



# CHOWKIDAR

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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 (2019) 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 SEARCH FOR COLONEL HEATH

'Let me tell you my story,' began the message from Michael Heath, and it is such an encouraging story of research, discovery and restoration, that it is told here in his own words. 'I live in Toronto, Canada and since retiring five years ago I have taken on the task of researching and documenting our extended family in Canada and before. It was known in the family that the widow Agnes Heath (my great, great, great grandmother) brought her three children (Charles, Emily and Elizabeth) to Canada in 1836 following the death of her husband in India in 1819. It was understood that they left India sometime after 1819 and spent the intervening years in Switzerland and Italy where the children were educated. Beyond dying in "Camp at Ajanta" (the world famous Buddhist caves) nothing was known of the burial location of my great, great, great grandfather.

I searched the internet for a couple of years for his burial location and finally got a break when my contact at the British Library suggested I try BACSA. I searched the online BACSA site and got a partial name match for the Christian Cemetery in Jalna, Maharashtra, India - but it was not conclusive that it was my relative. I pursued a contact at BACSA who put me in touch with Kevin Wells who had done a very thorough report for BACSA on that same cemetery. In very short order Kevin emailed me pictures of my ancestor's burial monument together with the inscription, confirming I had found my ancestor's final resting spot. Kevin's picture made clear that a lot of deterioration had taken place in the 190 or so years since the death of Colonel Charles Heath - I decided when I saw those pictures that I would travel there to restore his monument.

This past October-November I was with my wife trekking in Nepal and while she returned to Canada after our trek, I flew to Mumbai and then took the train to Jalna - I took the train the day after the end of Diwali which was a very bad decision, the train was standing room only for nine hours, luckily I got to the train station very early and secured a seat. I arrived in Jalna in the middle of the afternoon, my tuk-tuk driver did not know of the cemetery but he did know the Church so we made our way there. At the Church I met Nasir, and guided by him we made our way to the cemetery, with Kevin's marvellous report I was able to very quickly find my relative. I explained to Nasir my purpose for coming to Jalna, and he said I should meet Dr Moses who lives at the extended Hospital/Church and former hospital grounds. The Doctor invited me in for tea and biscuits, I presented him with a copy of

Kevin's Jalna report and explained my goal of restoring my ancestor's monument within the week so that it could be completed before I had to return to Canada. His support was immediate and thorough, and I am convinced the combination of me showing up and Kevin's report delivered the message that people care about the cemetery. Dr Moses introduced me to Suresh who was doing some bricklaying on the Doctor's site but he released Suresh to work on my project. For the third time that day we returned to the Colonel's burial plot and I nodded supportively while Nasir and Suresh discussed the details of the project. By six that evening I had hired a team of four to begin work the next day and had supplied funds to acquire the bricks, mortar, sand and water needed to get the project moving. Over the following five days I would make a point of visiting the restoration site once or twice a day to show encouragement, ensure they were getting on with it and answer any questions. I asked them to restore the monument in the same way that it was originally built back in 1819. All but one of the grave monuments in the cemetery were built in the same manner, a brick core covered in masonry and then painted white. After five full days the team of four were finished and the following day a pair of painters arrived to finish the project with two coats of paint. I departed the next morning totally satisfied with the restoration project I had been able to complete. (*see page 60*)

An important part of the message is also just how easy the restoration was to accomplish. Show up, stay nearby, have a clear story, a clear mission with a reasonable timeline, smile and be supportive, have cash ready to buy materials, visit the work site daily and again show appreciation and support, tip appropriately. Maybe I got lucky but I sensed everyone I met appreciated me travelling a long way to their country to honour my ancestor and by extension their country, they in turn wanted to help me.'

Kevin Wells' search for his own ancestor's tomb in the Jalna cemetery was told in *Chowkidar* (Spring 2008) and this led to the detailed report mentioned here, a copy of which is in the BACSA Archives at the British Library. Kevin has now produced a short illustrated history of Colonel Charles Heath, Michael's ancestor, and how he came to be buried at Jalna. Born in Colchester, Essex in 1776, Charles entered the East India Company Army as a cadet. On arrival, probably at Bombay, he was attached to General Stuart's forces which were fighting Tipu Sultan in the final Anglo-Mysore war of 1799. After the defeat and death of the Sultan, Charles, by now a lieutenant, helped to raise the new 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry Regiments at Cannanore, which lies

today in the southern Indian state of Kerala. By 1810 Charles was promoted to the rank of major and the following year he married a Scottish woman, Agnes Wallace, from Arbroath. The wedding took place in St Mary's Church, Madras, often named as the oldest Anglican church east of Suez. Three children were born to the couple, two of the births being recorded at Bellary and Ellichpur, in the northern Deccan. Charles' regiment, the 7<sup>th</sup> N.I. were based here after the third Mahratta war broke out. This was to be Charles' final campaign and his regiment was led by General Sir John Malcolm. By now he had become a lieutenant colonel and because he had shown such reliability in the field, he was transferred to lead the 13<sup>th</sup> N.I. at Jalna.

He set off to take up his new post but died in camp at Ajanta, probably from cholera, on 18 February 1819. His body was taken the considerable distance to Jalna and interred in the old cemetery there. Agnes and the children were already at Jalna, in anticipation of Charles' posting there and the words on his tomb have a heart-felt quality: 'Here rests the remains of Lt. Col. Heath, H.C. Service, died 18 February 1819. He was a worthy man, a brave soldier and is sincerely regretted by all his friends. This monument was consecrated in honour of his memory by his affectionate and afflicted wife.' It was Agnes who had the melancholy task of reading the Burial Service over her husband's body in the absence of a chaplain. Agnes did not remain long in India after her husband's death. She gathered up her children and later settled in Canada, where perhaps she already had relatives and from where, two hundred years later, her descendant Michael Heath would make the journey to Jalna.

## **MAIL BOX**

New BACSA member Rosie Crump is hoping to visit Bengal and Bihar this year, but wants to do some 'homework' first on her maternal ancestors who lived there from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. What has been established so far is that a Louis Broucke was in Monghyr, an ancient city on the banks of the Ganges river in 1824. Units from the East India Company were stationed there and it was a centre for the indigo trade, which first attracted the Broucke family. Louis married Eliza Mary Moore in 1830 and at least one child was born to the couple, a son called William Joseph. Sadly by 1837, Louis was dead, and was interred in the old Lal Darwaza cemetery in Monghyr. Then there is an 'intriguing gap' for over twenty years when the Broucke and Moore families disappear from the records. They reappear in 1859 with William Joseph Broucke's marriage to Letitia, née Whiffen. A son is born the following year, followed by a daughter nine years later.

(There may have been other, unrecorded births.) The family is now leasing land from the Bettiah Raj, a large and profitable *zamindari* estate in Bihar and there are also connections with the Darbangha Raj, another estate where indigo crops flourished. By the 1870s, William had moved to Champaran, in north west Bihar and it was in Bihar that Rosie Crump visited her grandparents, as a child. Her own father was a sugar planter until 1965. The indigo trade was almost wiped out in the early 1900s, with the promotion of aniline dyes which were discovered and then manufactured in Britain. Many growers switched to planting sugar cane crops instead. Any information that could help Rosie Crump in her search would be welcome, particularly if anyone has experience of researching in the State Archives at Patna.

The surname Crump is an unusual one and it was a coincidence that BACSA member Jean Andrews contacted BACSA recently in a bid to get the Crump family tomb in Calcutta renovated. Surely there must be a connection at some point in the past, we thought, so both enquirers have now been put in touch with each other. Jean herself was born in Allahabad from a family with connections going back five or possibly six generations in India. Her 3x great grandfather, Robert Roberts, born in Wales around 1778, joined the 53<sup>rd</sup> Shropshire Regiment as a private soldier, and died at Trichinopoly in 1817 during the third Mahratta war. It is not known if he was wounded in battle, or died in camp from cholera like Charles Heath, whose story is told above. Robert was buried at St John's Church, Trichinopoly on 7 December, as the ancient Burial Register confirms, but it is not known if his grave is still identifiable. The next record is when Roberts' son Edward, now twenty-four years old, married Isobel Massey at Agra, in 1833. Edward's bride was only fourteen on her wedding day, a reminder of how very young some girls were married. At least four children were born to the couple, of whom more later. Edward became headmaster at the famous Delhi College and the family lived in a large house on the bank of the river Jumna. But their story now takes a tragic turn.

Classes began early at the College during the hot summer months and pupils and staff were at their books by 6.00 am on Monday 11 May 1857 when a servant arrived from Edward's house with the news that mutiny had broken out the previous day at Meerut, only forty miles away. Pupils were sent home and staff were ordered to take shelter in the Magazine where a large number of frightened Britons had assembled. But it was clear this was only a temporary measure and the order was given that all civilians, including women, children and the wounded, should make their own way to Ghaziabad where loyal Company soldiers were gathering.

Edward, his wife Isobel and two of their younger children were helped across the river but were harassed and chased by roving groups of mutineers, hunting down Britons and Anglo-Indians. Mrs Andrews tells us that Isobel, unusually for the time, 'was an enormous fat woman and she was soon completely exhausted and could go no further'. She collapsed and begged her husband to go on with the two little boys to safety in a nearby orchard. Half way across open ground the youngest child, Alexander realizing that his mother had been left behind, pulled away from his father and ran back to her. Isobel hid him under her voluminous Victorian skirts and feigned death as the mutineers approached. When night fell she recovered and found a sympathetic villager who arranged for Isobel and Alexander to travel by bullock cart to Ghaziabad, where they found shelter. Edward and his elder boy, aged seven, were not so lucky. Unwisely they re-entered Delhi and were among the forty-eight British prisoners killed at the Red Fort on 16 May by rebel sepoys who had taken over the palace and persuaded the old Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, to support them.

The eldest son of Isobel and Edward, born in 1835, is the great-great-grandfather of Mrs Andrews and luckily he had left home and was working for the Salt Department a few miles outside Delhi when the revolt occurred. His name was Robert Edward Havelock Roberts and in an interesting snippet of history we learn that a number of people whose lives were saved by General Sir Henry Havelock incorporated his name into their own. 'So my great great grandmother became Mrs Havelock Roberts and the name was maintained by many members of the family right through to Uncle Colin, who was always known as Colin Havelock Crump.' The Crump family may have been in India as early as 1770, serving in the East India Company's army and research is still ongoing into this side of the family's fascinating history.

The Crump tomb is a large and elaborately pillared structure in South Park Street cemetery, Calcutta, and in the same cemetery is the more modest tomb of William Archibald Edmonstone who died on 7 September 1803. The Edmonstone family also have long connections with India and a descendant, Mr Edward Gibbs, gives us some background. The family, of Norman extraction, were granted lands in Stirlingshire, Scotland, and a number of the younger sons sought a career in the East India Company, among them two brothers, William and Neil. 'The brothers had been dispatched to India largely against their will by their autocratic father with the aim of restoring the family fortune. Neil prospered whilst William struggled, dogged by a weak constitution. Both fell seriously ill in Calcutta in 1803, and whilst Neil

recovered and lived another thirty-eight years, rising to the top of his profession William succumbed to an unknown disease and ended up in South Park Street cemetery.’ Neil went on to act as aide-de-camp to Lord Cornwallis, serving a succession of six governors general. It was Neil who translated the Persian documents from Tipu Sultan’s library, later bequeathing many of the manuscripts to the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

William’s tomb, which has been excellently restored within the last few months by the Christian Burial Board (*see page 60*) raises some interesting questions for the historian. For one thing, the surname is spelled Edmondstone, an archaic form of the name, with the second ‘d’. The inscription is brief to the point of inscrutability. Yet we know from the *Bengal Obituary* that the original wording contained a lengthy passage from the Bible (Job 7, verse 1) that begins ‘Is there not an appointed time for man upon earth?’ This was noted in the *Obituary* ‘on the west side’ of the tomb, though nothing of it remains today. The original inscription had begun: ‘To the Memory of William Archibald Edmonstone, Esq. eldest son of Sir Archibald Edmonstone, Bart. As a tribute of respect and fraternal affection, this monument is Æerected. Obiit. 7<sup>th</sup> Septembris, A.D. 1803. Ætatis 45.’ It seems clear that substantial alterations or repairs were made to the tomb at some point. The long inscription was removed and a new one put in place, simply recording the name (mis-spelled), and the dates 1758-1803. The tomb is in a prominent position, to the left of the Park Street entrance, against the high wall facing Lower Circular Road. Perhaps the tomb was damaged by a falling tree and was once a larger, domed structure? Certainly what we see today seems lacking a finial, which might have been a broken column, to signify a life cut short, or more likely a funeral urn. It would be interesting to know if any visual record of the original tomb exists.

Mr Ranajoy Bose of the Christian Burial Board reminds us that there are a number of less well-known cemeteries in Calcutta, including that of St Stephens at Kidderpore, which used to be known as the Sailors’ Cemetery, established as it was near the docks. The foundation stone was laid for the Anglican church here in 1844 and two years later St Stephens was dedicated in the presence of the governor general, Sir Henry Hardinge. The curiously-shaped steeple, which has led to the name ‘rocket church’ is supposed to be based on a ship’s lantern, to welcome the sailors home. A number of Bengal pilots and their families were buried in the adjoining cemetery, men who would bring the ships upriver to Calcutta from the Bay of Bengal.



A large and handsome tomb was photographed here in December 2018. (see page 61) It is that of Mrs Charlotte Louisa Sharling (née Needle) who was married in 1859 to Charles Sharling, believed to be one of the Pilots. Eight children were born to the couple and research has uncovered the background of the Sharling family, whose founder, Joseph Rousseau Sharling was born in Sydney, Australia and emigrated to India. His daughter in law, Charlotte, was born in 1842 and died on 26 October 1880. It is hoped that restoration work can be carried out here to commemorate the many seafarers who died in Calcutta.

## **CAN YOU HELP?**

BACSA member Caroline Wakefield asked for help last year to find the grave of Lieutenant Ralph Mitford Ingilby, who was killed near Arrah in Bengal, during the Uprising of 1857. (see *Chowkidar* Autumn 2018) It was known that Ralph's body had been taken to the cantonment at Dinapore (today Danapur) and interred there, but did the tomb still exist, she wondered? Syed Faizan Raza, BACSA's Area Representative for Bihar volunteered to search for it and reported in October as follows: 'The grave of R. Mitford Ingilby has been found in the cemetery number 3 of Danapur. It is a gated cemetery; as it has been raining cats and dogs in Patna so the place has been overshadowed by the wild bush and tall grasses. I would rate the overall condition of the cemetery to be in an average state. I am sending some of the images of Mitford's grave and of the cemetery.' Considering the overgrown condition of the cemetery with waist-high grass, Mr Raza did well to find the tombstone, still standing upright in a rough piece of ground. And the inscription was still clear enough to read: 'Sacred to the Memory of Ralph Mitford Ingelby, Lieutenant 7<sup>th</sup> Bengal Native Infantry who was killed in a night attack on Arrah during the Indian Mutiny on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1857.' (see back cover) It is not known who erected the headstone, whether it was Ralph's fellow officers and men, or a relative who commissioned it sometime after the event. The term 'Indian Mutiny' was not commonly used at that time in India, it being generally referred to as the 'Sepoy outbreak' or 'Sepoy Rebellion'. Nevertheless, it has been found and the cemetery photographed.

Another successful mission was completed in October 2018 by Mark Davies who had set out, for the second time, to get to Lesliganj, in Jharkhand, which is named after his sixth generation ancestor, Matthew Leslie. The Autumn 2018 *Chowkidar* detailed the history of this important man who was a Collector in Bengal, a judge in Patna and Benares and a member of the Board of Revenue in Calcutta.

With the help of Indian friends, Mark arrived in Lesliganj and was introduced to various local dignitaries including the oldest inhabitant; the head of police; heads of the town and district councils and some Muslim elders. Sadly, none could bring any new information about Matthew Leslie – ‘it was the common assumption that he was buried here, a misconception I was able to correct as we know he was actually buried in Berhampore, in West Bengal’. What Mark was able to establish was that in August 1786 the East India Company decreed that native commissioned officers, on retirement, should receive a gratuity of three months’ pay and have a parcel of land allocated to them ‘as near as possible to the Stations to which they had been attached’. On the death of the officer the land would not be taken back into Company control but ‘left to the option of his family to receive a perpetual grant [of the land] at a moderate fixed rent to be determined by the Collector’. This considerate arrangement probably explains why Matthew Leslie’s name has survived as long as it has. Leslie was the Collector here from 1786 to 1793 and was thus known to the retired soldiers settling down on their allocated plots of land. It is a satisfactory conclusion to Mark Davies’ search and he will be lecturing about his visit later this year. (see **Notices** on page 59)

An interesting obituary of Narcisso Vanderhyde was found a few years ago and sent to BACSA by a descendant, Margaret Murray. Dated 1881 it appeared in a newspaper called *India Catholica* and read in part: ‘On the 7<sup>th</sup> instant, Mr Narcisso Vanderhyde passed away to a better life at the age of 71 years and 6 months. The sad event occurred in Smaller Mahim [Bombay] at the residence of his elder son, our friend Mr Peter Vanderhyde.... hailing from the Malabar Coast, he was the son of Mr Francis Vanderhyde, Commandant of the historic fortress on Anjengo, and grandson of Captain Horatio Vanderhyde, Commandant of the Force known as the Nair Brigade in the service of H.H. the Maharaja of Travancore. He endured his suffering with great resignation, as those of us who visited him recently can bear testimony.’ The family were Dutch/Portuguese Catholics who may have been settled in south India before 1750. Margaret Murray is going to India this year, basing herself in Trivandrum and hoping to view baptismal records in old Catholic churches there and to learn more about the Nair Brigade and Fort Anjengo. ‘I will visit graveyards too’ she tells us. ‘I have the names of the ancestors, but no exact dates, just my own approximations. So needles and haystacks spring to mind. I want to try and make as many preparations as I can, but I don’t know where to start.’ Predictably, she adds, no replies have been received from the Indian record offices or the Catholic churches in response to

her initial enquiries. So BACSA put her in touch with Mr Chekkutty, the Area Representative for Kerala who was quickly able to find someone familiar with the archives at Trivandrum. We look forward to reports on the old Catholic cemeteries there.

An unusual query has been received from new BACSA member Alison Reynolds – it does not concern a missing grave, because we know where her great-uncle Frederick Hallard Dale was buried – in the English cemetery on Tenerife in 1965. What we don't know is much about his life in war-time India and afterwards. He was born in Manchester in 1888 and during World War One served in Mesopotamia with a Mechanical Transport unit, before being sent to Rawalpindi where there was a training school. At the end of the war Frederick decided to stay in India and he became an electrical engineer and a Member of the Institution of Engineers (India). From 1921 he was in Bhopal, working for the Bhopal Produce Trust, a commercial venture and the Bhopal Electric Supply with its coal-fired power station. There were meetings with the Begum of Bhopal, Sultan Jehan Begum Sahiba, who did much to modernise her princely State. In January 1938 Frederick was appointed Superintendent of the Power House at the new hydro-electric scheme in Malakand in the North West Frontier Province. The scheme, which was opened by the viceroy, must have seemed like a new and exciting challenge, but already, by the end of the year doubts were being aired about the capital expenditure necessary to complete the scheme.

With the outbreak of war, the position of Superintendent was abolished in order to save money and Frederick and his wife Alice, a widow whom he had married in 1932, found himself working in Peshawar as a sales engineer, on half his previous salary. It was now, in 1940, that Frederick ceased to correspond with his relatives in England who never heard from him again, although efforts were made to trace him and his wife. This is where an unexpected resource comes in. Frederick was a Freemason who had been initiated at Mayo Lodge in Rawalpindi in 1919. His movements can be partially traced through the Masonic Lodge Returns which were sent to Freemasons' Hall in London. Clearly freemasonry was important to Frederick, as it was to many other Britons abroad and Lodges had flourished in India from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. He joined the Roos-Keppel Lodge in Dunga Gali and the Border Chapter in Peshawar, moving to the Stewart Lodge in Rawalpindi in 1943. After Indian Independence the British couple decided to stay on and Frederick is found joining two more Lodges in Calcutta at the end of 1947.

Clearly there was work for him there and he is listed as a chief engineer in 1955 when he and Alice decided to come home. Mayo Lodge had taken the radical decision to relocate from Rawalpindi to Twickenham in Middlesex and it became something of a hub for returning Masons from India. Frederick may have heard from fellow Masons that Tenerife was an attractive place for retirement and there was a strong Masonic presence on the island too. So Alison Reynolds has been able to trace her great-uncle's movements through the Lodges he joined but hopes that readers may be able to suggest places to research the 'missing years' between 1940 and 1955. Possibly someone remembers Frederick Dale who was described as an engaging personality, and certainly a resourceful and clever man.

Another query that does not concern a grave comes from BACSA member Gillian Tindall who is seeking information about the Madras Medical College. A government general hospital for sick East India Company soldiers had long been established inside Fort St George and by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was moved to new premises as the town expanded. By 1827 it was realised that the hospital needed to teach and train its staff and a Dr William Mortimer was appointed as superintendent. Eight years later the place was designated as a Medical School and was officially opened by the governor of Madras. (We do not know what happened to the existing patients – presumably they were lodged elsewhere.) Would-be Indian doctors were admitted for training and in 1850 the School was awarded College status before becoming affiliated to the new University of Madras in 1857. Dr Mortimer had already left by then for Europe, but it is his time in Madras that interests us – was he married, or possibly widowed, and might any BACSA member recognize him as an ancestor?

## NOTICES

**BACSA** visit to the Exhibition 'Splendours of the Raj' at the Queen's Gallery on Monday 17 September 2018. In 1875 the Prince of Wales visited India to establish diplomatic links with the Rulers of the Princely States. During the many Receptions and Durbars there was an exchange of gifts and some of these formed the major part of the exhibition. As a memento of a trip down the Ganges, the Maharajah of Benares presented the Prince with a gold sapphire and diamond inkstand in the shape of the peacock barge used for the visit and this formed the signature piece of the exhibition. Other items on display were jewelled swords, caskets, armour, rosewater sprinklers and perfume holders, the most notable being presented by the Maharajahs of Kashmir and Jaipur. Also on display were paintings and manuscripts

from South Asia now in the Royal Collection, among them the eye-catching portrait 'The Public Reception of Colonel John Low at Lucknow by Nasir al-Din Haider, King of Awadh', a Holy Quran of 1613, owned and annotated by Tipu Sultan, presented to the Monarch by the Librarian of the East India Company, volumes of poetry dating back to the 16th century and, rather oddly, a Hindu translation of Queen Victoria's Highland Journals. These were just a few of the many exhibits enjoyed by BACSA members some of whom went on to have lunch at the Army and Navy Club.

**FIBIS** Autumn meeting will be held on Saturday 12 October 2019 at the Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, London SE 1 (opposite Waterloo Station). Mark Davies will be talking about his successful quest to reach Lesliganj (see page 55) plus a subsequent journey of discovery in the footsteps of another East India Company ancestor, Thomas Wood (c. 1765-1834), the first person to map the Brahmaputra river through Assam. The meeting begins at 10.00 am. Please check the FIBIS website for details nearer the event: [www.FIBIS.org](http://www.FIBIS.org)

**IMPERIAL INDIA – FIND YOUR ANCESTORS!** was the title of a successful tour led by the Editor of *Chowkidar* in October 2018. The trip was organised by BACSA member Mr Yasin Zargar, who runs Indus Experiences, a company established nearly 25 years ago that specializes in travel to south Asia. The theme of the tour was to look at cemeteries in five Indian cities – Delhi, Meerut, Lucknow, Cawnpore and Calcutta and to meet people living there. Not surprisingly, the expedition attracted media interest and some of the group were interviewed by reporters. BACSA's membership secretary, Christopher Carnaghan told the *Hindustan Times* that his father had served in the Indian Police Force for a decade during the British Raj and that he himself had been born in Karnataka. Indian newspapers are usually receptive and sympathetic to stories of the British presence before Independence in 1947. After all, it is part of India's history too. BACSA member Mrs Francesca Radcliffe located the tomb of her father-in-law Geoffrey Radcliffe, younger brother of Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who famously 'drew the line' between India and Pakistan before Independence. (see page 61) Charles Volkers found the grave of an ancestor, Mrs de Russett in a field near All Souls' church at Cawnpore. He had been unable to locate it on an earlier visit. He also found the tomb of another ancestor, Mary Stowell in Lower Circular Road Cemetery Calcutta. A boat trip upriver to the old Danish settlement of Serampore and its little cemetery was much enjoyed. It is hoped to run a similar tour in 2020.



*above: Michael Heath at the newly restored tomb of Colonel Charles Heath in Jalna (see page 50)*

*below: the restored tomb of William Edmonstone in South Park Street cemetery, Calcutta (see page 54)*







*above: Charlotte Sharling's tomb at Kidderpore (see page 55)*

*below: BACSA member Mrs Francesca Radcliffe at her father-in-law's tomb in Delhi (see page 59)*



## A KASHMIRI LOVE SONG

Some of the most extraordinary sights in India are the old, overgrown colonial graveyards where generations of Britons who went out to serve the Empire were laid to rest. In one such burial ground in the southern city of Chennai – Madras, as it was once known – BACSA member Andrew Whitehead came across the grave of a woman whose story throws an unusual light on the lives of the British in India:

‘St Mary’s is proud to proclaim itself the oldest Anglican church east of Suez. It stands inside a vast fort, built by the British some three-hundred-and-seventy years ago to keep out marauders, among whom the most troublesome, as so often, were the French. In a remarkable thread of historical continuity, Fort St George remains the seat of government of the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu and its seventy million people. A couple of minutes stroll from St Mary’s and you’re at the chief minister’s office and the state assembly building. The church still attracts a respectable Sunday congregation; its monuments and memorials delineate Britain’s early, stumbling, not always gentle, encounter with India. The surrounding graveyard quickly became full – the lifespan of Britons in India back then was short. St Mary’s was allocated an overspill burial ground on a desolate spot a couple of miles away called the Island. It’s there still, sprawling, unkempt, a blasted elegy for Empire – a caretaker does his best to keep the dereliction at bay, but it’s a losing battle. Obelisks, crosses and funeral statuary peep out from the dense undergrowth. Stray dogs howl with anger when disturbed. No one goes there except –tell-tale signs suggest – to gamble, defecate, drink ... and have sex.

At the far end of the grounds, just as you wonder whether you dare venture any further, there are two neat, well-tended, fenced-off plots of Commonwealth war graves. And close by, in a no man’s land between the manicured rows of war dead and the tangled mayhem all around, I came across a grave I was looking out for – a small, modest plaque in memory of General Malcolm Nicolson and his wife Adela Florence, who both died in what was then Madras in 1904. She was one of the most popular poets of the Edwardian era – she wrote of love, longing, suffering and death; and above all of India, with which she had a profound affinity. She at first made out that her poems were translations from Indian languages – and she used a man’s name, Laurence Hope. Some verses of hers, set to music, you may know: ‘Pale hands I loved, Beside the Shalimar’. I remember my father singing those lines to himself. It includes a couplet, addressed to those pale hands:



I would rather have felt you round my throat  
Crushing out life; than waving me farewell!

The poem is called 'Kashmiri Song' – Kashmiris are often described as fair-skinned. There is an ambiguity, perhaps deliberate, about the gender and racial identity of narrator and lover. Some of her poems are deeply transgressive: addressing not just gender and race, but betrayal, harm and the erotic, in ways which we rarely associate with that apparently strait-laced era. Whether this was fantasy, exotic fable, or based in part on experience, we just don't know.

The story of her death is disturbing. Her husband was much older; he needed a prostate operation; it went wrong; the Madras nursing home had run out of oxygen. A few weeks later, his widow – thirty-nine years old and with a four year-old son in the care of relatives in England – took her own life. Gossip travels fast, and the word went out that this poet – so knowledgeable about Indian customs and lore – had committed sati ... an ancient, and long-outlawed, custom of a wife taking her own life when her husband loses his.

Adela's sister was also a writer – using the pen name Victoria Cross, she wrote racy novels; her most popular is said to have sold six-million copies. Set in India, it's about a genteel young English woman who takes her Indian servant as her lover and won't give him up even when she gets engaged to an eligible, English, colonial administrator. Her lover dies, but she discovers she is expecting his child. She marries her English fiancé and they move away; when the baby is born, she realises that her husband can never abide this living reminder of her Indian lover, so ... she suffocates the child.

It's fiction of course. But it does make you pause. The novel violates so much of what's expected of a refined English woman in India at this time. You wonder whose anxieties are being expressed in this tangled storyline – and what its emphatic commercial success says about its readership: that they liked to be shocked and appalled, or in some vicarious manner wanted to share in the thrill, and agony, of a woman who breaks the rules. The writings of both sisters challenge some of the conventional assumptions about Empire – about the attitudes and experiences of those Britons who made their lives in India. Colonial graveyards such as St Mary's are often among the most potent epitaphs of an enterprise which by-and-large history does not judge kindly. But delve deeper beneath that dense mat of vegetation, and it's extraordinary what you can find.

## **BOOKS BY BACSA MEMBERS**

### **The British in India: Three centuries of Ambition and Experience**

David Gilmour

To read David Gilmour's latest book on India is a little like visiting a stately home. The first response is to admire the architecture, the placing of windows, doors, and turrets. Then the interior reveals the attention to detail, the placing of the furniture and the arrangement of portraits, large and small, on the walls. In this book all the elements fit together perfectly, and the result is a masterpiece. Read it!

Gilmour states his objectives early in his work, 'I am interested in the motives and identities of British individuals .... in who these people were, and why they went to India, in what they did and how they lived when they got there, and in what they thought and felt about their lives on the subcontinent.' He does this by examining a vast range of sources, organised in three sections, Aspirations, Endeavours, and Experiences, and many subsections. Almost every page is littered with examples, too many to be quoted here. Gilmour stresses that the numbers of people who went to India were extremely small, and outside the cities could lead solitary lives in isolated outposts. The motivation to lead this kind of life was the lure of riches, but the risk of death was extremely high in the eighteenth century, due to tropical diseases; the Bombay saying that 'two monsoons was the life of a man' was near the truth. Nevertheless many young men took the risk. Cadets aged sixteen went to join the East India Company's armies, because it was possible for an officer to live on his pay, which was not possible in a British regiment. Poverty induced numerous Irishmen to enlist. Family tradition led others, the 'dolphin families' like the Cottons, Stracheys and Rivett-Carnacs to go, as their relatives already in India could further their careers. Nor must one forget the many businessmen, the 'boxwallahs' and planters, many of them Scots.

There was little training for the East India Company's civil servants, the 'writers' and the army cadets until the establishment in the early nineteenth century of Haileybury for the civilians, and Addiscombe for artillery and engineering officers. Some army engineers spent much of their service in India building canals or designing buildings; for instance Sir Richard Strachey's sole military experience was in the first Sikh War (1845-6), and the remainder of his service involved overseeing the development of canals, and Captain Charles Wyatt, Bengal Engineers, who designed Government House Calcutta (now Raj Bhavan) based on Kedleston Hall, the home of Lord Curzon.

After the introduction in 1853 of competition for the India Civil Service, the successful candidates usually spent two years in a university before going to India. This was a policy advocated by Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, possibly because two of his brothers had died in India; the principle of basic training in Britain continued until halted by war in 1939, and friendships formed there lasted throughout their service and beyond.

Gilmour's next section, 'Endeavours' is divided into 'insiders' and 'the open air'. Careers in India often involved both aspects, as ICS officers began as District Officers with office duties as magistrates and collectors of revenue, inspectors of prisons and many more obligations; in the cold weather they toured their districts. Some relished the opportunity to settle disputes on the ground, and see village life at first hand, while others could not wait to get a post in the Secretariat, or a transfer to the Political Service, which handled relations with the Indian States, and the tribes on the North West Frontier. Sir Harcourt Butler distinguished the two types as lean and keen men on the Frontier, and fat and good-natured men in the States. Life as a Resident in a State was easy but rather formal if the State was well-administered, but required diplomatic skills, particularly if the Ruler was a minor.

On the Frontier the Political Officer had to know the tribes, and to judge when it was appropriate to hold a jirga, or council of elders, to settle disputes. Acknowledged experts, like Robert Sandeman (died 1892) and later George Roos-Keppel spent years pacifying the tribes with great success. Recreations from official duties ranged from the social atmosphere of the numerous clubs, graded according to the ranks of the members, to the more active pursuits of hunting birds and dangerous animals, like pig-sticking. Ladies found the clubs a welcome relief from the boredom and isolation of daily life, and enjoyed hunting and (surprisingly) pig-sticking with shorter spears. There were some who scorned these pastimes and yearned for more cultural pursuits, like Bill and Mildred Archer who developed interests in Indian tribal life, and Indian painting which lasted all their lives.

The final chapters deal with those who 'stayed on' after Independence, either in the civil services and armies of Pakistan and India, or branched out into second careers in many fields in Britain, such as the civil service, foreign services or many business firms. All harboured nostalgia for their previous lives in India. A few became notable teachers, the last of whom was probably Geoffrey Langlands who has just died in Lahore, aged 101.

BACSA members will appreciate Gilmour's remarks and analysis of deaths in India. The numerous cemeteries are mute reminders of the toll exacted by India, and remain BACSA's concern today. (RJB)

2018 Allen Lane ISBN 978 0 241 00452 4. £30.00 pp618

**Paper Jewels: Postcards from the Raj**

Omar Khan

Old picture postcards have only recently been recognised as a valuable tool for the historian and this book is a major work on postcards of people and places in the Indian subcontinent. The earliest examples from the author's collection of what can properly be called picture postcards date from 1892 and are advertisements for Singer sewing machines. Men and women in colourful costumes pose in front of treadle machines that were to alter the lives of the home dressmaker and the professional *darzi* (tailor). Postcards quickly became very popular among the British and other foreigners in India for several pragmatic reasons. It cost only a one *anna* stamp to send a card home and a few *pies* for inland postage; writing space on the card was limited which was ideal for a cheery greeting and did away with the tedium of letter writing; and cards were handsomely coloured at a time when photographs were restricted to black and white or sepia. A very small number of English-educated Indians sent postcards too, but the fact that until the 1940s and the movement for Independence, postcards were printed mainly in English, meant they did not appeal to the majority of native language speakers.

Khan's book is based on cards of eight cities including Karachi, Calcutta and Madras, and three areas – Kashmir, Ceylon and the North-West Frontier. A chapter on Independence sits rather awkwardly at the end of the book. There is a very useful map of the subcontinent, Burma and Ceylon showing where the various distributors of cards were based and their names will resonate with anyone who has handled these old cards. D. Macropolo, tobacconist in Calcutta, together with the publishers Thacker, Spink & Co; Moorli Dhur & Sons, Ambala; H.A. Mirza & Sons, Delhi; Johnny Stores, Karachi; D.A. Ahuja & Sons, Rangoon, and the well-known Ravi Verma Press and M.V. Dhurandhar, Bombay. The cards themselves were frequently printed abroad, particularly in Germany and Austria which dominated the market until the start of World War One in 1914. Ravi Verma, whose distinctive style still influences poster art today, bought a lithographic steam press from Germany in 1892, although he had to sell his ownership a decade later to a German company.

Lithographically produced cards soon gave way to the collotype where an image on glass was transferred to cards. The oilette, a printing method that added depth to a painted picture became popular and after about 1910 real photographs, sometimes hand-coloured, are common. A much wider range of images than the conventional views of today's postcards was published. Cremations, murder victims, famine victims, plague camps, prisons, earthquake damage, 'hanging of rioters' and 'The Gallows at Peshawar' were all subjects deemed suitable for postcards at a time when newspapers did not publish photographs. Royal visitors, particularly British royalty, were popular subjects and there were also series of Indian and Singhalese tribes, tradespeople, entertainers and household servants.

The pictures in this book are beautifully reproduced, as they should be. Unfortunately one can't say the same about the text and the footnotes. Some of the pages are unnumbered in arbitrary fashion. Quite early on the footnotes are in trouble. On page 72, for example they appear in this order: 16, 18, 17, 20. In a new chapter on page 109 footnotes start at 26. This may seem trivial but it is annoying if one wants to check a particular statement by the author. More serious is the poor proof-reading so that the art historian Giles Tillotson's name is consistently mis-spelt, Aitchison College in Lahore becomes Aitcheson, the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh is 'buried' instead of the cremation that actually took place, and unforgivably the late Michael Stokes, BACSA chairman for several years who had his own splendid postcard collection, is referred to on page 23 as 'Michael Powell'. One expects better from publishers of this repute. (RLJ)

2018 Mapin/Alkazi Collection of Photography £45.00 ISBN 978 81 89995 85 0 pp362

### **Theodore & Eliza: The True Story**

Susan Harvard

When the engagement of Lady Diana Spencer to the Prince of Wales was announced, genealogists immediately started to trace her ancestry, but could get no further back than 1818, four generations away from the Princess. That was the date of baptism of five-year-old Katherine (Kitty) Scott Forbes in the Bombay Presidency. There was no doubt about Kitty's father – he was Theodore Forbes, from the impoverished Scottish gentry who, like many of his countrymen, had sought his fortune in India. But who was Kitty's mother? Speculation, fuelled by ignorance, claimed that she was a 'dark-skinned native of Bombay' called Eliza Kewark who was not married to Theodore, thus making her daughter illegitimate.

Kitty's great grandson, the art historian Theodore Crombie began his own research into his family's background and suggested to the author that she might write a novel based on the story of Theodore Forbes and Eliza Kewark. Luckily Susan Harvard resisted this idea and decided to carry out her own investigations based mainly on largely unsorted family papers in the library of Aberdeen University. 'It was there' she writes 'in Mss 2740 of the Special Collections in King's College Library, that, against the odds, the details of Eliza's poignant story had survived...the story of Kitty's parents, though hidden and almost forgotten, was not lost. It exists still on the worn pages of Theodore's letter book...in letters from his brother-in-law Agah Aratoon Baldassier of Surat...but above all, in Eliza's letters to Theodore, dictated to a Parsi scribe in her broken English...and always signed in Armenian script "Sahiba Forbes" and in English "Your affectionate Mrs Forbes".'

Born at Boyndlie in Aberdeenshire in 1788, Theodore joined the East India Company as a civilian and he arrived in India a young man of twenty years old. By the autumn of 1809 he was appointed as Assistant Registrar in Surat and it was here he met and fell in love with Eliza who came from a respectable Armenian family. The couple were married according to the Eastern Orthodox ceremony and although no marriage certificate survives, Eliza refers to the ritual of bride and groom placing wedding crowns on each other's heads. The newly-wed pair travelled together to Mocha, where Theodore took up the post of Political Agent. His job was to purchase coffee for the Company and to monitor merchant shipping at the entrance to the Red Sea. This was at a time when piracy was rampant and cargo-carrying ships were as much at risk from pirates in their fast-moving dhows as from tropical storms. The author was fortunate to visit Mocha and the Yemen in the 1990s. One couldn't do it today. The remains of merchants' houses were still visible then in the deserted ancient city - elaborately decorated three-storeyed buildings that hinted at what a rich and important place it had once been. It was here that the first child was born to the couple in October 1812. The little girl soon became known as Kitty and a nurse called Fazagool, who may have come from Africa, possibly as a slave, was employed to look after her. It was Fazagool who was later to accompany Kitty on her long sea-journey to England and to Theodore's parents at Boyndlie.

There is much more one could say about this book which is an astonishingly accomplished debut by the author. It is beautifully written, it is subtle in portraying its real life characters and is particularly good in describing the three cities that feature in the story

of Theodore and Eliza; the cities of Surat, which was fast losing its crown to Bombay, and the Arabian trading centre of Mocha. It also brings out the discrimination that non-British women started to face in early 19<sup>th</sup> century India. Gone were the days when mixed marriages were accepted and even encouraged as a way of keeping British men out of trouble. Poor Eliza became a victim of this prejudice as Theodore realised that an Armenian wife was a handicap to his new career as a Bombay merchant. The story does not have a happy ending. Warmly recommended. (RLJ)

2018 Harvard Works of Art ISBN 978 1 9995952 0 3. Copies from the author, Mrs Susan Harvard at: Vellow Wood Cottage, Lower Vellow, Williton, Taunton, TA4 4LT for £11.99 including first class postage and packing. £1 for each copy sold will be donated to BACSA. pp335.

### **Juliet's Letters from India**

Juliet O'Connor

In September 1963 a newly-married English couple, Dan and Juliet O'Connor sailed to India where they were to spend nine years working, with one home leave. The Revd. Dan O'Connor had been appointed to teach English literature at the prestigious St Stephen's College in Old Delhi, as well as becoming chaplain to the college community. Juliet, who had just completed a teacher training course in arts and crafts, found work at Queen Mary's School. St Stephen's had been founded in 1881 by a group of Anglican missionaries from Cambridge, and it provided an excellent education for boys of all faiths, attracted by the college's high standards. The Cambridge Mission paid for the couples' fares from England, aboard the Anchor Line's ship *Caledonia* but after that they had to rely on what they could earn from teaching and writing.

Juliet wrote frequently to her parents in Stockton on Tees, using aerogrammes, those pale-blue flimsy self-folding envelopes familiar to older readers. When Juliet died in 2016, her husband Dan found that all her letters had been carefully preserved by her mother, and he has now edited them for publication in this paperback book, with a brief introduction. It was, as he said, strange for English people to be living in Independent India for any length of time (the O'Connors stayed in Delhi for nearly a decade). There were a number of transient foreigners, experts in various fields, VSO workers and others but it was mainly the missionaries who committed themselves to setting up house and working there. The 1960s was a period when India was finding her place in a post-colonial world. Although the author doesn't explicitly say so, it was also a time of hope and optimism.

Photographs of Mahatma Gandhi were pinned up in small shops and humble tea stalls as a mentor for the future. English people were still treated with a generous amount of respect and even awe – a hangover from the British Raj. But it was also a difficult period – two wars with Pakistan followed by the trauma of the birth of Bangladesh. There were constant shortages – electricity and water supplies were variable (they still are in some places today), and because India's manufacturing base was undeveloped and Britain had stopped exporting its own goods after 1947, basic items were hard to come by. An Indian doctor friend of the O'Connors had to import his own surgical instruments from Britain at his own expense.

There is plenty of domestic detail here. Living in a house on campus, up on the Ridge, the O'Connors were host to pupils and friends, hospitably arranging dinners and tea parties on a very limited budget. The young Allan Sealy, later to become a well-regarded novelist, taught Juliet how to play the guitar. Juliet made most of her own clothes, and those of her two sons, Aiden and Timothy, who were both born in India. 'Frantically knitting and reading Trollope' is a typical entry. There are no great political insights here, because this is not a political book, although the couple were presented to the prime minister, Pandit Nehru. But it is a delightful insight into a lost period, 'a journey out of time' as Juliet called it, and a nostalgic read for those of us who lived in India in the 1960s. (RLJ)

2018 No publisher given. Available from Amazon.com ISBN 9781727463040. £10.00 plus postage. pp245

## **BOOKS BY NON-MEMBERS THAT WILL INTEREST READERS**

**Empress: Queen Victoria and India**

Miles Taylor

This is a biography of Queen Victoria like no other. Plenty of other books chronicle Victoria's robust common sense, coupled sometimes with a certain wilfulness, and those qualities are present in this book. But there is also a strong historical dimension in the tale of the Queen's lifelong love affair with India. Most of us know about her *munshi*, Abdul Karim, who at the end of her life taught her Hindustani. For her courtiers and to many of us now he seems to be just John Brown Mark II and it must be no accident that both have figured in films about her. But this book makes clear that her interest in India goes right back to the earliest years of her reign.



In 1841 her mentor Lord Melbourne was replaced as Prime Minister by the uncharismatic Peel. But Peel's cabinet included some more colourful characters. One was Lord Ellenborough, at that time President of the Board of Control overseeing India in uneasy tandem with the East India Company. In 1842 he became governor general of India. He immediately began writing monthly dispatches direct to Victoria. This was without the approval (or probably the knowledge) of the Company. His purpose in this was to cast Victoria in a special role: He wrote to her in 1843: 'were your Majesty to become the nominal Head of the Empire.... the princes and chiefs would be proud of their position as Feudatories of an Empress'.

This was, of course, at a time when the demise of the Company's hold on India was still to come. It also casts the maharajahs and other princes of India in a romantic glow, like fairly altruistic members of the House of Lords, in rather the same way as *taluqdars* were thought of by many 19<sup>th</sup> century Indian Civil Servants (ICS) as English country squires. This romantic view captured Victoria's imagination. Her love affair with India continued. Most of Ellenborough's successors continued his habit of sending separate Indian dispatches for royal eyes only. This was helped by the fact that both Lady Dalhousie and Lady Canning were former ladies-in-waiting to the Queen. What more natural than that Charlotte Canning would send back detailed accounts together with sketches and photographs of all she saw in India? Victoria was rapidly becoming an expert in Indian affairs. When Charlotte Canning sent her news of the outbreak of the Mutiny, Victoria immediately put her finger on the matter: 'a fear of their religion being tampered with is at the bottom of it'.

The suppression of the Mutiny led to the Proclamation of the abolition of the Company's rule in November 1858, and this opened up another facet of Victoria's interest in India. The Proclamation was read out all over India in English and in the vernacular languages. It had been put together with amazing haste. Some officials only got their copy four days before it was due to be proclaimed. The most important aspect of the Proclamation was the attitude to the inhabitants of India. Victoria disliked early drafts, and insisted that the Proclamation named her, rather than the Government, as exercising British dominion over India. She also asked that Peel include mention of future prosperity and general welfare 'pointing to the privileges which Indians will receive in being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown & the prosperity following in the train of civilisation'.

This last phrase did not appear in the final text. Instead it says the Queen 'holds Ourselves bound to the Natives of Our Indian Territories by the same obligations of Duty which bind Us to all our other Subjects'. Despite these relatively circumspect words, Victoria herself from then on took a much more paternalistic (or rather maternalistic) attitude to India than her ministers, and was consistently more libertarian than her viceroys with the exception of Lord Ripon. She enjoyed the flummery of the Durbars, Lytton's Imperial assemblage of 1877, Disraeli's formal conferring of the title of Empress of India. But she also had a real sense that she had a duty to the people of India which was not always shared by her viceroys or ministers, and it also seems her reading of the Proclamation was shared by many of her Indian subjects.

With the benefit of hindsight we can see that she saw farther than most of her viceroys, and her emotional but warm response, though out of tune with her ministers, seems to us today much more constructive. (Professor Taylor takes his story to the end of the Raj where we see the unhappy sequel.) It is against this background that we can place Victoria's learning Hindustani at an advanced age from her *munshi*. Professor Taylor has produced a fascinating book and anyone interested in India, or Victoria, will find much to enjoy and learn from. He writes well and his book is impeccably structured. One very small criticism: the full text of the 1858 Proclamation should have been included as an Appendix. (RSM)

2018 Yale University Press ISBN 978 0 300 11809 4 £25.00 pp388

## SHORT NOTICE

**Empire of Enchantment: The Story of Indian Magic** John Zubrizycki

After a rather muddled start the author describes how the British in India dealt with an eclectic mixture of assorted fakirs, jaduwallahs, jugglers and magicians. The arrival of Indian jugglers in Victorian England caused a sensation, although the performers themselves made little money and had to be repatriated. One man, Ramo Samee (Ramaswami) was buried in a pauper's grave at St Pancras. The famous rope-trick is examined in detail. An entertaining read.

2018 Hurst & Co, London. Hardback £25.00 ISBN 9781849049443 pp357

**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.

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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)



*Ralph Mitford Ingilby's tomb found at Dinapore in 2018  
(see page 55)*