fully accepted by neither the Indians nor the British, despite their feeling that distant Britain was 'Home'. That there were limitations on 'Home' came as an unwelcome shock when large numbers (some 25,000 by 1970) emigrated to Britain after Partition. Despite their sense of affinity with the British, many faced colour prejudice and a lack of awareness of their special relationship to the Raj.

The author looks at the strategies they adopted to make a place for themselves in their new home, where communities often lacked the warm intimacy and easy going relations of India. Few were able to bring much money with them, and lacked the servants and way of life they had previously enjoyed. Contact with other Anglo-Indians gave support: many settled in the peripheral circle of London where transport hubs provided employment. Otherwise job opportunities were limited and many drifted downwards, finding employment and friends in the working class. Interestingly it was often women who did better, trading on their office management or nursing skills to forge successful careers.

In negotiating their difficulties, Anglo-Indians often found it easier to play down their background and attempted to assimilate in their newfound home. While dancing and music, which had been such a feature of their lives, still drew many Anglo-Indians together, when confronting British society some abandoned their heritage, often claiming to come from countries bordering the Mediterranean. The second generation of children born in Britain merged even more successfully. The strict discipline of the Anglo-Indian home was often challenged by children of a more liberal age who intermarried and regarded Britain as their home. This was helped by the rise of multiculturalism and an increasing ethnic mix, in which Anglo-Indians were

no longer singular exemplars. But, ironically, the growing South Asian diaspora merely increased the tendency for Anglo-Indians to lose their identity. Muslims and Hindus were defined and often vociferous minorities. Anglo-Indians, neither quite Indian nor British, faded away as a grouping in public awareness. More recently, there have been attempts to redress this. Clubs in some parts of the country maintain the tradition of sociability and love of Indian food for which Anglo-Indians are renowned; others draw together the alumni of old Anglo-Indian schools in India. The South London Anglo-Indian Association, with other groups, raises money for charitable and philanthropic work, mainly among Anglo-Indians in India, but also for causes in the UK. Regular international gatherings of Anglo-Indians have also over the last years given the community a sense of its own world-wide identity, with Australian Anglo-Indians taking a leading part.

A growing interest in ethnicity has also drawn British Anglo-Indians out of the shadows. Tracing roots in the past, programmes such as TV's 'Who do you think you are?' discovered the Anglo-Indian antecedents of actor Alistair McGowan and comedian Billy Connolly, making the viewing public aware of a group which to a large extent has been assimilated beyond recognition. Academics such as the author also play their part. Questions of migration, settlement and ethnicity have now become part of the academic mainstream, and the history of groups such as the Anglo-Indians are now being increasingly examined. While her approach is within the theoretical structure of academic debate, the author has used oral history as a tool of investigation, and her book includes interviews with a wide range of Anglo-Indians. These make her study of interest to the general reader as well as the academic, and the work is recommended as a sympathetic investigation of a little known group in Britain. (RAR)

2017 Lexington Books, 4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706, USA www.rowman.com ISBN 978 1 4985 4588 4. £70.00 pp227

#### BOOKS BY BACSA MEMBERS ALSO RECEIVED

**Koh-i-noor: The history of the World's Most Infamous Diamond**  
William Dalrymple and Anita Anand  
2017 Bloomsbury ISBN 978 1 4088 8884 1 £16.99 pp335

**Ribbons among the Rajahs: A history of British women in India before the Raj**  
Patrick Wheeler  
2017 Pen & Sword ISBN 978 1 47389 327 6 £25.00 pp246

#### AUXILIARY FORCE INDIA

A query from Australia in the Spring *Chowkidar* about the AFI (Auxiliary Force India), brought a good response from members whose fathers and grandfathers had served in these armed volunteer units which were formed following the 1857 Mutiny. Alan Lane's father John Joseph served in two such auxiliary 'regiments' in Assam – The Assam Valley Light Horse and The Surma Valley Light Horse, the latter being set up in 1886. It covered the districts of Cachar, Sylhet and Chittagong, which are now divided between India and Bangladesh. Many of the volunteers here came from the tea estates where they were junior managers, because the AFI attracted young men. It was more like the Territorial Army, than Dad's Army and one can see the advantages – plenty of healthy exercise and horse-riding, summer camps like the one held in Dibrugarh in 1939 and the friendship of an exclusive 'club'. Mrs Carol Turner from Gloucestershire tells us that her grandfather, David Paterson, went out to Calcutta in 1920 to work as an engineer in a jute factory, having trained at the renowned Engineering College in Dundee. He had been a member of the Lochee Boys' Brigade and later the TA. Mr Paterson joined the Calcutta Scottish Volunteers Pipe Band and his granddaughter still has his Glengarry bonnet complete with feathers. The volunteer units elected their own officers and devised their own uniforms. The Volunteers took precedence over the Indian Army Regiments and on military parades and at durbars they led in front, with the 'proper' regiments of Indian, British, Sikhs and Gurkhas bringing up the rear. The Calcutta Light Horse is one of the most famous, made up of 'box-wallahs' from the managing agency houses. They were responsible for blowing up the German merchant ship *Ehrenfels* at Goa during the second World War.

Below is a delightful amateur sketch by Lieutenant Colonel A.B. Beddow, stationed in the Cachar District, sent in a letter to his young son in 1932. Colonel Beddow had to act as ADC when the Governor of Assam paid a visit and inspected the Surma Valley Light Horse.



## BACSA LECTURES

We are pleased to announce a series of lectures under the title 'Reconsidering the Raj'. The lectures have been put together by two BACSA members, Valerie Haye and Rosemary Raza who write: The British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia in association with the Institute of Historical Research will reconsider this remarkable period in a series of lectures by leading scholars. In the first Jon Wilson argues that the growth of British rule was from the earliest days often chaotic and accidental, serving British interests rather than any wider good. In the second Charles Allen responds that the British offered elements of undoubted value to India, not least the exploration and record of its culture. Later lectures focus on pivotal events: the Indian Mutiny, the Afghan Wars and Independence and Partition. (For full details see the flyer that accompanies this Autumn's mailing.)

## BOOKS FROM INDIA

For many years BACSA member Mr Ram Advani of Lucknow provided readers with books which were not easily obtainable outside India. He also issued catalogues at intervals and would bear in mind readers' particular interests, alerting them when something relevant was published. After Ram's death in 2016, BACSA was left without a supplier to provide the good service we had enjoyed. So we are now pleased to introduce Mr Vijay Kumar Jain of Prabhu Book Service at Gurgaon, who has agreed to become BACSA's new supplier of books published in India. Mr Jain tells us that Prabhu Book Service began on a modest scale in 1962 selling current and out-of-print books, government reports and tracts on Indian sociology, castes, tribes, histories particularly of the Raj period, the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and Gandhiana. 'Dusty old books attracted me' says Mr Jain and for many years he has been catering to the scholarly community and research institutes in India with a good, efficient and personalized service. He issues around 15 catalogues a year. Scholars around the world get books at the rupee prices so that even with limited budgets they have access to Indian books. 'I love to interact with them and hunt out the desired materials for them if I can. Out-of-Print books carry the prices fixed by me. We welcome enquiries/orders for books not listed on our catalogues.' Buyers from Britain will be invoiced in sterling and USA buyers in dollars. Please see the notice opposite for further details.

**Front cover:** the striking photograph of tombs in South Park Street Cemetery, Calcutta has been kindly provided by Mr Richard Griffith.

**BOOKS FROM INDIA:** Readers of *Chowkidar* are welcome to place orders for new Rupee priced books with Prabhu Book Service, Booksellers, House No.557/Sector 14, Gurgaon 122001, Haryana, India.

(Proprietor: Mr. Vijay Kumar Jain - Mobile No. 0091-124-9818727879). Mr. Jain will invoice BACSA members in Sterling adding £4.00 for Registered Air-Mail for a slim hardback and £3.00 for a slim paperback. Sterling cheques should be made payable to Prabhu Book Service.

Prabhu Book Service issues catalogues of current and out-of-print books on various phases of Indian studies including the Raj period and the freedom movement from 1857-1947 which will be gladly sent on request.

E-mail: [prabhubook@hotmail.com](mailto:prabhubook@hotmail.com)

## Notes to Members

When writing to the Honorary Secretary and expecting a reply, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

If wishing to contact a fellow-member whose address is not known to you please send the letter c/o the Honorary Secretary who will forward it unopened.

Members' email addresses will not be given out. If an email is sent for a member, via the Editor or the Honorary Secretary, it will be forwarded to that member. It is then at the discretion of the member to reply or not.

If planning any survey of cemetery MIs, either in this country or overseas, please check with the Honorary Secretary to find out if it has already been recorded. This is not to discourage the reporting of the occasional MI notice, which is always worth doing, but to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

The Editor's email address is: [rosieljai@clara.co.uk](mailto:rosieljai@clara.co.uk)

