

PROJECTS REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH ASIA 2020

Area Representative's (AR) name in brackets

There was very little progress on projects in 2020 because of the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

BURMA (Adam Foucar)

The proposal from the parish priest of St. Patrick's Cemetery, Moulmein to improve public access and maintenance through extending the surfacing of paths was rejected by the Executive Committee. Previous grants had been spent on these features and the Committee felt that future help for St. Patrick's should be devoted to conservation of graves.

INDIA

Delhi, Nicholson Cemetery (William Crawley)

We are in discussion with the Delhi Chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage about a third phase of work concentrating on grave conservation.

Haryana, Ambala Cantonment Cemetery (William Crawley)

Although this is not a project, our Area Representative put in a lot of work helping the Cemetery Committee mount a campaign to regain control of the cemetery from an individual who had occupied it. The deputy high commissioner, Chandigarh, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Haryana Government became involved. The Cemetery Committee secured access, but the dispute continued in the courts.

Maharashtra, Pune, St. Sepulchre Cemetery (Peter D'Cruz)

Using his status as our Area Representative, Peter D'Cruz lobbied the local authorities about the broken-down state of the perimeter wall of this cemetery. They responded by replacing the rear part with a higher and stronger barrier to prevent incursions.

Tamil Nadu, Madras, St. Mary's Cemetery on the Island (William Pettigrew)

A project proposal was drafted and cleared with the local cemetery committee. We resolved the problem of transmitting funds to Madras and the contractor was on site preparing facilities for workers. £6,005 were granted for initial work.

Tamil Nadu, Coonoor, Tiger Hill Cemetery (Phillida Purvis)

A grant of £6,541 was made for the repair of the boundary walls and, under the direction of the Cemetery Committee of All Saints Church, Coonoor, work was completed in 2020. The cemetery is safely secured from the intrusion and destruction by animals and undesirable elements which had plagued it and brought destruction to headstones.

Tamil Nadu, Kotagiri, European Cemetery (Phillida Purvis)

No progress was made on this small project to repair boundary walls.

Telangana, Hyderabad Residency Cemetery

The Deccan Heritage Foundation organised a maintenance programme of the cemetery and its surrounding garden with a grant of £3,010 from BACSA, which covered half the cost. The grant was given on the understanding that a permanent maintenance regime would be agreed with the local authorities.

West Bengal, Calcutta, Lower Circular Road Cemetery

The Christian Burial Board was unable to advance its ideas for further conservation work.

West Bengal, Calcutta, South Park Street Cemetery

The Association for the Preservation of Historic Cemeteries in India (APHCI) lost its financial support from an established local company, to help maintain the cemetery. It appealed to BACSA for an increase in our annual maintenance grant, which was agreed. Sadly, APHCI's chairman Mr Ashwani Kapur died in April. He had worked tirelessly for decades in support of South Park Street Cemetery.

Annual maintenance in India The East India Charitable Trust (EICT) made grants to cemeteries in Agra, Calcutta, Kotah and Meerut. BACSA made grants to cemeteries in Jhansi and Salem.

Plans Make progress on our next major project, to conserve St. Mary's Cemetery on the Island in Chennai (Madras).

PAKISTAN (Rosemary Raza)

The Coronavirus pandemic seemed to have hit this country particularly hard. The leading conservation architect, Yasmeen Lari, who took an interest in our work, contracted the virus, and her husband died. Another contact in Faisalabad died, along with four colleagues and a contractor. Understandably this distressing situation led to less progress than we would have hoped for.

Faisalabad, Gora Qabristan (Christian Cemetery)

We had yet to receive reliable information about the use of a grant of £1,000 to restore and preserve four graves and their headstones, as well as renovate the lychgate.

Multan

A local Christian group which expressed interest in conserving the cemetery near the international airport, which has a number of impressive grave monuments, was unable to take this further.

Lahore, Dharampura (Mian Mir) Cemetery

A Brigadier Samson Sharaf took on the management of improvements and repairs and asked for help from BACSA. We responded positively, but there was no further communication by the year's end.

AREA REPRESENTATIVES: The Executive Committee is grateful for the support of our volunteer area representatives. Mrs Valerie Robinson and Mrs Jennifer Garwood relinquished their responsibilities for Rajasthan and APHCI Calcutta &

Tejpur, respectively. We regret the death in September of Ms Eileen Hewson, member and area representative for Sri Lanka and Ladakh.

CONSERVATION MANUAL: The manual was finalised, translated into Hindi, Urdu and Bangla, and published. It will be available on the website and in printed form, free of charge.

PROJECTS SUBCOMMITTEE: This was established in order to devise a policy to prioritise cemeteries and monuments by ranking them in terms of historic, architectural and landscape importance. A tabular assessment of significances was nearly complete. Subcommittee members also contributed to the drafting of the Conservation Manual (see above) and provided a forum for ARs and others to discuss, if only remotely, forthcoming projects before their submission to the Executive Committee.