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CHOWKIDAR

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Editor: Dr Rosie Llewellyn-Jones MBE

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 (2023) 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

THE MIDNAPORE MURDERS

During the troubled period of the 1930s when calls for Indian independence grew stronger, three British officers were gunned down within eighteen months of each other in the Bengali town of Midnapore. Their stories are related in a well-researched article published in the Kolkata *Telegraph* together with photographs of the three graves at St John's church. Sadly the graveyard is utterly neglected today, rat-infested and subject to vandalism and overgrown vegetation. The *Telegraph's* focus was on the young Bengali men who carried out the assassinations while BACSA's interest is in the history of these three men, James Peddie, Robert Douglas and Bernard Burge. The post of District Magistrate in Midnapore had been a fairly uncontroversial one until the Hijli Detention Camp was established there in 1930. This housed men who were being held for offences against the British government which was cracking down hard on the armed struggle for independence. James Peddie was a 38-year old Scotsman, born in Fife, who had served in the Great War. He joined the ICS in 1921, and a decade later was appointed magistrate at Midnapore. His short tenure there was marked by arrests and raids on the townspeople and 'oppressive measures', including public floggings. An underground organisation, Bengal Volunteers, planned to kill him and he was shot down inside Midnapore School, while visiting an exhibition one evening. The old-established school had no electricity and the room was dimly lit by kerosene lamps. Peddie died the following day, 8 April 1931, in hospital. His grave is marked by a handsome stone cross and the inscription bears the words 'Carry On'.

Peddie's successor was another Scotsman, Edinburgh-born Robert Douglas, known as a good cricketer. It was during his tenure that one incident in particular sparked a deep resentment in local people. This was the shooting of two unarmed detainees in the Hijli Camp. Douglas blamed the prisoners and this caused an outcry in Bengal, with Rabindranath Tagore writing a strong letter to *The Statesman,* which the British editor refused to publish. Douglas had increased his own security and began to work from home, only visiting the District Board office for monthly meetings. But it was here on 30 April 1932 that he was shot by two young Bengalis who got in through a rear entrance. He died immediately and one of his assassins was hanged at Midnapore Central Jail the following year. Douglas was buried alongside Peddie under another stone cross (recently vandalised) and his inscription concludes 'There is peace to thee and no hurt'.

Not surprisingly it became increasingly difficult to fill the office at Midnapore. Two British District Magistrates killed within thirteen months was not an inviting prospect. Against the wishes of his wife, Bernard Burge accepted the post. Like Peddie, Burge had served in the Great War, for which he was decorated and he subsequently served on the North West Frontier during the Third Afghan War. Leaving the Army, he joined the ICS in 1921. Like Douglas, Burge was a keen cricketer, having captained the Ballyganj Cricket Club in Calcutta. He had also, briefly, been in command of the Hijli Detention Camp after the shooting incident, which made him a strong target for the Bengal Volunteers. His bungalow was patrolled by sentries night and day and his own bodyguards accompanied him everywhere. His wife, Barbara, was punctilious in vetting anyone who wanted to meet her husband, interviewing everyone beforehand and accompanying the visitors to see her husband. Perhaps surprisingly she herself was not a target and so was able to travel freely around Midnapore.

Football has a particularly strong following in Bengal, both in the past and today. As an avid football fan, and president of the Town Football Club, Burge decided to watch a match at the Midnapore ground against the Mohammedan Sporting Club on 2 September 1933. It was reported that Burge and his security team felt no harm could come to him on a football field. This was a dreadful mistake. Getting out of his car, Burge is said to have changed into a football jersey and as he walked towards the pitch he was gunned down by five assassins. His police security officers retaliated and two of the killers were shot dead – the remaining three being captured by the football crowd and subsequently hanged.

Burge joined his two predecessors in St John's graveyard. A marble cross with an image of Jesus crucified marks his tomb. His inscription concludes with the words 'The Price of Empire' – an overtly political statement and certainly not a religious sentiment. There was huge outrage over Burge's murder, from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India and the Governor of Bengal. It was pointed out that Burge was not a soldier in a country at war but 'a civil official performing just his daily round, the common task with the shadow of death as a constant companion, simply because he was doing his job'. His widow, Barbara who had done all she could to ensure his safety was awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind medal. Burge's war medals were auctioned recently at Spink, fetching a total of £1,800. No further British officials seem to have been appointed to the Midnapore post and the three graves at St John's are a poignant reminder of men working in the closing years of Empire with fatal consequences. *(see back cover)*

MAIL BOX

Shimla has a particular place in the history of British India for several reasons – political, social and emotional. It was the first hill station to be developed, and this came about almost by chance. Captain Charles Kennedy, a military officer was appointed Assistant Superintendent of Sikh and Hill Affairs in the early 1820s and he built the first permanent residence there which he naturally named Kennedy House. The building was put up within a month by local people and workmen brought up from the plains and the finished result looked rather like a Swiss chalet. Within a decade more houses were erected by the British and two decades later there were over 100 dwelling places with evocative names like Kenilworth, Primrose Hill and Richmond Villa. Naturally there were deaths among the inhabitants and the first cemetery was established on an empty hillside in 1828. Thirteen years later it had to be closed because the town had crept up around it.

The largest cemetery, Kanlog, opened in 1850 and when Shimla was designated the 'summer capital' the population grew dramatically. Many people associated with the town are buried here as well as important figures during the heyday of British India. The cemetery lies in a pleasant area on a well-wooded spur of land and was increased in stages to accommodate the rising number of Christian dead. It was one of ten 'showcase' cemeteries nominated by Brigadier Bullock in his wide-ranging survey at Independence. Sadly this cemetery, which closed in 1920 has been subject to neglect for many years. BACSA has been informed of its deterioration and has made a number of practical propositions offering financial help but these have not been taken up.

The message from BACSA is that the key to a successful conservation and protection of the graveyard is support from the people of Shimla. There are two messages to get across - to explain that the cemetery is part of India's built heritage, not a leftover from the Raj, and that the old cemeteries are green spaces in what now are often built-up areas and a potential local community asset, not a rubbish dump. Unfortunately earlier this year BACSA received disturbing news from Mr Deven Khanna, employed as counsel by the residents of Kanlog.

a) Sheets of tin have been erected around the cemetery so that unauthorised building inside is hidden from public view.

b) local people are barred from visiting this heritage site which they claim is being converted into private property.

c) kitchens and bathrooms have been constructed inside on green spaces by removing graves.

d) a JCB is being employed at night to create parking spaces.

e) weekly functions are being organised which local people are barred from attending.

It is not good news. Photographs of the destruction and illegal fencing have been received. *(see page 128)* The latest information we have is that a petition to the High Court was sent in May of this year and the Deputy Solicitor General of India and other important figures have ordered the Heritage Committee of Himachal Pradesh to inspect the heritage cemetery at Kanlog and look specifically at the violation of regulations to protect such historic sites. In particular there is to be no car-parking on site, no construction and no functions, religious or otherwise until further notice. There is a Chapter of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) at Shimla whose convenor is Mr Raaja Bhasin, author of a number of books on the town, and whose latest book *Some Memorials and Burials in Shimla* is reviewed on page 139. So BACSA stands ready to help and hopes that the combined efforts of local people, the Heritage Committee and INTACH will start to undo the damage that has been done and to turn this cemetery into what was initially proposed – a showcase that will attract visitors and provide a pleasant, green area for local people.

After this depressing news it is good to report a success story arising out of a report in the Spring 2023 *Chowkidar*. Eleanor Conroy's grandfather, Henry Little, had died shortly before Christmas 1932 aged only thirty-one. He was a European police sergeant and had been stationed in Nainital where he caught pneumonia waiting in a snow-storm for the arrival of the Governor. Eleanor and her mother had located and visited the site of his grave in the Nishatganj cemetery, Lucknow nearly twenty years ago, but had found only an imprint in the ground and a broken stone cross. BACSA member Phillida Purvis kindly offered to visit the cemetery where she and her husband identified the grave site. The couple were helped by Narayan Sharma, an experienced guide from the well-respected Tornos India tour agency, based in Lucknow. Narayan arranged for the chowkidar to excavate the stone which had sunk into the soil, to clean the inscription on it and make it safe for the future. Eleanor was happy to meet the very reasonable cost of restoration and the grave is now secure. The involvement of Tornos suggests this might be a useful way forward for similar restorations, using local contacts to improve a place of interest for visitors and tourists. *(see page128)*

Bhagalpur in Bihar is not really on the tourist map, certainly for British tourists, so *Chowkidar* is grateful to Syed Faizan Raza for searching out an old cemetery on the Lower Nathnagar Road there. This may be the forerunner of the cemetery listed in the BACSA Archives that was consecrated in 1867, although the tomb found recently by Mr Raza is much older. 'I discovered the grave with the tombstone of Lt. Colonel Alexander Dow, Esq' he tells us and this is good news because it has not previously been photographed. The inscription, heavily whitewashed around the edges reads: 'Sacred to the Memory of Alex. Dow Esq Lieu^{t}. Colonel in the Honb^{le} Companys Service he departed this Life on the 31st July 1779 Aged 43 years'. Dow, who was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds packed a great deal into a comparatively short life. *Chowkidar* published a brief article about him in the Spring 2011 issue where his eclectic career was noted. A little more information has come to light since. Born in Perthshire and educated for a mercantile career, he subsequently enlisted as an ensign in the East India Company's Bengal Infantry, where he was promoted to captain in 1764. He became part of the 'White Mutiny' two years later when British officers protested fiercely against being stripped of an extra field allowance.

By this point Dow had made considerable progress 'in the oriental tongues and knowledge of the political state of Hindostan' and on returning to Britain he published two translations from the Persian on the history of India, which were well received. He was regarded not only as an Orientalist, but also as a prominent figure of the Enlightenment for his sympathetic views on the Hindu religion. Much less is known about his life in India and it was hinted that he may have been involved in contraband, which could account for his frequent journeys between India and Britain. Certainly he died a very rich man, leaving £10,000 to his former Scots employer John Nisbet, known as a 'merchant and smuggler', which might be a clue. The cause of death is said to be 'ill-health' and there is still a lot to be learned about this interesting figure.

Another find made in Bhagalpur is that of the grave of the infant Edward Barton, who lived for less than a week in September 1778. He was the second son of James Barton, Collector at Bhagalpur and his pyramid-topped tomb is in a precarious condition after nearly 250 years. Mr Raza collates information throughout the subcontinent and a contact in Pakistan, Dr Azeem Shah Bukhari has told him about the Khanpur cemetery there. It lies in the Rahim Yak Khan district, near the railway station and faces similar issues to the majority of cemeteries with the number of graves and tombstones decreasing almost daily. One of the remaining graves has the following inscription:

'In Affectionate Remembrance of Sarah 'A Kashmiri' the beloved wife of Robert Ellis Indian State Railways born at Loodianah 1842 died at Khanpur 11 November 1881'. We can speculate that Sarah may have converted to Christianity to marry Robert Ellis and that her own surname had been forgotten, or perhaps never known.

New BACSA member Jill Jackson-Hill visited India recently and was struck by the poor condition of a British cemetery in Gwalior. There is some confusion over which cemetery it was – either the Gujari Mahal, the so-called 'Fortress' cemetery at the Elephant Gate, or the Jarerva, or Mutiny cemetery. The earliest burials noted were from 1847, so this would seem to indicate the Jarerva cemetery, which opened in that year. Only later did it become known as the Mutiny cemetery. 'It is in a shocking state of disrepair and neglect but the headstones are still largely visible in the scrub. By contrast I also visited the graveyard in Pachmarhi, the old hill station founded by [Captain James] Forsyth and there the graves are in very good condition, although they have all been whitewashed for some reason!' Anyone living in Gwalior or who visits it frequently is invited to contact BACSA to see if some restoration could be carried out. It was the tour guide, a history graduate from the city, who directed Jill Jackson-Hill to the old cemetery. This marks the increasing trend of employing university-educated guides by good travel agencies in India, whose expertise could lead to useful contacts for tomb restorations as we saw above in the Nishatganj cemetery at Lucknow.

Earlier this year BACSA member Johnny Cotton and his wife Martine paid a long over-due visit to the grave and memorial of Julian James Cotton 'who gave up most of the best years of his life in the service of the Crown in India and for the Indians. He died relatively young and very far from his family, up country in the Madras Presidency. Like a few others of his direct descendants we felt we represented all of his large far flung family.' BACSA has a lot to thank J.J. Cotton for. He was a talented historian and his *List of Inscriptions on Tombs or Monuments in Madras* published in 1905 is invaluable, particularly as so many have disappeared over the intervening years. The book was part of the Monumental Inscriptions series published by the government of India. Cotton published other books too including *A List of European Tombs in Bellary* which was edited by the late BACSA member Eileen Hewson. His background was impeccable, coming from a family whose connections with India had begun in 1769 when his ancestor Joseph Cotton commanded an East Indiaman to the subcontinent. Most of J.J. Cotton's work was in the judicial branch of the ICS and he was also editor of the *Provincial Gazette* and Curator of the Madras Records.

His grave lies in the grounds of St George's Cathedral, Madras and a memorial plaque was placed in St Mary's Church which stands within the precincts of Fort St. George. The grave, reports Johnny Cotton, is now surrounded 'with a number of newish, rather massive and not particularly nice black marble monumental graves. Besides them, JJ's simple marble grave stone stands out as being far more discreet and elegant. The inscription mentions *inter alia* 'Sometime Scholar of Corpus Christi College, Oxford' a fact that was worth stressing since Classics was his real love. Indeed until his very last days JJ continued to compose Greek and other verse which he regularly sent back to his college where much of it was published in the College magazine *The Pelican.* The light grey and white streaked marble gravestone was in good condition though long gone were the low and attractive railings which had originally fenced it in.

'We had brought with us some of the ashes of Granny and Grandpop (Sir John being of course JJ's son), and these we spread discreetly on and around the grave. With them we placed on the tombstone a small bouquet of early spring flowers picked the previous morning in our garden in London just before leaving for the airport. Amongst them were a few white snow drops, arguably the first snowdrops ever seen in Chennai! The bougainvillea also on the tombstone came from a plant close by in the cemetery. From the Cathedral we travelled across to St Mary's. Built in 1687 it is the oldest Anglican Church east of Suez. The memorial tablet put up by his friends to the memory of JJC is easily found on the pew side of almost the first column as one comes into the church. It is in good condition.' *(see page 129)*

Malcolm Chase, a long time BACSA member has sent an item from a Sri Lankan web-based newspaper *(The Island Online)*. It is the account of a visit to the Beach Cemetery at Gallipoli in Turkey where 285 British Commonwealth troops are buried. The writer, George Braine, noticed that three of the graves were those of riflemen from the Ceylon Planters Rifle Corps. (The Turkish guide to the cemetery was unaware of them.) The names of the three men buried here were Alexander Forrest, Guy Middlemiss and Henry Ashfield Carlisle and they are located next to each other. The Corps was formed at the turn of the 20th century and consisted mainly of European tea and rubber planters, all volunteers. During the Great War eight officers and 221 men embarked for Egypt where they were trained and eighty were sent on to Gallipoli, arriving there on 25 April 1915. The three men named above were all in their early 20s so it is likely they were the sons or relatives of planters. Forrest and Carlisle were killed on the same day, 2 May 1915 and Middlemiss four days later.

One volunteer who did survive was Herbert Brett, a planter on the Yakwila coconut estate at Pannala in the North Western Province of what was then Ceylon. He was commissioned and rose to the rank of major. After his battalion was decimated he was forced to surrender and was subsequently mistreated as a PoW. He did not return to Ceylon. This is a sad little footnote to thousands of those killed at Gallipoli, estimated to be around 44,000 of Allied troops alone.

BRITISH CEMETERIES IN PAKISTAN

'Survey Report on British era Cemeteries in Galiyat Region, Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwar' is the encouraging title of a recent report. The survey was ordered by Mr Ehsan Mani, chairman of the Galiyat Development Authority and was carried out in May and June of this year by Mr Babar Hanan Abbasi, the Assistant Director Projects. The main objective was to identify and restore the cemeteries of British soldiers and their families who in lived in the Galiyat area so descendants 'can visit the graves of their loved ones'. This is an ambitious scheme. Pakistan is not high of the list of places for cemetery tourism, but there is no reason why it shouldn't be and this is a promising initiative. Thandiani is a small hill station 23 miles from Abbottabad and here a lease was granted to members of the Battye family where a sanatorium was set up for the nearby garrison. The site contained a few European houses, a camp ground, a bazaar and the small seasonal church of St Xavier in the Wilderness which was only used during the summer months. There are two cemeteries here, both in pitiful conditions with flat tombstones barely visible below vegetation and litter. Kala Bagh is another small hill station, where the cemetery is under the control of the Pakistan Air Force and is said to be in better condition.

Khaira Gali Town is a third hill station which was occupied by British troops during the summer months, who then returned to Rawalpindi for the winter. Remains of about 28 graves have been found in the cemetery here, although only one stone has visible inscriptions: 'Sacred to the memory of Edward A.F.H. Day, Lieut. Who died at Khyra Gully June 10th 1884 aged 22 years'. The other side reads: 'The dearly beloved son of the late Reverend Edward Fitzgerald of Edenburn House, Co. Kerry Ireland and of Mrs Day of Cheltenham. R.I.P.' It was unusual for a son to take his mother's name rather than his father's and perhaps this indicates a family tragedy. Lastly, the Gorra Dhaka (Ayubia) is a tourist resort and there are three British cemeteries here with the remains of about 100 graves. Most are simply indented patches on the ground, but clearing the sparce vegetation may well reveal some inscriptions.

CAN YOU HELP?

When the Spring 2023 *Chowkidar* offered a rare music book of psalms, *Punjabi Zabur,* published in 1908 to anyone who might be interested it seemed like a long shot. But an email came promptly from BACSA member Fiona Addleton who wrote 'I could find a very good home for it in Punjab, either in the rare book collection at Forman Christian College (a Chartered University) in Lahore (where my husband currently serves as Rector) or in the Museum of the Pakistan Bible Society, also in Lahore'. Mrs Addleton also told us that someone in Pakistan is currently working to have all the 150 *zaburs,* or psalms, sung and put on YouTube. The book was published in Benares at a press established by a Welsh doctor, Dr E.J. Lazurus, not a common Welsh name she adds. So the book, purchased in a job lot at a local auction, has now gone to an appropriate home where it will be suitably appreciated.

BACSA member David Barnabas from Bangalore tells us that he came across a grave in a cemetery at Madurai in Tamil Nadu recently. The inscription on it read: 'To the Memory of M. Dayanagam Pillay, Computer Revenue Survey Who Departed This Life On the 11th February 1879 Aged 34 Years.' Mr Barnabas has two questions - the surname Pillay is very 'Indian', he observes, so why does the grave lie among those of British citizens, something he says was not done in 1879? Secondly what was a 'Computer Revenue Survey?' We can hazard a guess that there should be a comma after 'Computer' and that this describes a man working for the government department dealing with land revenue, then one of the chief sources of income. A 'Computer' at this period was a person, not a machine, and was someone who reckoned up, or computed, the amount of payment due. But the question of why he was buried along with Britons is harder to answer, unless, like Sarah 'A Kashmiri' above, he had converted to Christianity

BACSA member Yvonne Matignon-Gonsalves has an unusual relic of an Irish regiment once stationed in India. It is a drum case in the shape of a rough wooden box with a painted inscription which reads: Pte J Laycock Drums 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers India. An image on the other side of the box shows crossed swords and a drum. The Fusiliers were formed in 1881 from two earlier 'European' regiments in India, one of which, the 102nd Royal Madras Fusiliers had been posted to Bellary in southern India, where the drum case was found. It was discovered in an abandoned garrison church near the Batri cemetery in the cantonment at Bellary. No further information is forthcoming, but perhaps BACSA members could throw light on the Madras Fusiliers and Drummer Laycock? The case could be donated to a suitable army museum.

An interesting email comes from Professor Jamshed Yar Khan in Pakistan who is hoping to trace descendants of those buried in the Nowshera cantonment cemetery. Professor Khan lives near this historic cemetery but tells us that access has become difficult not only due to terrorism but because the army authorities have taken it over and permission now has to be sought before a visit. Nevertheless, he hopes to survey the site. A Protestant church remains in Nowshera cantonment and its priest has become a friend of Professor Khan. BACSA has recommended a number of sources that list some of those buried here, and has requested photographs, if possible, of outstanding graves or monuments. In the meantime anyone with an ancestral connection to the Nowshera cemetery is asked to contact the Editor, who will pass on messages.

Margaret Murray is trying to locate an ancestral grave and there is a sad story attached to it. 'Alfred Thomas Murray (the earliest of our Murray ancestors so far traced) pops up at his marriage in October 1866, in Madras and later on his burial certificate, only 13 years later, when he was said to be aged 33 at time of death (there is a slight anomaly in the age he gave on marriage and the age given on death) which occurred in Pursawalkum, near Georgetown, Madras. He was formerly a signaller in the Telegraph Department at the time of marriage, but as his children were baptised, the records show that he was not in work (maybe a result of mental illness or perhaps unemployment caused by mental illness.) Unemployed, at any rate. He died on 11 June 1879 so was born around 1844-6, we deduce. We have never found a birth record to check his age. He, his wife, Georgiana Webber, and children, all lived in Blacktown, Madras.

When he died, he was said to be 'an inmate of the lunatic asylum' and cause of death was diarrhoea - which could imply cholera or typhoid, perhaps. So, in 2015, we visited the Kilpauk Mental hospital, formerly the Asylum, in the hope of finding more information. But they had no records before 2000. I asked where inmates would have been buried and was told that they would be buried in the closest cemetery to the hospital, That cemetery, they said, was very old and in a dangerous state so it was now closed to the public, completely overgrown. And they didn't recall the name. It's sad, really, that we know least about the ancestor whose name we carry than any other ancestor. The only records we have for him are the marriage and the burial certificates. So, it would be lovely to find out where he is buried. The only clues we have are Blacktown and Pursawalkum and the fact that he married in the Congregational chapel in Blacktown, so was probably a non-conformist,

or perhaps a Presbyterian (maybe he had Scottish roots). We have tried Ancestry etc. to try and find relatives, and have not found anything conclusive but there were a few possible matches from Scotland.' Any ideas from BACSA members would be appreciated.

THE MISSING 'ANGEL'

A query has been received from BACSA member Vicky Singh of Kota in Rajasthan. She tells us that St John's Church, Calcutta contains many fine memorial sculptures and one of the best commemorates Lieutenant Peter Lawtie who served under Sir David Ochterlony during the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1815. Lawtie was a member of the Corps of Bengal Engineers whose skills were needed on the punitive expedition particularly in fording rivers and crossing the difficult terrain. 'The masses of the mountains are immense, their sides steep, and covered with impenetrable jungle...the roads are very insecure' wrote an observer describing the country.

But Lawtie's role was not purely a practical one. He was also aide-de-camp to Ochterlony and on 14 April, as part of the action around Malaun fort (now in Himachal Pradesh), he led a volunteer body of deserters and prisoners from the Gurkha army into action against their former masters. This decisively turned the tide and Ochterlony was greatly impressed by their fighting spirit and welcomed the men into his own force. This was the start of the Brigade of Gurkhas, which continues to this day. In tribute the Calcutta memorial was erected by Ochterlony himself with officers under his command and the inscription records that Lawtie at the age of twenty-three 'at the close of the first campaign of the Nypal war to the successful termination of which his exertions had eminently contributed, fell a victim to his devotion in the service of his country'.

The name of the sculptor is not visible from the photograph, and it is a striking and curious image. The coffin rests on a plinth and to the left is the figure of a Gurkha soldier prising up the lid and gazing into the casket. He wears a short coat, a bandolier shoulder pouch, a loincloth exposing his bare legs and a pair of slippers. His headgear, a shako or military cap, lies at his feet. To the right is a female figure in flowing robes, suspended above the coffin and holding the lid open. Her right hand, which is missing, may have held a lantern. A winding cloth spills out of the coffin. It has been suggested that this figure might be an angel, although there are no signs of wings, nor a halo and she seems rather elaborately dressed, with a close-fitting bodice, a necklace and her hair in a fashionable bun. *(see page 130)*

above: the Kanlog cemetery Shimla (see pages 119-120)

below: identifying the Little tomb at Nishatganj, Lucknow (see page 120)

above: memorial to Julian James Cotton at St Mary's Church, Madras *(see page 123)*

below: his tomb at St George's Cathedral, Madras *(see page 123)*

above: the Banff memorial to Lieutenant Peter Lawtie, without the 'angel' (see page 125)

below right: the version in St John's Church, Calcutta

What this rather unsettling scene represents is not clear – was Lawtie being laid to rest? More puzzling still is a second marble memorial to Lawtie, this time in Banff Church, Scotland. The inscription is similar and begins 'This monument is erected in addition to one in the cathedral church of Calcutta....' Added wording at the end notes that he was 'Beloved, respected and admired. Born at Banff February 25th 1792, Died May 5th 1815' But there is no female figure here and the Gurkha soldier leans alone over a closed coffin. What looks like an entrenching tool is now tucked behind his shako. The reason for the Gurkha is clear – he is mourning the death of his new commander who led him and his comrades into the Company army. But who was the woman and why has she disappeared from the Scottish memorial? Perhaps she was considered rather risqué for early 19th century Aberdeenshire?

Profile: Once Upon a Time in India

An occasional series looking at BACSA members and their connections. Hugh Purcell worked for the BBC, visiting India as a tour leader, film-maker and writer. His 2008 book After the Raj: The Last Stayers-On and the Legacy of British India *includes a chapter on BACSA.*

Reading Robert King's article in the last edition of *Chowkidar*, I was struck by the similarity between his first trip to India and mine. I travelled overland in 1964 and experienced two extraordinary survivals of the Raj. The first was a once weekly train between Zahedan in south Iran and Quetta in Pakistan originally known as the Trans – Baluchistan Railway. Built by the British during the Great War it initially transported soldiers and supplies across the Baluchistan desert, connecting the Raj with Persia. In our day the return half of the journey was time tabled to leave Zahedan on a Tuesday and arrive in Quetta thirty hours later, a shortish haul by the standards of Indian train journeys, as we were to discover. *Lonely Planet* called it 'one of the most memorable train journeys in the world….the trip is guaranteed to be a story you will tell until you die'.

So here am I telling it, but for the wrong reasons. The three of us, just graduated from Cambridge University, arrived in Zahedan on a Sunday, having crossed Europe, Turkey and Iran on local trains and buses in the previous two weeks. Outside the town we found two railway tracks and next to them – or was it a mirage? - a British-Indian station. Given the lawless, frontier atmosphere of Zahedan, known to backpackers as 'Dozda', the 'den of thieves', it looked absurdly orderly. There were 1st and 2nd class waiting rooms, an (empty) restaurant and even the sign 'the following objects must be declared to the conductor before being taken on the train….' or am I imagining this?

It was all a relic of the Raj, but the train did exist. I remember camping alongside the track with, eventually, a dozen or so other overlanders and watching the Indian train, 3rd class carriages only so upright wooden seats, shimmer into view. The next morning we were off, sort of. For thirty-five hours the train lurched and jolted through sandy desert, averaging only ten miles an hour, before stopping with finality in the evening of the second day outside Ahmed Wal just inside Pakistan but still 150 kilometres from Quetta. Landslide had blocked the track. A bus arrived and after arguments over money we squeezed on, too tight to move for another night without rest. At four in the morning we arrived at Quetta, the gateway to the Indian subcontinent. It was deliciously green and cool. What a relief and a triumph!

Three weeks later in Delhi we encountered a Raj footnote. Wandering round Connaught Circus looking for somewhere to sleep we came across Lady Harding Serai, a patch of dirty ground consisting solely of rows of charpoy beds. I read now that it was rescued from 'utter disrepair' in the 1970s and turned into a women's hostel, but for us children of the Raj it was our first night in India's capital. Over the next two months we saw India before it became like everywhere else. We were thrilled by the confusion of castes and gods, the cacophony and colour on the streets, the challenge of big stations at night. Where are they now, the *bhistis,* the *sadhus,* the *fakirs*? Gone, but we were there in time.

BOOKS BY BACSA MEMBERS

Empire Building. The Construction of British India: 1690-1860

Rosie Llewellyn-Jones

This is a very readable book, richly illustrated, of interest to scholars and general readers alike. 'Construction' is the theme; it is broadly interpreted. After an introduction that whets the appetite, we turn to the founding and early development of Calcutta—a fine and balanced short account. The second chapter illustrates the precarious and undervalued roles of engineers, as local plans and spending were repeatedly misunderstood or countermanded from London and thwarted by problems of expertise, labour and supplies. The chapter then offers details on architectural projects, finance, styles and materials, including (less expected) on the first gunpowder factory, sericulture and filatures. One observation is that nearly all the early engineers held military appointments and sometimes marine experience provided the only relevant training. I can add from my own studies, à propos of a comment that Richard Blechynden in Calcutta was an unlikely civil architect after

minimal experience in mathematics, navigation and marine surveying, that his brief service as a midshipman was perhaps oddly well-suited to his later career. The first chapters are peopled by such adaptable adventurers and opportunists, from Europe as well as Britain, ready to meet needs for which they seemed to have sparse preparation. Lack of formal training sometimes did mean unsuitable direction of important projects (there are several examples here; I would emphasise Captain Wyatt's extravagance over Government House, Calcutta). Initially many buildings were ill-suited to India's climate. Styles emerged, especially neo-classical, that became popular among Indians as well as Europeans. (Palladio's *Treatise* was available in late eighteenth-century Calcutta.)

Chapter 3 turns to 'the spirit of Enlightenment': widespread enthusiasm for discovering Asia, as in the formation of the Bengal Asiatic Society. On its initial exclusion of Indians an interesting suggestion, interpreting Flaxman's monument to William Jones, is that Indians and Europeans were seen 'in their appropriate spaces, each acknowledging the other's surroundings without wishing to inhabit them' (p.93); I think they were separate but unequal. The chapter then raises colonisation in informative short discussions of botany and horticulture, trigonometrical and revenue surveys, and language categorisation and training. Knowledge was sought; European categorisation mostly imposed. Some investigations seemingly had little non-scientific purpose except to unlock East India Company money; others were scientific but mainly commercial. The chapter continues with the advent of printing, including an outbreak of political censorship; then turns to services, notably for education, orphans, 'lunatics' and health, initially directed at poor Europeans or Eurasians and the Company's Indian employees. Efforts, formerly depending mostly on private charity, under the British also needed support from public events, lotteries and free-masons.

A fascinating fourth chapter is devoted to a communications revolution. The lack or loss of pre-colonial maps led to new route maps drawing on local knowledge and to the step-change in Rennell's *Bengal Atlas*, recording existing travellers' routes but leading on to general surveys meeting demands for information. Highways developed similarly, sometimes along truly ancient routes but generally in response to current needs. Desire to know what existed then fed an expectation of improvement, inspiring developments from short-lived semaphore stations to telegraph lines, steamships and railways that required large investment and unprecedented public land-acquisition. At the same time the rulers' imagination was often limited. Indians' strikingly rapid take-up of railways, for example, was unexpected.

Cantonments and hill stations, their character and construction, are described in chapter 5. They were sometimes exemplars of confusion and corruption but are also memorials to innovations under Company rule. They were durable and divisive responses to climate and European priorities. The first fully-developed military cantonment at Berhampur (ruinously expensive) provided remarkable facilities for European soldiers, a model for the future. European country-houses were built too, indicating the wealth of successful individuals. Hill stations, initially marking wider territorial control and always with a military presence, became major summer resorts for governments as well as individuals, associated with sanitoria and schools, but also environmental damage, animal slaughter and taxidermy.

The final chapter considers change. First is the impact of territorial expansion on engineers, surveyors and then education for such specialists and generally, from elementary to university level. Next is a 'recognisable pattern of an anglicised town' (p.193) including public buildings, churches, clock towers, monuments, shops, post-offices, gardens, clubs, and changing fashions in housing. The next theme is standardisation and foreign control, for example over time, measurements and money. Final remarks concern views about slavery and engagement with India: both changed between the 18th and mid-19th centuries. European wearing of Indian dress, once acceptable, came to be deemed improper, and Indians were thought unwilling to change, despite their frequent interest in aspects of modernisation. My own view is that there were prominent European admirers and investigators of India throughout British rule, a growing willingness to attempt improvement (often ineffective) and at all times widespread confidence in European superiority**.** **Peter Robb**

2023 Hurst ISBN: 978-1-787388-048 £30.00 pp239

BOOKS THAT WILL INTEREST READERS

Adventurers: The Improbable Rise of the East India Company
David Howarth

This is a large (459pp) and important book dealing with a topic of which most of us are pretty ignorant. William Dalrymples's book on the HEICo (*The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company* Bloomsbury Publishing 2019) covers the same period as this book in a mere 20 pages. This is not to knock Mr Dalrymple, who has understandably focused on the purely Indian aspects, whereas Mr Howarth spends a lot of time not only on the Dutch East Indies but also

on Persia, China and Japan, as well as glances at the other English merchant companies such as those for Muscovy, Venice, Turkey, etc. The structure of the book is original and set out in the Introduction. The Portuguese empire was in decline when the HEICo was founded. This was partly Spanish influence, when Philip II claimed the throne of Portugal, partly a reluctance to found colonies, and partly an own-goal in allowing Jesuits to proselytise. This was apparently the last straw that caused the Japanese Shoguns to slam the doors shut on almost all western trade. Then came the Dutch, who had no interest in Jesuits, but realised that the rajas of the Spice Islands were only minor princelings and could be coerced or worse into doing what the Dutch wanted. The Dutch East India Company (the VOC) was backed by the state and founded colonies as a permanent presence in the Far East. All this was in contrast to the English who relied on entrepreneurship. Sir Thomas Smythe was the man of vision who after a career with the Muscovy Company and the Levant Company (the latter born from a merger of the old Turkey and Venetian Companies in 1592) – all one might argue pressing to much the same goal -- became the first Governor of the HEICo.

In looking at the origins of the HEICo, Mr Howarth is not averse to considering matters of morale and national character – what he calls 'the Tudor process of nation-building'. This is unfashionable among some historians, though there are plenty of examples of states with relatively modest resources pulling together to thwart an infinitely larger and better equipped rival. From there we go on a tour with an HEICo ship called the *Peppercorn* which Mr Howarth calls 'hell on sea' – he is referring to the 'savage' crew, gathered as he puts it from the caverns and taverns of Limehouse.

The first 30 years of the HEICo was a frustrating time as it tried, pretty unsuccessfully, to break into the markets for spices and other trade in the far east, including China and Japan. Eventually there was a show-down with the Dutch who effectively won the Spice islands. This included the massacre of Amboyna when a particularly ruthless Dutch Governor called Jan Pieterszoon Coen captured ten HEICo employees, tortured them into confessing to an attempted coup against the Dutch, and then executed them. Those who want the gruesome details that can go to Giles Milton's *Nathaniel's Nutmeg.* Reaction by the English Company to the news included commissioning a picture of the episode from an artist called Richard Greenbury 'wherein was lively, largely and artificially, set forth those several bloody tortures and executions inflicted upon our people at Amboyna'. This came to the notice of the Privy Council who encountered hostile Dutch reaction and moreover were afraid an

upcoming holiday might encourage anti-Dutch riots. The HEICo Court took fright and tried to pin the whole thing on Greenbury. He sent in his bill to the Company for £100, but was eventually bullied by them to accept a mere £30. The picture does not survive.

The book is excellent at showing relations between the HEICo and the crown – flattery was what James I went in for, and so was to an extent manageable. Charles I could only focus on money and was shameless in sponsoring non-HEICo expeditions, thereby undermining the monopoly which the Crown itself had created. But meanwhile, almost by accident, England found its way in India thanks largely to Sir Thomas Roe, who became a valued courtier to Jahangir, the Mughal Emperor. Rebuffed by China, expelled by the Dutch from the Spice Islands, and by the Shogun from Japan meant perforce the HEICo's concentrating on India – hence the direction the Company increasingly took, so that Mr Howarth's improbable rise of the HEICo became thereafter Mr Dalrymple's relentless rise. This is a fascinating book, rich in texture, beautifully written, and covering a broad sweep of history. Strongly recommended.

Richard Morgan

2023 Yale University Press ISBN 978-0-300-25072-5 £25.00 pp459

Unmaking the East India Company – British Art and Political Reform in Colonial India c.1813-1858 Tom Young

The title of this book somewhat surprised me but after reading every chapter I became aware just how appropriate it is for this remarkable contribution to the study of Anglo -Indian Art. Mildred Archer and other art historians of the second half of the 20th century had largely dismissed the period between 1813 and the catastrophic upheavals of 1857 as one of meagre artistic output with few artists of merit working in the subcontinent. She couldn't of course have been more wrong. This pioneering book explores in depth the demise of the East India Company between the loss of the trade monopoly in 1813 to the effective nationalisation of the East India Company in 1858. Tom Young argues effectively that new artistic mediums like lithography, published in periodicals and in other formats, and aimed at the emerging middle class, destabilised the entire structure of the Company's legitimacy and rule. A previously aristocratic concept of corporate identity in colonial India was eroded and undermined by the political and moral mores of this new emerging class. The author had previously written a detailed biography of the artist Sir Charles D'Oyly and his first chapter looks at how this artist, in founding the Behar School of Athens, shaped colonial self-

fashioning but with the importation of the lithographic press contributing to the promotion of art for the middle classes in India. The next two chapters reveal in stark detail how colonial racism, so prevalent in India in this period was connected to artistic technologies like lithography. A direct comparison is made between the brilliant 18th century artist Arthur William Devis and the work of the Gantz family in Madras. Devis, possibly under the direction of the founder of Calcutta's Asiatick Society, Sir William Jones, had proposed plans for a print series of Indian occupations called 'Economy of Human life'. It failed to materialise, but the paintings prepared for it are of the highest artistic merit in which every figure is individualised and characterised. They were frequently done on the spot. In contrast the Gantz Brothers' lithographic 1820s publication called the 'Microcosm of Indian Life' directly reflected the way that the colonial structure of 'extractivism' destroyed the South Indian economy and the labourer became the chief commodity. Each figure is illustrated not as an individual but as a type to be exploited. Lithography determined the way racism was fundamentally enacted. The fourth chapter turns to how artistic production shaped domestic perceptions of imperialism and the emergence of the monarchy as an imperialistic entity.

The final chapter considers one of the darkest aspects of East India Company rule – the opium trade in Patna. Shortly before the Great Rebellion of 1857 Robert Lyell, the personal assistant in charge of opium at the Gulzarbagh factory commissioned the leading Indian artist of the day in the city – Shiva Lal – to paint murals of the various stages of opium production on the walls of the factory. Only his sketches survive but the very idea of using art to promote a trade that had extremely dark labour practices is bizarre. The author argues that the concept emanated from the emergence of murals in England to promote imperialism. On 3rd July 1857 two hundred Muslims, led by the book seller Pir Ali Khan, unfurled the green flag and rose in rebellion. Lyell rode out to meet them and was shot from the saddle.

This reassessment of the role of colonial art as a reflection of identity and power – indeed of the concept of Britishness across the globe is long overdue and Tom Young has risen to the challenge brilliantly. The book is lavishly illustrated and extremely well produced as we have come to expect from the Mellon Centre's press. Every facet of this book is admirable even if aspects of the subject are a disturbing reflection of British colonial rule in the last years of the East India Company and the inevitable progression towards the calamity of 1857. **Charles Greig**

2023 Yale University Press ISBN 978 1 913107 39 0 £40.00 pp246

Pompous Graves: A History of the Park Street cemeteries of Calcutta Anirban Bhadra

This is a very accomplished book by a young author who lives in Calcutta. We learn how the first Britons in India dealt with burials in a non-Christian country. The earliest Anglican church was not erected until the end of the 17th century, so there was no focus around which a graveyard could be established. Two solutions were found. One was 'garden burials' where the deceased was buried on their own estate or that of a friend and the second was to emulate the great Mughal tombs with their domes and pinnacles. The first mention of a cemetery in Calcutta is 1665 which will surprise many who believe that Job Charnock's two-storied mausoleum is the oldest funerary monument in the city. Charnock died in 1692 and was buried in what was already known as 'the old English cemetery'. Visitors to the site, which is now in the grounds of St John's Church, will have noticed a number of tombstones laid flat around his mausoleum, several of them with Latin inscriptions. An aquatint by Thomas Daniell shows a number of fine tombs here, but a wholesale demolition in 1802 cleared the majority of them away. The large obelisk tomb of Mrs Elizabeth Reed, which had survived the clearance and was photographed in 1909 has now also vanished. South Park Street cemetery, which superceded it, was opened in 1767 as the 'new burying ground' and it was to be another half century before it became known as Park Street, after a long-vanished deer park near the Chowringhee corner.

Pompous Graves is packed full of relevant photographs and maps as well as previously unknown facts which have been diligently uncovered by Bhadra. For example the notable difference between the truly pompous monuments of South Park Street and the much humbler memorials of later cemeteries had previously been attributed to a fundamental religious shift. It was thought the Evangelical movement encouraged a simpler, less grandiose style of commemoration of the dead. Not so. On page 38 we find 'Great inconvenience having arisen....from the general practice which prevails among all classes of erecting Tombs of unreasonable dimensions over the remains of Relatives and Friends, the Rt. Hon'ble Governor-in-Council has been pleased to resolve that the size of monuments hereafter to be erected in the burial ground of any outstation shall be limited to 7 ft x 3ft. 6ins.' So it was for a pragmatic reason, rather than a spiritual one that the change occurred. Tribute is paid to BACSA's founder, Theon Wilkinson and to Dr Maurice Shellim, who lived in Calcutta for many years. A less well-known name is Roger Pearson, a young British accountant working in Calcutta in the 1950s.

He persuaded the Burial Board to halt its proposed demolition of South Park Street cemetery while he raised funds for restoration. With the help of Calcutta-based architect Bernard Matthews and Aurelius Khan ICS, Pearson succeeded in restoring most of the monuments. Aurelius Khan subsequently became Secretary of the Christian Burial Board.

BACSA was so impressed by the draft manuscript of *Pompous Graves* that it has funded its publication. The book is not only the first detailed history of the Park Street cemeteries, it is well-written, informative and with a touch of humour too – a final chapter on 'Looking for the Paranormal' is instructive. There is a chronology, a list of notable burials and a good index. Highly recommended. A limited number of copies are available in Britain from the Editor of *Chowkidar* and it is also on sale at the gate-house of South Park Street cemetery itself.

2023 BACSA 978 0 95 5907799. From: 135 Burntwood Lane, London SW17 0AJ. £10.00 including postage and packing. pp160

Some Memorials and Burials in Shimla Raaja Bhasin

The author has long been associated with the Indian hill station and this small book is a useful guide not only to the cemeteries but to some of those buried within them too. Not surprisingly there are a number of burial sites (Kanlog, the largest is discussed above). The others are Cart Road, also known as the Old Bullock Train Office; Sanjauli: the cemetery below St Bede's; the War Memorial at Bishop Cotton School and the old cemetery at Jutogh. Christ Church with its fine stained-glass windows, tower, clock and memorials was developed during the 1860s. At first there were no pews, so the congregation had to make do with rough benches or bring their own chairs. The pews today still mark the seats of the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief and the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab.

Perhaps the most moving part of this book are the memorials to people who died far away from Shimla but who had family connections with it. Lieutenant Colonel George Bennett Kingston died from wounds in Alexandria while gallantly leading a charge at Gallipoli in June 1915. Captain Edward Massy Dennys of the 2/4th Gurkha Rifles was killed while on service in Mesopotamia. And Florence de la Hey is commemorated with a plaque placed by her grandson Richard on behalf of his family. 'Though we later generations never knew you, we will always remember you.' Illustrated and recommended.

2021 Amazon ISBN 9798783913952 £4.50 pp63

MISCELLANY

Not all material received for *Chowkidar* fits neatly into its regular features so occasionally we publish short items of interest. One such is new member Vanessa Long's story from Mirzapur. As part of a tour group, she found a tomb there to 'Quartermaster Rogers' which is believed to be that of her 3 times great grandfather. Jacob Rogers, who died in 1824 was a European officer serving in the army of the Maratha leader Daulat Rao Scindia. A number of foreigners had joined Scindia, including the well-known French general, Benôit de Boigne. In 1803, with the capture of Delhi by the East India Company, these men were offered a financial inducement to leave the Maratha army and a number of them did so, including Rogers, who received a captain's pension. He seems to have then joined the Company army, as he is noted as 'Lieutenant' on his Mirzapur tomb. A portrait of him is now housed in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

Valley of the Doon is the title of a little book published in Dehra Dun in 1952. Its author was A.R. Gill about whom nothing is known but was obviously someone very familiar with the town at the foothills of the Himalayas. What is of particular relevance to BACSA is that nearly half the book is devoted to its cemeteries, including a detailed account of the Dehra Dun Cemetery Committee, its members, the staff it employed as gardeners, the endowments it received and much else of interest. Specifications for coffins are listed from 'casket class' of highly polished deodar wood to 'third class', which was lined with cheap quality *khadi* cloth. Pauper funerals cost Rs70 for adults and Rs30 for babies.

There were various funds that paid for the upkeep of the cemeteries and lists of those buried in endowed graves. Lists are also included of the Italian and German prisoners of war who died in internment camps during World War Two. A chapter presciently entitled 'The Future of British Cemeteries in India' confidently states that because India is a secular state 'there is no reason to fear that British cemeteries will be interfered with'. The book, which is illustrated, also has two pasted-in photographs of graves which were clearly significant to its owner: Effie Govan Fischer who died in 1906, aged ten years and Frances Marion Govan, widow of Brigade Surgeon G. H. Govan, who died in 1917 at the age of 80. Because it was published in India, shortly after Independence, *Valley of the Doon* is not listed among the usual books about Dehra's cemeteries. It was not a government publication and was possibly printed privately. It will remain in BACSA's small reference library for future use.

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

Printed by Joshua Horgan, Oxford

The graves of Bernard Burge, Robert Douglas and James Peddie, St John's Church, Midnapore