



CHOWKIDAR

Volume 16 Number 3 Spring 2022
Editor: Dr Rosie Llewellyn-Jones MBE

British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (BACSA)

President

Sir Mark Havelock-Allan Bt QC

Vice-Presidents

Field Marshal Sir John Chapple, GCB,
CBE, DL

Sir Michael Davies KCB

Mr David Mahoney

Dr Michael Nazir-Ali

Mr Alan Tritton CBE, DL

Lady Wade-Gery

Honorary Secretary

Mr Peter Boon

Barn End, London Road

Blewbury, Didcot, OX 11 9PB

tel: 01235 850410

email: secretary@bacsa.org.uk

Acting Honorary Treasurer

Mr Paul Dean

97 Verulam Road

St Albans

AL3 4DL

Tel: 01727 845229

email: treasurer@bacsa.org.uk

Chowkidar Editor

Dr Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, MBE

135 Burntwood Lane

London SW17 0AJ

Tel: 0208 947 9131

email: rosiejai@clara.co.uk

Chairman

Mr Paul Dean

Executive Committee

Mrs Alex Bailey (Communications &
Website Editor)

Dr R. J. Bingle (Records, BL Archives
MIs & church matters)

Mr Charles Greig

Ms Valerie Haye (lecture series)

Dr Rosie Llewellyn-Jones

(publications & 2nd hand book sales)

Ms Denise Love (Projects Co-ordinator)

Dr Rosemary Raza (General Meetings
& Events)

Brigadier Ian Rees (Cemetery Records,
maps & military liaison)

Ms Valmay Young (Website Manager
& Twitter Editor)

Mr Yasin Zargar (South Asia Adviser)

Honorary Membership Secretary

Mr Christopher Carnaghan

42 Rectory Lane

Kings Langley

Herts WD4 8EY

tel: 01923 267458

email: membership@bacsa.org.uk

NOTES ON BACSA

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

There is a steady membership of over 1,100 (2022) drawn from a wide circle of interest - Government; Churches; Services; Business; Museums; Historical & Genealogical Societies. More members are needed to support the rapidly expanding activities of the Association - the setting up of local committees in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Sri Lanka, Malaysia etc., and building up the Records Archive in the India Office Collections at the British Library; and many other projects for the upkeep of historical and architectural monuments. The Association has its own newsletter *Chowkidar*, which is distributed free to all members twice a year and contains a section for 'Queries' on any matter relating to family history or the condition of a relative's grave etc. BACSA also publishes Cemetery Records books and has published books on different aspects of European social history out East. Full details on our website: www.bacsa.org.uk

Founded by the late Theon Wilkinson, MBE

© British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia

THE MAZAAR OF SERGEANT WATKINS

‘On a recent visit to Allahabad I was shocked beyond words to find that in the famous Alfred Park the grave of G.R.Watkins, Quartermaster Sergeant of the 6th Regiment, killed on 6th June 1857 has been just razed to the ground and no trace left of it. The grave was in existence till recent weeks. Please keep me abreast of action being taken and let me know if I can be of assistance.’ The news was emailed to *Chowkidar* in November 2021 by BACSA member Mr Gurpreet Singh Anand.

Alfred Park was named after Queen Victoria’s second son and had previously been called Company Bagh - the East India Company’s garden - an extensive site of 133 acres. (Today it is called the Chandra Shekhar Azad Park.) QM Sergeant George Richard Watkins, to give him his full name, is one of those Englishmen who have taken on a mysterious persona after death. His is not the first such tomb that has subsequently become a place of pilgrimage for Indian people. The story goes that he was known as Richard Sahib, and also as Richard-ud-din (‘Richard of the Faith’). Among some circles in Allahabad it is believed that he was ‘an English gentleman who decided to lead an austere life of spirituality and ultimately went on to become a revered saint’. It is not easy to reconcile this description with that of a QM sergeant, and it may be that confusion has arisen over an earlier Richard Sahib but nevertheless ‘the tomb is highly venerated as a *mazaar* (the grave of a holy man), by the locals who often come and mark their presence by paying regular homage’. The grave itself was a flat stone fenced with iron railings and a metal cross. (*see page 58*) As befits a holy man, the stone was covered with a silk cloth, and the inscription underneath read: ‘Sacred to the memory of George Richard Watkins Quarter-master Sergeant of the 6th Regiment who was killed on 6th June 1857. Aged 30 years, 1 month and 21 days.’ The 6th Bengal Native Infantry had initially supported its European officers as news of the rebel Uprising spread across northern India. But on the evening of 6th June the sepoys suddenly turned on their British officers and a number were killed, shot down on the parade ground. European women, children, male volunteers and army pensioners were already inside the Fort, but there was anarchy in the city itself as the jail was opened, the prisoners released and the treasury looted. Order was restored with the arrival of General Neill and his Madras troops five days later when the dead were retrieved and buried.

In trying to establish what had happened to Sergeant Watkins’ grave, Mr Anand put BACSA’s Secretary in touch with Mr Nilesh Narayan who runs a tour company specialising in ‘off-beat’ cities of Uttar Pradesh and

who has a keen interest in Alfred Park. Mr Narayan was able to unpick what had happened and to provide a possible remedy. A complaint about illegal encroachments in the Park had gone before the High Court of Allahabad. Encroachment is a serious problem in India and old Christian cemeteries are often the victims of the 'land-mafia' as the encroachers are called. In this case the High Court ordered that all encroachments in the Park that had taken place after 1975 were to be removed, including 'graves and mazaars'. 'Unfortunately,' reports Mr Narayan 'due to laxity of the authorities, the grave of Sergeant Watkins bore the consequences...the authorities went overboard to demolish a documented site.' A few undocumented graves, believed to be those of Mewati Muslims who were killed fighting the British in 1857 were also lost. Mr Narayan proposes that the grave should either be reconstructed, or a memorial plaque placed nearby. Photographs show that although the site has been levelled, with the stone and railings removed, no disinterment appears to have taken place.

MAIL BOX

By contrast, cheering news was received shortly before Christmas 2021 that the Pines Cemetery at Nainital is being restored on the initiative of the Tourism Department. There are a number of cemeteries in and around the popular hill station that was the summer retreat of Britons from the United Provinces during the Raj. Today it is the State capital of Uttarakhand. The Pines Cemetery is also known as the Kala Khan Cemetery and spreads over a series of wooded ridges with a handsome entrance gate. A recent video shows that work has started by dismantling a series of low rise retaining walls, and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will be consulted for specialist restoration work. (A copy of the BACSA Manual on cemetery conservation has been offered.) The large cost (Rs30 lacs so far) is being met by the State government in the hope of promoting foreign tourism, particularly from the United Kingdom.

The site contains the graves of Boer prisoners of war, exiled here from South Africa as well as 16 Commonwealth War Graves from World War One. Among the latter graves is that of Bertie Meech of the 2nd Dorsetshire Regiment who died on 21 June 1916 aged 19 years. Assuming he had joined a local regiment, what was a Dorset lad doing in a country relatively untouched by war? Meech may have travelled to India before the Great War began, because the Dorsetshire Regiment had long been stationed on the troubled North West Frontier. In 1914 it was ordered at short notice to Mesopotamia to protect oil supplies and it is

possible that Meech was wounded here and evacuated back to his Regiment's 'home' in India. Nainital was considered a healthy place and one for recuperation for British soldiers, although clearly from the numbers buried here it was sometimes too late to save them.

For some reason, another casualty of World War One does not have the usual CWGC headstone. Colonel Thomson's grave is a conventional ridged stone with the following inscription: 'Colonel Alexander Henry Thomson DSO Commandant 30th Punjabis (Indian Army) whose life was given for his country. August 2nd 1918 in his 45th year.' Thomson's 'A' Company of Sikhs were sent to German East Africa at the start of the war to the country that is now Tanzania. Having crossed the river Rufiji in pursuit of the enemy, Thomson was severely wounded on 7 January 1917 and ordered his men to leave him to die on the battlefield. But Subedar Thakur Singh disobeyed orders and went out at night to recover his Commanding Officer and bring him back to safety. For this gallant act, Singh was awarded the Indian Distinguished Service medal, while Thomson got the DSO. Repatriated to India, sadly he only survived for 18 months and is buried in this quiet, tree-filled cemetery.

Mention of Bishop Robert Caldwell, the respected missionary in the Autumn 2021 *Chowkidar* prompted Mr Santana Gopalan to write to BACSA with the reassurance that the tombs of the Bishop and his wife Eliza Caldwell remain secure in Holy Trinity at Idaiyapudi in Tirunelveli diocese, Tamil Nadu. This is the church that Robert Caldwell built painstakingly over more than three decades. He had died, aged 77, at Kodaikanal, a hill station in the Nilgiris and very unusually, because people were normally buried where they died, his body, dressed in his episcopal robes, was carried some 200 miles to its final resting place in the church. Caldwell was a remarkable man, dedicated to the people of south India and keenly interested in their languages. Almost single-handedly he was responsible for the so-called Tamil Renaissance which led to a new-found pride in the language and its speakers. His wife established a number of schools for girls and this formidable couple preached Christianity in India for half a century. Caldwell's love for his adopted country was reciprocated when his statue was erected at Chennai, and he is perhaps the only Briton since Independence to be commemorated on a postage stamp that was issued in 2010.

Equally revered was the East India Company officer Francis Whyte Ellis, who arrived in Madras as a writer in 1796. It was Ellis who initially identified a group of local languages, including Tamil, as Dravidian, that is, distinct from Sanskrit and quite possibly older. He also established

the Madras Literary Society and in his honour a district of Madurai is named Ellis Nagar. But unlike Caldwell, Ellis's grave at Dindigul is no more. It was destroyed in the 1970s when a church building was extended. This was apparently not widely known until BACSA's Secretary got an email in July 2021 from the Dindigul chowkidar, Mr Gnanaraj informing him that 'local government officials, and judiciary officials with media people had come to the cemetery searching for the lost Ellis grave' and also, curiously, searching for 'the cemetery that belongs to BACSA'.

A little research revealed that in 1994, a BACSA member, Colonel Michael Hickey, had given the same chowkidar a sum of money to tidy up the cemetery where an ancestor was buried. (see *Chowkidar* Spring 2006) This was done, and photographs of the site and its good kutcha wall were sent to the Hickey family in 2005. Now, all these years later, the memory of BACSA is still alive, as is Mr Gnanaraj and hopefully the cemetery is still in good order under his long guardianship.

Mr Gopalan tells us that the Tamil Nadu government is attempting to locate the graves of European scholars like Ellis, to acknowledge and publicise their contributions to the study of Tamil and its ancient literature. Although the Ellis grave has gone, its inscription has been copied and reads in part: 'Uniting activity of mind with versatility of genius, [Ellis] displayed the same ardour and happy sufficiency on whatever his varied talents were employed. Conversant with the Hindoo Languages and Literature of the Peninsular, he was loved and esteemed by the natives of India, with whom he associated intimately.' Not a bad way to be remembered and BACSA's thanks go to Mr Gopalan and Mr Gnanaraj for reminding us of these distinguished men and their work.

Kodaikanal, where Bishop Caldwell died, has its own 'old cemetery' which was the subject of a long article written by Resham George recently in *The Kodai Chronicle*, an online magazine from the Western Ghats. This is the American Missionary cemetery, the resting place of the first missionary families who arrived here in 1845. There was also a makeshift church here too, erected in 1858 from whatever could be found, including flattened biscuit tins, and which survived for less than half a century. The cemetery is well maintained by local residents, including a retired teacher, Beulah Kolhatkar who has digitised records of those buried here. Tombstones newly restored include that of John Edward Tapp, after whom the cemetery road was named as Tapp's Road. He died in 1877 and is best known for working with the philanthropist Sir Vere Henry Levinge, known as 'the Father of Kodai' to create the Kodai Lake in 1863.

Another newly cleaned headstone is to John Adamson of the British India Steam Navigation Company (B.I.S.N.) The acronym had given rise to the idea that Adamson had been killed by a bison, which was untrue. It seems to have been confused with the nearby grave of Dudley Linnell Sedgwick who had actually been killed by a bison while shooting in the Pulney Hills on 20th March 1875. (*see page 58*) He was ‘the third son of the late William Fellows Sedgwick of Cashio Bridge, Watford, in the county of Hertford, England’. (In fact the correct name of Dudley’s home is Cassio Bridge.) The stone was erected ‘in loving remembrance’ by his mother, brothers and sisters. The Indian bison is found in the forests of the Western Ghats and is one of largest bovine animals in South Asia - certainly not to be confused, as many do, with the harmless buffalo. One of Kokaikanal’s best known inhabitants, buried here, is the Revd. John Scudder, of the American Arcot Mission who was born in Ceylon and died in 1900 ‘after forty years service’. According to his descendants Scudder volunteered to take the cholera vaccine during its trial phase, in order to encourage others to overcome their fear of vaccination, something that resonates strongly today.

A touching message was received recently by BACSA member Alan Lane about the Kajuricherra cemetery in Bangladesh. Located in the Deanston Tea Estate, it was part of the Consolidated Tea & Lands Company, and itself a subsidiary of James Finlay & Co. Deanston is a Scottish village and when Sir John Muir, the baronet of Deanston bought into the Finlay Company, it seemed appropriate to name one of the newly developed tea estates after his title. Mr Lane is a member of Koi-Hai, an association with a wealth of knowledge about tea-planting and planters, past and present. A fellow Koi-Hai member, Mr Ashraf Ahmed shared his reminiscences: ‘I was posted in Deanston Tea Estate in the central garden, Kajuricherra, during December 1975. My extra duty as an Assistant Manager also included looking after the only cemetery of James Finlay’s in Bangladesh. It was a regular feature for most of the overseas visitors to drop in to the cemetery whilst visiting the Balisera Valley estates. Having an interest in history, I used to visit this cemetery on a regular basis, and, in time, I could remember most of the epitaphs. In the late 1990s we had a visitor, a Mr Tait, who came from the United Kingdom to bury his mother's ashes in his late father's - Gilbert Henry Tait - grave. Mr G.H. Tait was an Assistant Manager in Rajghat Tea Estate, and suddenly died of a heart attack at the age of 35 while going for the Morning Muster of labour on the morning of 13th December 1937. When Gilbert Tait's son, who was in his 50s by then, performed the last rites for his mother's ashes, I was present, amongst others. It was a very emotional ceremony, and he was sobbing uncontrollably. When I look back and think about them, I pay tribute to those early days planters and their sacrifices for tea.’

Photographs show that the Kajuricherra cemetery is indeed well maintained with neat greenery. (*see page 59*) Were there specific guidelines for such cemeteries, one wonders, or were they an ad hoc response to the inevitable deaths of the Europeans managing them? And given their remote locations, who conducted their funeral services?

CAN YOU HELP

Two BACSA members kindly answered the query about the war memorial mentioned in the Autumn 2021 *Chowkidar* on page 34. Whether the inscribed stone still stands today is not clear. But at least it has been established that 20 COY. SO. DN. R.A. was the Southern Division Royal Artillery. 'It seems to have been a territorial division by districts, according to location' writes Barry Gregson, 'I have seen medals to the 'Northern Div. RA in the past, but I don't think these subdivisions lasted very long.' David Brind took the trouble to contact the Royal Artillery Historical Society who added that 20 Company was in the Garrison Artillery. The inscription noted that the non-commissioned officers and men named had died at Calcutta and Barrackpore.

Christopher Bentall from Cheltenham has found and researched a half-hidden memorial with an Indian connection in St Gregory's Catholic church there. 'I doubt many people are aware of its existence' he writes, 'for one thing it is sited in an unusual place, well above eye-level and since refurbishment work took place in the church it is less accessible, being inside a closed off area currently used as a storeroom for cleaning materials.' This is a pity, because the memorial commemorates Anna Bella Eliza, widow of Lieutenant Colonel Sartorius who died in India in 1801. The wording reads in part [she was] 'the tenderest, best and most affectionate of mothers...erected by her deeply afflicted daughter whose anguish for her irreparable loss will cease but with the last breath of her existence'. Anna Bella, the inscription concludes 'opened her hand to the needy and stretched forth both hands to the poor'. The date of her death is given as 7 April 1849, so she outlived her husband by nearly half a century, dying in Cheltenham at the age of 80. Mr Bentall speculates that the memorial may have been connected with a charity school that was housed in the original chapel before the present church was completed in the mid-nineteenth century. Yet Anna Bella was not buried here, but at Kemerton in Worcestershire, in St Benet's churchyard. She was born in London in 1768 to Sir George Rose MP, a prominent politician, but she was illegitimate at a time when that mattered greatly. This may be why she was in India, to find a husband, rather than making a match in England.

Anna Bella married Colonel John Conrad Sartorius in Bombay in 1789, when she was only 21 years old – he was then 45, with an impressive military record. One wonders what the two had in common, nevertheless the marriage produced two children. Sartorius, who was born in Alsace Lorraine had been educated at the military college in Württemberg, and served as a cavalry officer in the Duke of Württemberg's army before resigning to become an ensign in the East India Company's Bombay army. What induced him to move from Germany to India is not clear, but he had engineering skills, which were badly needed at the time by the Company, which had neglected to select and train its own engineers. Sartorius was chief engineer at Mangalore, surviving an eight-month siege by Tipu Sultan's troops and later carrying out a number of surveys, including the Malabar Coast and Salsette Island. It is surprising that his work is not better known. He gets no mention in Colonel Sandes' definitive book *The Military Engineer in India*. Sartorius died at Cannanore (now Kannur) in today's Kerala and it would be interesting to know if his grave survives and whether or not he is better recognised in France or Germany today.

Talking of Mangalore, this was one of the actions in which the 73rd Perthshires had participated and it was one of the Battle Honours on their regimental crest, together with 'Seringatam'. The regiment had been raised as the 42nd Royal Highland Regiment of Foot in 1780 and saw service in India and Ceylon, being stationed on the island for several years. BACSA member Donald Stadtner is currently researching and writing about churches in Ceylon and he was struck by a fine memorial monument to the regiment in St Peter's Church, Colombo. (*see page 59*) This lists the non-commissioned officers and men 'who died during their last tour of service in this island from 17th March 1869 to 2nd February 1874' and there are 60 names in all. What intrigued Mr Stadtner was the inscription on the lower edge of the plaque which reads: 'Lucknow. Martin sculpt.' Lucknow is a very long way from Colombo, as he points out. Were there no local stonemasons, or suitable stone available in Ceylon? The regiment had no connection with Lucknow, and in fact Lucknow has no stone, so Martin the stonemason was probably working on sandstone from Chunar which is particularly fine-grained and honey-coloured when newly quarried. The Colombo memorial has darkened during the hundred and fifty years since it was erected, but remains in remarkably good condition as a tribute to the men who died so far from home. Very little has been written on monumental masons in South Asia or their trade, yet it is an integral part of cemetery research and restoration.

BACSA member Tim Willasey-Wilsey has a poignant story about four sisters who travelled to India on a Danish ship to find husbands at the end of the 18th century. Quite possibly they were the first of the ‘fishing fleet’ which became a popular way for young English women to meet eligible bachelors already established in the East India Company. Eliza and her sister Jemima arrived in Madras in 1798 to stay with their aunt, Anne Carteret Harris, wife of General George Harris who was about to storm Seringapatam and depose Tipu Sultan. Both girls were engaged within months and this encouraged the remaining sisters, Sybilla and Pheobe to try their luck. They travelled on a Company ship and had a nightmare journey when fever took hold and everyone on board had to spend a month at the Cape recuperating. Jemima married a future General, and Sybilla a future Admiral. Eliza married for love, her cousin Gilbert Geddes Richardson, the captain of a minor Indiaman and five children were born to the couple. Sadly Phoebe was to die of fever in 1804. She was on a visit with Eliza to Golconda, the fort near Hyderabad. (It was only after the death of Tipu Sultan that travel became safe in the regions he had controlled.) Her sudden death so affected Eliza that the latter wrote a poem expressing her grief and shock:

She went to India’s land, a blooming maid
With youth and health and pleasure in her train;
Where famed Golconda rears her marble domes,
Death found the beauteous prey and took his aim
T’was dead of night, and still, but the fair moon
With light serene showed all the impressive scene
When starting up from grief’s first trance I woke,
And sought the tent, where pillowed on my arm
Meek as the babe upon its Mother’s breast,
Recent she breathed her last.
Just on the horizon’s verge
A hillock rose where two tall tamarinds
Chequered the moonlight sky – beneath their shade
A busy work went on – some made the grave,
While others bore the bier.

‘There is no official record of her death’ writes Mr Willasey-Wilsey and no known grave. It seems she was buried where she died, close to where the party was camping. If one of your readers were able to identify her grave I would be (more than) delighted.’ Eliza suffered a further tragedy a year later when her husband died suddenly of fever. He was buried in St Mary’s cemetery in Madras, and his story, and Eliza’s grief was told in more detail in *Chowkidar* Spring 2018.

Mr Andrew Matthews has a double request. Looking at online past *Chowkidars* he came across an ancestor, William Matthews (1777-1858) an indigo planter in the Jaunpore district of northern India. Matthews was under the patronage of the governor general Sir John Shore who had originally granted him land for his plantation. The family came from Down Ampney in Gloucestershire where our enquirer, Andrew Matthews, has connections. The original article was published in *Chowkidar* Autumn 2013, written by William Matthews' great grandson, Mr Edward Mitchell, who was not a BACSA member. This means unfortunately we no longer have contact details for him. So if anyone can assist with further information on either William Matthews, or the present day whereabouts of Edward Mitchell, please contact the Editor. 'I am anxious to pool our mutual family information' Andrew Matthews tells us.

THE GARDEN CEMETERY OF MADRAS

Madras was the second settlement established by the East India Company and St Mary's Church, with its austere tower, was completed in 1680, which makes it the oldest Protestant place of worship in the subcontinent. Before the church was built, burials took place in a guava garden, where the earliest stone is that commemorating Elizabeth Baker who died in 1652. But the guava garden cemetery had to be abandoned after the French siege of Madras in the mid-18th century and a new burial ground was established on an 'island' south of Fort Saint George. In fact the island is a piece of land entirely surrounded by rivers and an integral part of the city. It too, had been a garden which made it particularly appropriate for the new graveyard was to be a 'garden cemetery' that harked back to the Mughal tradition of large sepulchral monuments in verdant settings. It is of international importance and predates even the great South Park Street cemetery in Calcutta. Many of the monuments here reflect styles derived from ancient Greece, from 18th century Europe and from Mughal tombs. (It also has Commonwealth War Graves from both world wars, which of course are tended regularly.) James Anderson, the physician and botanist who died in 1809 is buried here. He founded the Madras Botanical Garden and his studies of local cultures and people are reflected in the different languages in which his name is inscribed on the monument's faces: Tamil, Telugu, Persian and English.

A particularly poignant inscription is that to the Hope family and a forgotten tragedy. A simple black stone records the memory of 'Mr William Hope, merchant, his beloved wife Kezia Hope, their four daughters and only children, Kezia, Ellen, Anne and Caroline who all perished at sea in the [Hon. Company's ship] *Jane, Duchess of Gordon* on or about 16th March 1800.'



above: Sergeant Watkins' tomb at Allahabad before its recent demolition (see page 49)

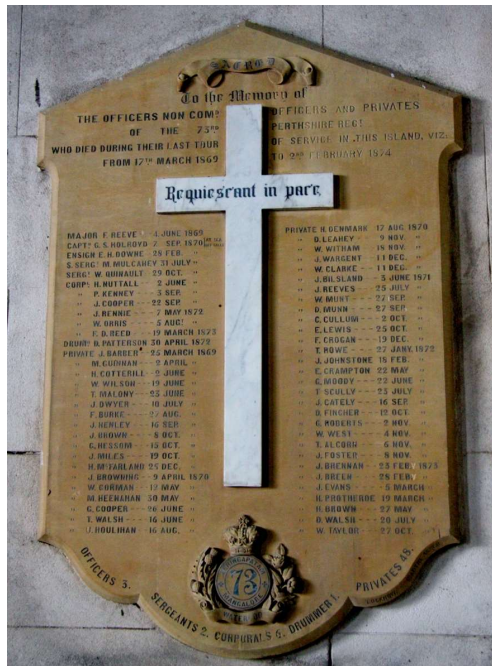
below: the tilting tomb of Dudley Linnell Sedgwick at Kodaikanal (see page 53)





above: the well-kept cemetery on the Deanston tea estate (see page 53)

below: regimental memorial, St Peter's Church, Colombo (see page 55)
 photograph courtesy Donald Stadtnr



Curiously, the engraver has made a mistake in the date. There was only one *Jane, Duchess of Gordon* Company ship and that was last seen off the coast of Mauritius on 14th March 1809. A hull was later spotted near the island, but sank before it could be retrieved. Sadly there were no survivors.

Although the cemetery is visible from adjacent railway lines and flyovers, it is seldom visited and was in an overgrown, dilapidated condition before BACSA began restoration work here. During the first phase the Gothic-arched entrance gatehouse has been re-roofed, some perimeter walls repaired and fourteen tombs in the central part of the cemetery have been beautifully restored. (*see back cover*) BACSA's heritage consultant is Mr Ravindra Gundu Rao, whom we have worked with before, and the contractors are Jeernodhar PCL. It is hoped that subsequent phases will include clearing the whole of central avenue, repairing more of the perimeter walls, the restoration of more tombs and conversion of the gatehouse to a covered area where the information boards about the cemetery can be displayed.

CEMETERY ROUND-UP

Mr Syed Faizan Raza, BACSA's Area Representative for Bihar and Jharkhand has been collating brief reports on cemeteries from the sub-continent. This is a useful exercise enabling us to see what is going on in less-visited areas. From Bannu in Pakistan comes a photograph of a damaged marble inscription, where the lead lettering has been picked out, but most of the wording can still be read: '.....dear memory of Laurence Hugh Nesbitt Rutledge Captain 1/8th Gurkha Rifles. Born November 9th 1888 [died] January 10th 1921 Requiescat in pace' Nesbitt was also a 2nd lieutenant in the Indian Army, attached to the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and was part of the North Waziristan Field Force, following the brief Third Afghan War during the summer of 1919.

A Dutch cemetery at Pulicat in Tamil Nadu had been restored by a group from the Netherlands, as a plaque on a gatepost shows: 'From Holland with Love/Renovation old Dutch cemetery financed by Van der Linden-Bouwbedrijf St-Michiels Gestel-Netherlands/ Stichting Thomas Bouwprojecten'. There is no date on the plaque so we don't know when restoration took place, although it looks fairly recent. Unfortunately the restored cemetery has deteriorated and Mr Raza's contact there, Mr Kapilan Jesudian reports that it is now covered in thorny bushes and is plagued by cattle, local alcoholics and gamblers. A photograph of the entrance to the cemetery shows it covered in litter.

An interesting inscription was discovered in Patna, in the Alamganj area, 'a few hundred yards east of Tripolia and south of a mosque'. It read: 'To the memory of Jacob Shavier who departed this life on the 17th September 1820 aged about 60 years.' Shavier was an old inhabitant of the station and was rewarded with a life pension from the Company for his long and faithful services as head clerk in the Patna Customs House. 'His loss was deeply felt by his dear relations and friends and his amiable disposition gained him the esteem of all who knew him. This tablet is dedicated by his children in memory of his uncommon merit.'

THE BLACK FAIRY OF CALCUTTA

The Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata celebrated its centenary last year. It was the inspiration of the Viceroy Lord Curzon, who left Bengal in 1905 and did not see its completion. He had intended it to be the British response to the Taj Mahal and there are certainly similarities in design and scale although one cannot compare a beautiful tomb to a working museum. Ironically by the time the Hall opened, Calcutta was no longer the capital of British India. But it is stuffed full of good things including the circular stone throne on which Robert Clive sat with Mir Jaffar after the victory at Plassey as well as the finest collection of Company paintings in the world. Outside the main entrance is a large seated figure of Queen Victoria and there are further statues inside, including that of Lord Cornwallis and Curzon himself. But it was the finial on the dome that captured the attention of writer Upala Sen recently. The female figure was known as the *kalo pori*, the black fairy. (The soft Bengali tongue has transmuted *kala pari*, as it would be pronounced further west.) In fact it is not a fairy, but a winged angel with a slender trumpet in one hand and a wreath in the other. It represents the Angel of Victory, derived from the Roman goddess of Victory. The Hall's curator, Mr Jayanta Sengupta believes that 'British imperialists imagined themselves to be [like the] Romans, hence the borrowed symbolism'. And of course the Angel of Victory could be neatly conflated with Queen Victoria, whose memorial it was.

William Emerson was the architect of the Hall, and the angel was designed by a Cheltenham sculptor, Robert Lindsey Clark who was art director at the firm of H. H. Martyn & Co. Ltd. It was cast in bronze by Frederick Mancini who worked in the foundry. The angel was shipped from Cheltenham to Calcutta in 1920 and erected on the dome some time between July and December the following year, in time for the Hall's inauguration. And there she still stands, an angel or fairy, depending on your point of view, but keeping a benign watch over the city.

PROFILE

I was told that Thomas William King, my 3x great grandfather, was an Admiral and Governor of Mauritius. Neither of these statements stands up. My investigations lead me to think he may have been a crook. If the inscription on his tomb in South Park Street Cemetery is to be relied on, he was born about 1779 – I have no idea where or who his parents were. He first appears in 1798 marrying Anna Margaretha Richter at St Martin's-in-the-Fields. The parish included Soho, at that time the main immigrants' area in London. There were several Richters there mostly Germans, many of them artists. The couple's children were baptized between 1803 and 1807, in St Martin's and later in Gosport.

The next sighting of him was a piece of luck: Thomas William King, English merchant, arrived at Cape Town in the *Saba*, an American schooner ex Boston in Nov 1806. He returned almost immediately to the West Indies, but was back in Cape Town soon after, to be joined by Anna Margaretha who had her last baby in England and lost the poor mite before sailing for Cape Town in 1809. In December 1810 the British captured Mauritius. King was there on the next boat. By the end of that year he was sending Mauritius sugar to be sold in Cape Town. This suggests his visit to the West Indies in 1807 was probably in connection with the sugar trade – hence the haste with which he dashed off to Mauritius in January 1811, since sugar was also the main business there.

Long after King's death the House of Commons enquired into sugar production in Mauritius: it depended on slave labour and there was evidence that despite the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, Africans had continued to be imported into Mauritius. Was King involved in this? In 1823 King was in Singapore (founded 1819) where his daughter Maria Frederica married my 2x great grandfather Alexander Morgan. King next moved to Calcutta, and became secretary to the Bengal Provident Insurance Company. He died in 1826. I was able to contribute via BACSA to the restoration of his handsome tomb in South Park Street. No sign of Anna Margaretha, but there was a girlfriend called Mary Gooderham and twin daughters born in 1824. I am told the miniature of him (*see page 63*) is by a French artist, so probably painted in Mauritius. The uniform must be that of a Napoleonic Wars volunteer corps. Can anyone add to this?

Richard Morgan was for some years head of IT at the two Houses of Parliament and the author of textbooks on IT Law. He also edited The Diary of an Indian Cavalry Officer 1843-63 Pagoda Tree Press 2003.



Thomas William King (*see above*)

BOOKS THAT WILL INTEREST READERS

‘Their Infantry and guns will astonish you’. The Army of Hindustan and European Mercenaries in Maratha Service 1780-1803

Andy Copestake

Bullocks, Grain, and Good Madeira: The Maratha and Jat Campaigns 1803-1806 and the emergence of an Indian Army

Joshua Provan

In recent years there have been many books published, several of them highly critical, on the relentless rise and expansion of the British in India in the latter years of the 18th century. It has been all too easy to overlook the paramount power in the greater part of India throughout this period – the Marathas. These two excellent books each address this intriguing and often rather brutal period that saw huge armies fighting to control the rump of the once great Mughal Empire. Andy Copestake’s impressive book describes in detail the rise of the Maratha Confederacy with their swift and formidable light cavalry and their domination of much of northern and Central India. He describes in detail how they imposed a *Chauth* – a levy of usually 25 percent on goods and wealth to pay for their armies. The Marathas received a major setback when an Afghan army under Ahmad Shah Dourani smashed a vast Maratha army at the Battle of Panipat in January 1761. It marked the effective end of the power of the Peshwa – the titular head of the Confederacy - and the emergence and then ascendancy of the brilliant Madhaji Scindia of Gwalior. It was he who recognised the superiority of European drill and tactics. From 1784 until his death ten years later he employed Europeans to raise ‘Trained Brigades’ to ensure his dominance. The author discusses in depth the formation of the ‘Army of Hindustan’ from an

initial force of just two battalions raised by the Savoyard mercenary Benoit de Boigne. His initial success against the ruthless Ghulam Kadir and the Mughal Ismael Beg at Agra in June 1788 was followed by numerous others. The Army of Hindustan eventually numbered over 30,000 men and 200 guns. Almost every battalion was commanded by Europeans of many nationalities including French, Irish, Scottish, English, German and even Dutch Officers. The book is well illustrated and has lots of fascinating details about an army that spread terror into the hearts of the British. Who would have imagined that following the capture of Ghulam Kadir, the French mercenary and Commander of three Maratha brigades, Lestineau, would make off with his soldiers' back pay and a saddle bag containing the Imperial jewels and flee into British Territory?

Joshua Provan's book is rather different but no less impressive –it is largely taken from original sources and discusses in detail the campaigns that effectively saw the end of Maratha dominance. It centres on the second Maratha war. The Treaty of Bassein in 1803 to restore the feckless Peshwa developed into a full scale operation to continue the governor general Lord Wellesley's expansionist policies. It saw for the first time the East India Company become the dominant power in the subcontinent. The author carefully outlines the armies of the different protagonists. The hard fought and bloody Battle of Assaye at which the little known Arthur Wellesley came to prominence and the effective rout of the Daulat Rao Scindia's army is described in extraordinary detail.

This is followed by a thorough account of Lieut. General Gerrard Lake's remarkable campaign to take Delhi from the forces of Ambaji Inglia, commanded by the French mercenary, Bourquien in 1803. Lake's diplomatic skills saw many other mercenaries abandon their Maratha masters. Perhaps the most impressive of these was Pierre Cuillier, the failed handkerchief-seller from Sarthe in France, who is better known as Perron, and who rose under Daulat Rao to the rank of General. He fled to British territory at a critical moment. The capture of Delhi was followed by the hard fought victory at Laswari and the difficult campaign against the Maratha allies, the Jats. They were able to survive the British onslaught and retain their then impregnable fortress of Bharatpur. The irony is that Lord Wellesley was recalled to London where he was much criticised for his war-mongering. Much of the Maratha lands were restored in the peace that followed. The only sadness is that the front cover used a painting from the Anne S K Brown Collection that has nothing whatsoever to do with the Marathas – Indeed it shows the Nawab Sadaat Ali Khan of Oudh in Durbar!

Both these books should appeal to BACSA members and the wider public. It is refreshing to read well researched books on a fascinating period that does not impose modern day sensibilities on the past but narrate in epic and accurate detail the campaigns and battles that dominated the end of the 18th century and first years of the next century. Both are exciting reads.

Charles Greig

‘Their Infantry and guns will astonish you’ 2021 Helion & Co. ISBN : 9781914059773 £25.00 pp224

Bullocks, Grain, and Good Madeira 2021 Helion & Co. ISBN : 9781913336547 £25.00 pp200

A Caper as High as the Moon: one family and a century of the Raj

Sue King-Smith

The ‘caper’ of the title was the response George Peppé anticipated from his sister in 1843 on the announcement of the news that he and his brother were to be sent to north India to set up a sugar factory. And good news it proved to be for a Scottish family of modest means who depended on sons and brothers for financial support. The estate which was subsequently established at Birdpur, near the border with Nepal, remained in the family’s hands till well after Independence. Author and family member Sue King-Smith has chosen to present the Peppé history in a particular format. She was advised by a publisher to avoid a commercially produced book, on the grounds that this would have necessitated a stand on ‘woke’ issues such as empire. Instead, she has self-published a compilation of family history, incorporating numerous family accounts and letters, with references to web sites, and illustrated by contemporary drawings, sketches, maps and photographs. The authorship of various contributions, including the compiler’s linking sections, is indicated by different colour type. The resulting mix does not always make for an easy read by the general public. Material is often duplicated, the plethora of names is sometimes confusing, while much of the anecdote and gossip is only of interest to the family itself. A more tightly constructed narrative and a firmer editorial hand would have been helpful.

Nevertheless, much of the material is fascinating. Most narratives of the British in India involve those in the military or civilian administration, who returned to Britain on retirement. The Peppé family were neither. They were the economic migrants of their era, who committed themselves to India over generations, and for whom India was truly home.

George and his brother William, who sailed to India in 1843, worked extremely hard clearing wild and previously undeveloped land, planting sugar, putting up factories which had been transported from Britain, and involving the local population in the creation of a rural economy which later spread to indigo, lac, tea and horse-breeding. Rice was also planted, dependent on an irrigation system which took fifty-three years to complete, illustrating the family's long-term commitment to India. An interesting account of life on the Birdpur estate in the years before Independence shows the family not only as economic managers, but administering justice, and fully integrated in the life of the community. Readers can draw their own conclusions about the so-called 'exploitative' role of the British.

Equally interesting are contemporary accounts of key historical events such as the Uprising of 1857. While one of the family contributors blames the British for the outbreak of violence, its details nevertheless make for chilling reading. The terror is palpable – though the aggression of many Indians was matched by the loyalty of others who saved numerous individuals. But in time bitter memories died away. An account by Stan Scovell - great granddaughter of the original George - of her childhood in the early days of the 20th century reflects a deep happiness in the rural life of the estate, and the household where English was rarely spoken, even by the children to their parents.

British women had a mixed life. Death in childbirth, and disease which killed numerous children, were afflictions which all suffered, no matter their background. But women like Delia Gibbon were challenged in other ways, when in the late 1840s she had to take over the running of the Birdpur estate, which posed huge administrative not to say physical demands. Ladies of the official cadres never had to fend for themselves like the amazing Elizabeth Boyson. Born in India in the early 19th century and educated in an orphan asylum, she used her only asset – her womanhood – to assure her survival through formal and informal unions with a series of five men by whom she had numerous children.

Apart from fascinating glimpses into the social history of the time, the account provides information about the family's particular interests in the culture of India. Chief among these was the Buddhist stupa at Piprahwa on the Birdpur estate, which was excavated by William Claxton Peppé in 1898, revealing relics of the Buddha and other remarkable artefacts. The finds attracted great attention at the time, and William's account in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* is reproduced, as well as other popular and scholarly reports. Meanwhile the record of the peoples of India, which was a particular concern of the Victorians with their passion for scientific classification, was assisted by George Tosco Peppé, son of the original George.

A talented photographer, he made his mark by recording the Juang tribe of south India, the images appearing in a publication in Calcutta in 1872. The artistic abilities of the family extended further. The book is illustrated by the sketches and drawings of Annie Larpent in the 19th century, and Elfie Peppé in the 20th. This was a type of activity which women made their own in India, contributing enormously to the record of the country. It would have been interesting to know where they were taught – at home, or possibly in the art schools growing in Britain and India – and whether they contributed to the many exhibitions organised in India. The raw material of the book raises many questions like this, and readers may be encouraged to pursue their interests further. Those who are concerned with organising and publishing their own family history will be interested to see the way it has been done here in one particular format.

Rosemary Raza

2021 Self-published. Copies from the author at High Appin, Tynron, Thornhill, Dumfries & Galloway, DG3 4LF, Scotland. £17.50 including postage and packing. ISBN 978 1 365 59771-8. pp256

A Judge in Madras: Sir Sidney Wadsworth and the Indian Civil Service 1913-47

Caroline Keen

On his retirement as a Madras High Court judge in August 1947, Sidney Wadsworth returned to England. He spent the bitter winter of that year writing his memoirs of India - from 1913 when he had first arrived as a junior civil servant to the end of his career. He felt, at the time, that there was no demand for his story in book form. Many other returning Britons had comparable stories to tell and perhaps a period of reflection was needed after the hastened British withdrawal and the creation of a split Pakistan. So he deposited the typescript in the Centre of South Asian Studies in Cambridge, having attended the University there. It was 'discovered' by his grandson, Simon Wadsworth in 2009 which led to the family approaching Caroline Keen, an Indian historian.

Rather than publish the substantial memoir itself (375 pages), the author has told Sir Sidney's story using only short extracts but putting them into context. (It might have been useful to see a few pages together of the memoir to appreciate its style.) Unlike military officers there seem not to have been restrictions on marriage for civil servants and Sidney soon met and married Olive Clegg, the daughter of another ICS officer. There is no high drama in this book and from the extracts selected, little comment by Sidney on the wider political picture outside south India. He slept through the attack on Madras by the German cruiser *Emden* in 1914 which destroyed oil tanks on the harbour and led to a mass exodus of citizens. He was part of 'the flap' during the second world war when the threat of bombing resulted in another large scale desertion of the city,

only to have people trickle back when the Japanese focus turned away from India towards Malaya. During the civil unrest of the 1920s, Sidney quelled what could have been a riot in Godaveri when a festival chariot procession nearly became a Congress-inspired political demonstration.

But on the whole, life was pleasant and peaceful, allowing the young couple to set up home in the various places where Sidney was stationed, including Vellore, Gudur, Madanapalle, Chingleput and Madurai. Madras was variously regarded as a 'backwater' and an old-established city that rather looked down on the newcomer, Calcutta, and of course, 'Delhi was a long way off' as the saying went. In 1924 Sidney decided to join the judicial branch of the ICS and spent six months in London where he joined the Middle Temple. Returning to India he served as District Judge and there are interesting anecdotes about the cases he tried, and his observations on local tribes, including the Toda and the Sugalis, a gypsy community. 'Some Criminals' and 'Thieves, Usurers and Snake-Catchers' are two chapter headings. When at leisure, Sidney was persuaded to take on the role of 'district commissioner' of the Madras Boy Scouts, which he enjoyed and he was, with his wife, a keen gardener. His was a life well-lived and his story is well told here. The illustrations are rather a let-down – photography seems not to have been a hobby, so we have to imagine the various homes in which he lived, but this is a minor criticism.

Rosie Llewellyn-Jones

2020 Hurst & Co ISBN 978 1 78738 324 1 £30,00 pp286

TAILPIECE

The Spring 2021 *Chowkidar* carried a cheering story about the British engineer Colonel John Pennycuik who built the Mullaperiyar Dam in Kerala. 'He turned the ever dry southern districts of Tamil Nadu into a green house of agriculture produce' and his birthday, 15th January has been declared a holiday there. Now we learn that the Tamil Nadu government is planning to install a statue of the colonel in Camberley, Surrey, his birth place. The Chief Minister announced recently that the state would seek to erect the statue in the city's central park after obtaining 'the necessary permission from the British government'. Pennycuik was determined to build the dam, which was finished in 1895. When the British government in India could not supply adequate funds Pennycuik is said to have sold family property in England to raise money for the dam's completion. It enabled local farmers to cultivate 2 lakh acres of land and became a prime source of drinking water in the region. A statue of Pennycuik was erected in Madurai in 2000 and there is a memorial at Gudalur in the Theni district. Here a large number of people have happily combined the south Indian harvest festival of Pongal with the birth anniversary celebrations when a special dish is created in front of the memorial and his statue is garlanded.

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

NOTES FOR MEMBERS

A member wishing to contact the Honorary Secretary may do so via Email, letter or telephone (details in the annual report). If writing to the Honorary Secretary and expecting a reply, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

If a member wishes to contact a fellow member whose address is not known, they should:

- either send an email to the fellow member via the Honorary Secretary or the Editor who will forward it,
- or send a letter to the fellow member c/o of the Honorary Secretary or the Editor who will forward it unopened.

In both cases, it is at the discretion of the member to reply or not.

If planning a visit to a cemetery, either overseas or in the UK, a member should check with the Honorary Secretary to find out what has already been recorded and whether there is action associated with the cemetery that the member might assist with.

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

Before



After



A newly restored tomb in the Garden Cemetery of Madras (see page 57)