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# CHOWKIDAR

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## Notes on BACSA

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

There is a steadily growing membership of over 1,800 (2000) 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 the building up of a Records archive in the Oriental and India Office Collections in the British Library; and many other projects for the upkeep of historical and architectural monuments.

The enrolment fee and subscription rates are obtainable from the Secretary.

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 condition of a relative's grave etc. There are also many other publications both on cemetery surveys and aspects of European social history out East.

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## A VICTORIAN TRAGEDY

'I am interested in tracing the fate of a writer of a small batch of letters to my grandmother when she was a young woman in Secunderabad' wrote Mr MJE Coode, to the British Library. 'My grandmother saved the letters, together with a photograph, that I assume is of the writer. His name was JT Waddell, though he always signed himself as "Tommy". The letters are dated from May to November 1897, from Rawalpindi, Ambela, and once, Fort Lockhart. On 27 October he was in Kangabur on active service. What seems to be the last one is dated 6 November 1897 from Tirah; in this he described the death of a mutual friend, Giffard, shot from behind by a sniper "the first the Regiment has lost". Since the letters stop so abruptly and my grandmother kept them all her life (despite subsequently being married to someone else) it occurred to me that Tommy Waddell too was killed in that operation. How could I find out more about him?'

Mr Coode's letter was passed to BACSA, and a little detective work uncovered the sad history of Tommy Waddell. His full name was John Tannach Waddell, and he was a Lieutenant in the Northamptonshire Regiment, which had been ordered to the North West Frontier Province, where raiding Afridi tribesmen were causing trouble. The military action became known as the Campaign in Tirah of 1897-1898, and a book of the same name, by Col HD Hutchinson, tells the story of the death of Lieutenant Waddell. Afridis, in wild, mountainous countryside, 'a network of ravines, nullahs, and rugged hills', had harried the troops with night raids, firing into the Army tents. This was how Lieutenant Giffard, Waddell's friend, had been killed, sitting at the Mess table when a bullet came through the canvas.

On 9 November 1897, Sir William Lockhart ordered a sizeable party of officers and men out to Saran Sar, partly to destroy the fortified houses of the Afridis, and partly to carry out a survey. The mission was successful, a few men were wounded, a mountain was captured, and the surveying party got to work. However, at 2.00 pm when the soldiers started to return to camp, the tribesmen believed their enemy was retreating, and started to attack the rear of the column, which was carrying back the wounded men. Marching slowly through a deep ravine, the Northamptons were suddenly attacked and twenty soldiers killed, including Tommy Waddell. A search party sent out from the Camp found their bodies the next day, 'stripped of clothing and arms, and some of them slashed with swords, but their bodies had not otherwise been mutilated.'

The official investigation into this sorry affair concluded that the Northamptonshire Regiment had simply not been given the training and experience needed to combat the tribal guerrillas 'nor the practical knowledge of the enemy's methods and tactics.....to retreat closely pressed by a savage foe, and conducted, encumbered by wounded through a terribly difficult country.'

'The enemy' it was reported, 'had seemed to rise up from the ground'. The men were buried near the camp site, and it is not known whether their graves exist today. How much Tommy Waddell's sweetheart in Secunderabad knew of the manner of his death is speculation. But clearly this brave young man, dying on the Frontier, was not forgotten by her.

## MAIL BOX

'A chance remark at the dinner table has triggered a flow of information dwarfing years of earnest effort with established organisations like the Burma Star Association and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission' wrote BACSA member Peter Freeborn. That 'chance remark' led to the identification of a memorial to Major David Kennedy Milligan of the Burma Frontier Force who was killed in the Chin Hills, during the Second World War. Major Milligan's sister, Alison Whiting, had never been able to locate the site of his grave, and she mentioned her frustrating search to Peter Freeborn over a dinner. He put her in touch with BACSA and it was quickly established, through BACSA's Burma Register, that her brother lay in the Fort White Cemetery. He had died on 9 November 1943, aged twenty-six years, at Mangkhang, the last halt before Falam.

Another BACSA member, Dr Desmond Kelly, added some useful information about the young man, who had worked for the Burma Forest Service before the war. Dr Kelly's father had fought alongside David Milligan, and reported that he died gallantly during the withdrawal from Falam. The Japanese were said to have buried him superficially on the slope above the ruined Rest House. Dr Kelly was able to put Alison Whiting in touch with Professor Fraser, MC, the former Medical Officer of the Chin Hills Battalion, who had also known her brother. There is still one unanswered question - a photograph that shows a memorial stone to the dead man, recording his birthplace in Dumfries, Scotland, and his date of death (see page 60). Was this stone erected where David Milligan was killed, or is it a memorial stone in Fort White cemetery? The identity of the three men behind the stone is unknown. A visit to the cemetery should clarify this, and give added comfort to Mrs Whiting, who has waited nearly sixty years for news.

Another BACSA member, Helen English, reports a successful visit to India in the footsteps of her grandparents, Fane and Frances Sewell, 'who met and fell in love on board ship on the way to Bombay in 1910. He was going to join the Imperial Indian Police and she was going to be a missionary. Five years later, Frances returned to Bombay and the couple were married in Balaghat, now in Madhya Pradesh. (Fane Sewell already had Indian connections, his own father John Tyndall Bruce Dalrymple Sewell being buried at Chhindwara, following his death from cholera in 1908.) Two sons were born while the Sewells were in India.



Travelling with her daughter Catherine, in temperatures of over 100 degrees, Mrs English began her visit at Secunderabad, where her father Jack had been baptised in St John's Church in 1917. The church seemed unchanged from a photograph taken that year, but of course was now surrounded by roads, and noisy traffic. On learning of the couple's family connections, members of the Youth Fellowship of the church took Mrs English and her daughter to Bolarum Church. 'There in the beautifully maintained cemetery, we found a grave we were looking for belonging to cousin Helen's twin brother, Bruce Murray Sewell who died in 1917 aged eight months. The cemetery was beautifully maintained, and photographs taken for Helen Newman of the grave she had never seen' (see page 60).

Disappointingly, on reaching the Chhindwara cemetery, where her great-grandfather John Sewell lay, the whole area was found to have been desecrated, with the boundary wall crumbling. Photographs taken of the grave in 1908 had shown it resplendent and ornate. Now little is left, a section of the cross found lying face down on the dusty ground some way off. There seems to be no church at Chhindwara with responsibility for the cemetery, leading to its subsequent neglect. (There are plans afoot for the restoration of this cemetery in co-ordination with our 'sister' organisation, APHCI, in Calcutta.)

'Then we drove for hours along pot-holed roads to Seoni Mission, founded by Scottish missionaries in 1896, where my uncle (Tom) was delivered by the eccentric Scottish doctor, Jeannie Grant, who ran the Mission hospital till the end of her life.' The Seoni Clubhouse which Fane and Frances Sewell had frequently visited was still there, and amazingly the beautiful billiard table on which they had both played, nearly a hundred years ago, was still in situ. Mrs English adds that the Sewells' two sons, Jack and Tom, are happily still with us, and both are BACSA members.

It is a shame that local authorities lay down such stringent rules about the shape and size of tombstones these days. Even the wording of inscriptions is subject to the stern municipal eye, and it has to be said that present day memorial plaques in churches too, verge on the bland. These thoughts are prompted by the long and splendid epitaph in the church of St Mary and St Lawrence at Great Waltham in Essex, which was recently copied and sent in by Michael Stokes, BACSA Council member. No-one would contemplate erecting such a memorial today, for the cost of the stonemason's work alone would be prohibitive, but it does make us realise how much more interesting were these 18th century inscriptions, with their potted histories, character references, moral inferences and medical reports:

> 'Near this Place lyeth the Body of Peter Curgenven Merch. He was sent in his Youth to the East Indies where attaining to a thorough knowledge of the Indian Trade in all its Branches he acquired a plentiful Fortune,

and withal what is more valuable, the Universal Character of a Man of Great Honour and Honesty, of invictable Faith and Integrity, which Virtues he adorned with an uncommon Affability and Politeness. Preparing after a twenty-five years Absence to return to his Native Country, he unfortunately fell into the hands of Connajee Angria, Admiral to the Sou Raja, then at war with the English in Bombay, and remain'd in a miserable Captivity about five Years, during which he behav'd with an unparallel'd Patience, Generosity and Greatness of mind, not only comforting, assisting and supporting his Fellow-Sufferers, but even refusing his own Deliverance without that of his Companions in Misery.

At last, having Freed himself and the rest by his own Industry and Management, he imbark'd for England, in hopes of sitting down in quiet and enjoying the fruits of his Labours, but see the Uncertainty of all things Here Below: Just before his Landing a Violent Fit of the Cramp seizing his Thigh and bursting the Veins, tho' the Effects were hardly discernible, yet was he forc'd soon after his Arrival at London, to have his thigh first laid open and then cut off almost close to his Body. Scarce ever was the like Operation perform'd. Never any undergone with more resolution and Firmness without so much as a groan or the least Motion to express his anguish! He outlived this operation 12 days, when the wound bleeding afresh he resigned his last breath with a surprising sedateness and unconcern at leaving this world being fully persuaded he was going to exchange his perishable for everlasting Riches.

He died June 26th, 1729 in the 47th year of his age. He was son of William Curgenven a Gentleman of a good family in Cornwall and married Francis, daughter of John Rotheram of this parish Esq. whom he left his sole Executrix having no issue, and who erected this monument over his grave as a token of her Affection and Gratitude.' No, they don't write them like that anymore.

BACSA members who attended the London meeting last October heard a fellow member, Philip Davies, a Director of English Heritage, lecture about an exciting new project in Calcutta. The Government of West Bengal has asked English Heritage for help and advice on preserving its magnificent heritage of colonial buildings. People have been saddened over the last fifty years to see 18th century buildings disappear behind advertising hoardings, crumble into disrepair, and sometimes irreparable decay. Remarkably there has been virtually no wholesale demolition, as has happened in England, or particularly in Dublin, where many



Georgian houses were lost. So most of the spectacular architecture that gave Calcutta its title of 'The City of Palaces' is restorable, and at a fraction of the cost that is entailed for similar buildings in England. The house at Dum Dum, near the airport today, where Robert Clive lived, is probably the most ruinous of the buildings under review. Here, as in other houses, joint ownership, or joint inhabitation, is a problem. The Maidan, the great open space in front of Chowringhee is due for a clean up, particularly the area around the Ochterlony pillar that has been used for years as a bus depot. It is nice to think that BACSA started the heritage ball rolling (in a modest manner), with its first project in South Park Street a quarter of a century ago. More good news is that the West Bengal Government plan to reinstate some of the colonial statues which were removed after Independence. It is ironic that an ill-judged proposal to demote the Trafalgar Square statues of Sir Henry Havelock and Sir Robert Napier comes at a time when Calcutta is planning to restore other figures from her past.

More good news comes with the first exhibition of the newly restored paintings at the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta. This is the finest collection of Indian paintings by artists including Zoffany, Robert Home, Tilly Kettle, and of course William and Thomas Daniell. The initiative to bring British experts to India to train local restorers was born out of the wish to mark Calcutta's tercentenary in 1994. Two BACSA members, Alan Tritton and Philippa Vaughan, have been particularly closely involved with the project. Calcutta has languished since the capital of India was shifted to Delhi in 1911, but it is now a place well worth visiting. An excellent website for the paintings is at **www.victoriamemorial-cal.org/**

Further evidence of a new and welcome attitude to some of India's best loved sites comes with the imaginative idea of getting the private sector to 'adopt' a building, and get it put back into good repair. St James's Church in Delhi, 'Skinner's Church' was one of first to be chosen. Some money had already been raised in England with the help of BACSA member Lt Col CRD Gray, of Skinner's Horse, but it was hard going. When the Aga Khan's Trust for Culture became involved, the future of the Church was secured, and work has now been completed. The beautiful stained-glass windows have been restored, with British expertise, and most importantly the dome has been strengthened, the iron ribs that had rusted have been replaced and the whole roof made water-tight. The Indian Oil Corporation and the Oberoi Hotel Group plan to restore other sites, including the Qutb Minar and the sun temple at Konarak. The Park Hotel hope to restore the neighbouring Jantar Mantar in Delhi, the extraordinary observatory built in stone, by the Maharaja Jai Singh.

An obelisk memorial, but not to the dead, was the intriguing start to an article in 'The Explorer's Journal' by Peter Byrne, who lived in Nepal for eighteen years, running a big game hunting company.

During those years he got to know the Taru - the indigenous people of the Terai forest - very well, and learned to speak their language. In the evenings he would sit with the Taru and listen to their stories of huge tigers, giant elephants, and strange happenings of bygone years. 'One story that arose repeatedly was about a *bilaiti memsahib*, a British lady, who had been involved in a hand-to-hand fight with a tiger. According to local legend the tiger had, during a hunt, broken all of the rules of normal tiger behaviour by climbing up a tree and attacking the lady in her *machan*, or shooting platform. Somehow she had managed to beat it off, and survive the attack. To mark this extraordinary event (especially as tigers do not climb trees), a stone marker had been put up on the site of the incident, though nobody knew exactly where it was.'

Many years later when Peter Byrne was researching Jim Corbett's old home in the Kumaon District of Uttar Pradesh, he drove to the city of Tanakpur, and from there took the forest road west to Haldwani. About 30 miles from Tanakpur, he met two old farmers, and during a conversation asked them if they had ever heard of the British lady and the tiger. They told him that the place he sought was ten miles further along the road, behind the old Jaulasal *bilaiti* Government bungalow. With the help of a friend, Colonel Hikmat Bisht, formerly of the Royal Nepalese Army, the bungalow was found, with a substantial obelisk behind it, just as the old men had said. The wording on the obelisk plaque tells the rest of the story: 'This pillar is erected by the Forest Contractors and Staff of the Jaulasal Range in memory of the bravery displayed by Mrs C.A. Smythies in her hand to hand fight with a tiger on 30.12.1926 and in thankfulness for her deliverance from that great danger'. Can anyone throw any more light on this fascinating snippet?

The last *Chowkidar* carried the photograph of a small church with a separate belfry, in the Darjeeling/Kurseong area, and we asked for an identification. This has now been provided, and the church named as Christ Church, Kurseong. Sadly it no longer exists, nor the little lych-gate that stood before it, only a grassy mound being visible today. But the surrounding cemetery is still there and a story from a few years ago adds interest to this pleasant site. Patrick Wales-Smith told us that his grandfather, Dr Arthur John Smith was buried at Christ Church. The young doctor, only twenty-six when he died, was born in Bredasdorp, in the Cape, in 1863. He studied medicine at Westminster Hospital (his Dutch father having been a ship's surgeon), and on gaining his MRCS, he decided to work in India, and took up the appointment of Civil Medical Officer for Kurseong in 1886. There he met Maggie Wales (grandmother to our correspondent), who was on a visit to Darjeeling to see her brother Philip. Arthur and Maggie were married at Christ Church on 19 January 1887. Their first child, named Arthur Douglas, was born the following January, and a daughter, Phyllis Margaret was born a year later. Arthur did his medical rounds of the district on horseback, and was much respected for his selfless work.



But in 1889 there was a bad epidemic of cholera in the plains of the Terai, which formed part of his extensive district, although there were no cases at Kurseong. In May that year, barely four months after the birth of his daughter, he returned ill from his round, suffering from cholera. He then developed pneumonia and died on 19 May. The children's nurse, and her husband also died, but theirs was the only household affected in the little town. Naturally his widow, Maggie, was distraught, and travelled home to England the next month, with her two babies. Although she remarried two years later, Maggie was never able to speak of her terrible loss to her children when they grew up. It was only in the last years of her long life, that the story came out - triggered by the gift from her daughter of some gardenias. Maggie was unable to accept the flowers, and explained that the gardenias in her garden in Kurseong were in full bud at the time of Arthur's death. At the age of ninety-one she wrote a seventeen page letter to her daughter, about the tragedy all those years ago. Neither of her children went to Kurseong to see their father's grave, but Mr Wales-Smith's brother Tony and his wife visited the spot in 1995 (see page 61). Although sad at the loss of the church itself, they found the cemetery a haven of peace, with the hillside falling away steeply beyond it into the great valley, with the Himalayas in the distance. The inscription on their grandfather's grave reads:

'Not lost, but gone before'. 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.' Sacred to the memory of/Dr. A.J. Smith/ who died of cholera at Karbia/on 20th May 1889, aged 26/Erected by the planters/and other numerous friends in token/of their great respect and esteem.'

A footnote to this sad story is that the grave next to Dr Smith's is that of Charles Arthur Kerr, his great friend. Kerr was Manager of a local tea-estate, and had predeceased Arthur Smith. At the latter's death, the path in the churchyard was altered, so that the two friends could lie near each other. The cemetery has now been fully recorded and photographed for our archive, thanks to Peter Leggatt and the Manager of his Company's tea estate at Kurseong.

## CAN YOU HELP?

'For the last six years of the painter Edward Burne Jones's life, he was obsessively in love with my great-grandmother, Helen Mary Gaskell', writes Josceline Dimbleby. Both Mrs Gaskell and Burne Jones were married to other people, and inspite of a twenty year age difference between the two, they remained close friends until the artist's death in 1898. Burne Jones had painted Helen's beautiful daughter, Amy, and it is around her that Mrs Dimbleby's questions centre. Amy Gaskell married Lionel George Bonham of the Grenadier Guards, when she was twenty-four.

Her husband served in the South African War of 1900-1902, and then in Asia Minor, training the Macedonian Gendarmerie until his death from typhoid fever in Constantinople in January 1910, aged thirty-six. At the time of his death, Amy was in Ceylon, and had apparently been living there since 1908. 'Why was she in Ceylon', asks Mrs Dimbleby 'and who was she with?' When Amy heard of her husband's illness in Constantinople, she could not reach him in time. His coffin was put on board ship, bound for burial in England. Amy arrived in England first, 'emaciated and very weak'. Two days later her mother, Helen Gaskell, found her dead in bed. It was thought she had died of heart failure. The Bonhams were buried together in Cranleigh, Surrey. Any information about Amy in Ceylon, or Major Bonham in Asia Minor between 1904 to 1910 would be greatly appreciated for a planned book by Mrs Dimbleby. Please e-mail her on <jossy@dircon.co.uk> or write via the BACSA Secretary.

BACSA member Mr Kimberly Lindsay recently acquired the medals of a Temporary Lieutenant, WP Platt, who was attached in 1916 to the Office of the Controller Military Accounts, 2nd (Rawalpindi) Division, Indian Army. Three years later, Lieutenant Platt was involved in the third Afghan War, and as well as qualifying for the campaign medal with clasp, he was also recommended for a decoration, and was made a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire 'for valuable services rendered in the Field of the Afghan War'. Platt then served with the Field CMA in Lahore from 1920 to 1921, being promoted to the post of Temporary Local Captain. He was demobilised in October 1922 on his return to England, and settled in Blackpool. What Mr Lindsay is particularly interested in is the Military Accounts Department of the Indian Army. Its acronym (MAD) must have been the butt of countless jokes, but in fact little is known about the financial department of the Army, accountants being generally considered rather colourless, dour, figures. Clearly Captain Platt was not only a consummate accountant, but a brave man too, and it would be useful to learn more about his working life. Ideas please to Mr. Lindsay at Hirschstrasse 32, 71282 Hemmingen, Germany, or e-mail him on <kimberley.lindsay@karius-partner.de>

A well-kept Rest House of the Indo-Tibet Border Police is situated at Bandrol, in the Kulu Valley District of Himachal Pradesh, India, and it was the scene of a touching ceremony last Autumn. Captain Stuart Ottowell, Honorary Secretary of the Rajput Regiment Dinner Club, had been invited to stay with an old Army friend, Major General AK Verma, near Bandrol. The General had spoken about the near-by graves of a British family, who lie in a stone-walled enclosure, in the picturesque valley. The founding member of the family was Captain Ranniph Charles Lee of the old 35th Royal Sussex Regiment (later the Royal Sussex Regiment), who resigned his commission in the 1860s to develop an apple orchard in the Kulu Valley. Captain Lee was a Devon man, and imported his apple stock and grafts from his home county.



Although the soil in the Valley is poor, the temperate climate suited the fruit trees well, and varieties such as Cox's, Blenheim Orange, Newtons and Russetts became justly famous in India. There were also Marie Louise and Williams pears.

Part of Captain Lee's success probably lay in the fact of his marriage to a local girl, Alumea, and two sons were born to the couple, Charles and Allen Lee. Captain Lee lived to the ripe age of eighty-two, dying on 14 August 1911, his wife having predeceased him four years earlier. Allen Lee kept up the orchards, and, like his father, married a local girl, Nimoo. He built a neat chalet-style house in the 1920s, which is now the Rest House. After Allen's death in 1942, Nimoo married Ronald Stanny Boughan, who sold the estate in 1966. Captain Lee's pioneering efforts had attracted other English families to the Valley, who established their own orchards. His grave, that of his wife Alumea, and his son Allen lie within the estate, now in good condition, thanks to the initiative of the present Commandant of the Indo-Tibet Border Police (see page 61). Before his visit last October, Captain Ottowell had got a small plaque made by the Royal Sussex Regiment, commemorating Captain Lee, and this was framed and presented to the Commandant. It now hangs in the hall of the Rest House, as a tribute to this enterprising man. Captain Ottowell would like to know if there are relatives of the Lee family, either in England or India. Please contact him via the BACSA Secretary.

There was a very positive response to a query in the last 'Can You Help?' Joan Scott from Edinburgh had told *Chowkidar* about her visit to Darjeeling in 2000 to find the grave of her grandfather, Captain Russell Pymm *(Chowkidar vol 9. No. 2)*. 'This had quite an amazing result', she now writes. 'I have had a letter from someone to say that Russell Pymm was his grandmother's maternal uncle and she often used to talk about "Uncle Russ". Now the two newly found relatives are to pool their information on the Pymm family and 'we may be able to put together a fairly comprehensive history' as Joan Scott says, thanks to BACSA.

When the head of Britain's Railtrack resigned last year, he announced he was going to India for a holiday. Many people thought it a pity he hadn't gone before so he could find out how to run a railway properly. It is a sobering thought that when a study was carried out by British researchers in 1999 at Calcutta's Howrah Station, it was found that more trains arrived there on time than they do in Britain. There is nothing quite like the Indian train, whether it is the little toy train from Kalka to Simla, or the Chetak Express of Rajasthan, or the comfortable intercity Shatabdis. And there is nothing quite like the railway colonies that were established alongside the great network of lines that criss-cross the country. They were mainly Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans (see the book review *Made in India* on page 64), and they were made up of families who lived, and sometimes died, in the shadow of the trains.

BACSA member SK Pande, a senior railway official in India has kindly sent us a few photographs of railway graves, including the highly curious one of C. Crowcher, which lies 'near the outer signal of Bar Station on the old metre gauge alignment between Abu Road and Ajmer. This was subsequently abandoned in 1996 when the line was converted to heavy grade' and the tomb is now an isolated monument. The small cross bears the simple inscription 'In memoriam/C. Crowcher/killed here on 4-9-89'. A photograph shows that the grave has become a local shrine, with *deepaks* and incense being used. 'There is a belief in the area that worship here is effective in cases of intermittent fever and ear infections', adds Mr Pande (with an entirely straight face, I think.)

In the same area, at Sirohi Road Station, is a raised granite platform, topped by a white cross, to the memory of 'Albertine Behrmann, born 26th October 1855, died 7th March 1880'. That is all we know, though readers may have some more information. What was once Erinpura Road, is now Jawaibandh Station, and here, neatly labelled R.32 is the memorial cross 'erected opposite the spot where Guard James William Samuels met his death in the performance of his duty with the Down Mail Train on the 11th January 1893' (see back cover). All three sites have a melancholy story to tell, but certainly give added interest to an Indian railway journey.

This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the death of Queen Victoria, and a leading letter in 'The Daily Telegraph' this January, from Professor Ged Martin of Edinburgh, reminds us that she is the most widely commemorated British monarch in the world. From the Arctic to the Antarctic, from Africa to Canada, Hong Kong to India, her name is still found today. 'On the map of the world at least, Queen Victoria is immortal', he wrote, giving a special mention to the splendid statue that stands before the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta. As BACSA's recent book 'Statues of the Raj' shows, there are more statues of the Queen still extant in India, than of any other British dignitary.

## NOTICE BOARD

**2002 will see a number of significant milestones for BACSA.** It will be our Silver Jubilee. We will hold our 25th Annual General Meeting in the Spring of 2002 and lastly, but not least, the 50th edition of *Chowkidar* will be published, having begun in 1977. To mark these events, BACSA plans another Grand Oriental Bazaar to be held at its meeting in October 2002 in the large Exhibition Hall of the Commonwealth Institute, Kensington. As before, we shall be asking members and friends to search their attics for unwanted knick-knacks with an Eastern flavour. There will be book-stalls too, selling second-hand books of interest to members. Proceeds will go to our overseas projects, and more details will be announced nearer the time.



**'The Victorian Navy'** is the theme of this year's Fair organised by the Victorian Military Society. There will be stalls selling and displaying model soldiers, medals, prints, books, replica uniforms and equipment. The Society's Fairs are well established and enjoyable events, full of helpful, knowledgeable people and this one promises to be as much fun as the others. It will be held at the Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, London W2, on Sunday 29 April, and doors open at 10.00am. Contact the Publicity Officer on 01635 48628 for further details.

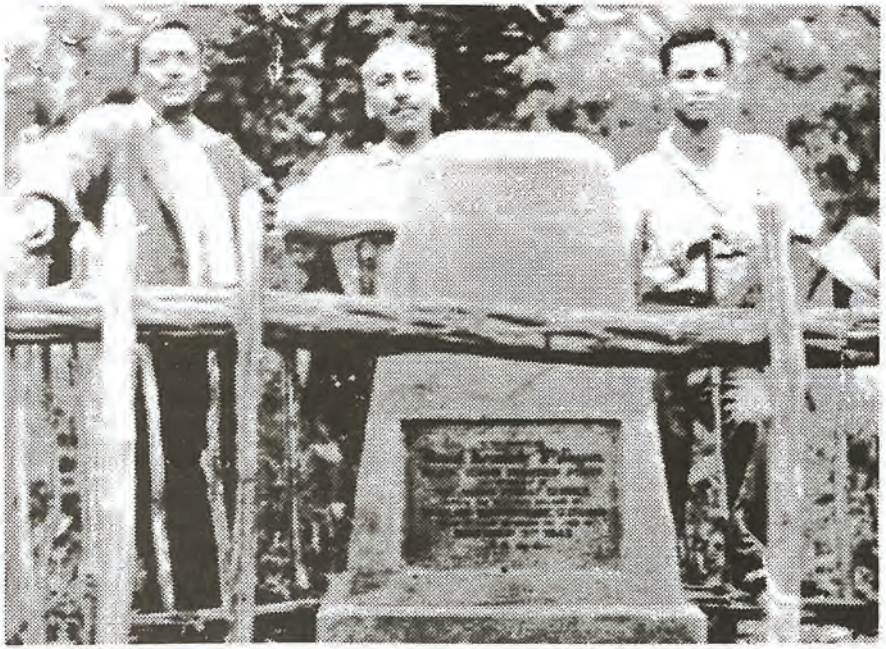
**The British in India Museum** was the first to commemorate the British Raj, at a time (in the early 1970s) when there was little interest in our Indian past. Now it is one of several museums on this theme, but is still one of the best. Exhibits include a fascinating collection of dioramas, postage stamps, picture postcards, paintings, military uniforms and model soldiers. There is an original display of photographs and letters from Lord Lansdowne to his mother, recreating the life of the Viceroy and his household during the heyday of British rule. The Museum is at Colne in Lancashire, and more details can be obtained by phoning 01282 613129.

**'Colonial Soldier'** was set up by Stewart Tuckniss in 1999 and sells decorative wooden statues of Indian and African soldiers from the colonial period. The painted statues stand about four feet high and accurately portray various regiments including the Bengal Infantry, Madras Infantry, and the Punjab Irregular Force of 1865. There is also a jolly little 'fellah' from the Egyptian Army of 1883. The statues are beautifully carved by craftsmen in West Africa. Mr Tuckniss' father and grandfather both served with the Mahratta Light Infantry, so he knows what he is talking about. For more information write to 'Colonial Soldier' Apartment 11, Thames Row, 43 Kew Bridge Road, Middlesex TW8 OHG or try the website on **www.colonial soldier.co.uk**

**The Indo-British Review - ICS commemorative edition.** In 1998 the Madras-based Indo-British Historical Society produced a special two-volume edition about the ICS, written by members who had served in India before Independence. The volumes quickly sold out, but the Indian Civil Service Association has now got hold of fifty more sets, and are offering them on a first come, first served, basis for £20.00 plus postage and packing for the two-volume set. The commemorative edition was compiled by the late Sir Nicholas Larmour, and as a tribute to his work and patience on the project, the Indo-British Historical Society are setting up two scholarships at the University of Madras in the name of Sir Nicholas. Proceeds from the sales of the Review will support the scholars. Postage and packing in the United Kingdom is £1.52, other rates on application. Please contact the Secretary at 8, Robin Mead, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 1PP. Cheques should be made payable to the Indian Civil Service Association.

*left: grave of Bruce Murray Sewell at Bolarum (see page 51)*

*below: memorial stone to Major Milligan, the Chin Hills (see page 50)*





*left: Dr Arthur Smith's grave, Christ Church cemetery, Kurseong (see page 54)*

*below: Captain Ranniph Lee's grave at Bandrol, Kulu Valley (see page 57)*

**BACSA BOOKS [Books by BACSA members. These can be ordered via BACSA, at no extra cost to the purchaser and will be sent with an invoice.]**

**Zanzibar, Slavery and the Royal Navy** Kevin Patience

Another entertaining and instructive book from the author of *Zanzibar and the Shortest War in History; The Bububu Railway* and *The Loss of HM Pegasus.* Although the slave trade from Africa's west coast to the New World had been abolished by 1820, it continued until the end of the 19th century from the East African coast to the Middle East, and what are now the Gulf States. Ivory and slaves were brought out of the mainland interior by Arab traders to Zanzibar, which since 1832 had been ruled by the Omani chieftain Seyyid Said bin Sultan. A power struggle developed among the Sultan's sons after his death, and Lord Canning, Viceroy of India, was called in to arbitrate. Zanzibar was declared independent (from Oman) in 1861, but there was no freedom for the estimated 20,000 African slaves that passed through its infamous market every year. The Royal Navy's patrols became skilled at intercepting the *dhows,* carrying their dreadful cargo to Arabia. Between 1867 and 1877 over three hundred slave ships were captured, and 6,000 slaves released and taken to the Mbweni Mission in Zanzibar, where they received a basic education.

But the toll in lives of the British sailors was heavy. Conditions on the ships' sailing cutters were primitive, each man being issued with a cork lifejacket, a blanket, and not much else. Rations were mainly salt-pork, biscuits, tea, cocoa and porridge, with the much-needed regulation tot of rum. In one ship alone, over a hundred crew were ill with malaria, bilharzia or dysentery, and accidents and injuries increased the number of dead and dying. Those who were not buried at sea, found their graves in small cemeteries up and down the East African coast. The largest of these is on Chapani or Grave Island in Zanzibar harbour. Sultan Bargash had willed this site to the Royal Navy in 1879 and the plot was consecrated the following year by the first Bishop of Zanzibar. After a forty-five minute bombardment (the shortest war in history), the Sultan had been 'persuaded' to abolish slave-trading on the island, and where the slave market had stood, the Cathedral Church of Christ now rose. One of the most famous incidents of the anti-slavery campaign happened in 1881, when Captain Charles Brownrigg was killed in a shoot-out with a slave-carrying *dhow* off the island of Pemba, north of Zanzibar. Captain Brownrigg was buried on Grave Island, the spot being marked by a large pillar. His death was avenged by the British Commander-in-Chief Lloyd Mathews who, accompanied by a hundred troops, tracked down the *dhow* master bin Hattam. This is a rattling good read, and a well told story. (RLJ)

2000 Published by the author, available from 257 Sandbanks Road, Poole, BH14 8EY £8.50 including postage & packing in Britain, £10 overseas pp108



**From Nawab to Nabob: The Diary of David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre** Nicholas Shreeve

His names reveal his history; David Ochterlony after the Resident of Delhi, Sir David Ochterlony, a man highly regarded by the Begam Sombre; Dyce after his father George, the Anglo-Indian son of Major-General Alexander Dyce and his concubine; and Sombre after his great grandmother, the Begam. The old woman, who adopted David and made him her heir at Sardhana, is still alive, at the beginning of this Diary, which starts on Wednesday 18th December 1833, David's 26th birthday. He was the only surviving male descendant of the Begam's husband Walter Balthazzar Reinhard, known as Sombre, and bore a strong resemblance to him, which made him doubly precious in the old lady's eyes. David's subsequent history is a tragedy that surprisingly has never attracted the attention of the dramatist or novelist. He was the first Anglo-Indian Member of the British Parliament, and, shamefully persecuted by his English wife, died in a foreign hotel.

During the five and a half years covered by this Diary, which was written in English, David lived at first in the Begam's Palace at Sardhana. After her death, having become a wealthy man, he travelled around India, went to Penang and Singapore, spent time in Calcutta, and finally sailed to his fate in England. It is difficult to convey the fascination of this book, carefully annotated by Nicholas Shreeve, an authority on the Sardhana circle. The detailed picture of palace life in a native state (admittedly a very small state), in 19th century India, will be of value to historians, but its real, almost psychological interest is in entering into the mind of David Sombre and his extraordinary world, most intimately described. During one week in January 1834, for example, he goes to Mass on Sunday (the Begam converted to Catholicism after her husband's death, and built a cathedral at Sardhana); on Monday and Tuesday he is horse-racing and playing billiards; in the middle of the week he thinks one of his two concubines, Dominga, might be pregnant, and is woken by drummers trying to move on a huge swarm of locusts. At the weekend he notes that the Padre, Father Julius Caesar (I told you it was odd), 'got a little merry at night from drinking port and was singing all the while.... [next day] he did not feel well from the effects of Port. Poor man! he had not taken much, but old age I suppose is the reason.'

By rights, David should come across as an unattractive character - he is hugely overweight, 19 stone 9 pounds at the age of twenty-six. He frequently gets boils all over him, and suffers from unspecified fevers. He finds it difficult to keep the peace between his two concubines, who both become pregnant. (Neither of his children survive.) He gets drunk frequently with his English friends: '3rd June 1834. Had terrible headache from last night's extravagance.' But it is his total honesty that makes this book so engaging.

As a very rich man, he was exploited shamelessly by hangers on, mostly white. He writes, quite pragmatically: 'I was much struck by Jane's saying "Oh, you black b.....r, if it was not for your money, no European would speak to you", which money I don't know how to take care of.' In fact, David met many interesting people (including the wily old General Ventura from the Sikh Court, and Joe Skinner), all of whom are described with a sharp eye. This is a remarkable work, never intended for publication, but compelling reading. (RLJ)

1999 Bookwright, Crossbush Bindery, Convent of the Poor Clares, Crossbush, West Sussex BN18 9PJ ISBN 0 948395 05 2 £15.00 including postage & packing pp270

**Made in India: a Chronicle of Childhood** Noel Gordon

One of the 98-year old author's many vivid memories is of travelling in a *dandy*, 'a chair in a frame carried by four men'. He was on his way to boarding school in Mussoorie, leaving home for the first time in 1913. His father is assistant station master at Saharanpur on the North Western Railway, when the story opens. Noel's paternal grandmother had come from Belfast, aged eight years old, to join her father at Madras. He was a former Captain in the East India Company's Army, and the year was 1857. Little Laura Duncan was snatched to safety during a local uprising, by an English doctor, and evacuated to Fort St George. In 1895, Laura Gordon, as she had become, was widowed, with nine children. Her eldest son enlisted in the Royal Artillery as a boy trumpeter, and was a bombardier in 1902, when his engagement came to an end. Discharged soldiers were then being encouraged to join the Indian Railways, and after a six-month trial period as a guard, Robert Gordon, the author's father, began his civilian career. Although housing was provided for the family, it is clear that they struggled financially on a salary of only Rs120 per month, equivalent to £8.00.

The author's mother was also of Irish descent, her grandparents coming from Kilkenny and Cork. Two of Noel's siblings died in infancy and one of his earliest memories is of a little white coffin on a table, at Christmas. Both babies were buried in the Saharanpur cemetery, which the author could never subsequently pass without a tear. But this is not a dismal book despite the hard times suffered. With his impressive total recall, the India of nearly a century ago is recreated, seen through the eyes of a lively little boy, growing up in railway colonies across northern India, and, for a short period, in Assam. The evening ritual of counting the ticket money is noted: 'coins and paper went into a stout leather bag with big brass eyelets, and the whole would be tied firmly with stout cord. Then a lighted candle and red sealing wax and the station seal would appear, and it was always my father who pressed the seal onto the wax and signed his name on the tag.'



'He always did the opening and shutting of the safe himself with a key from a big bunch that he kept in his pocket. The safe had a brass label with the maker's name: Hobbs & Co. Ltd. It was always the same in all the places where I watched the counting...the money, the special sound of the silver coins sliding into bag, the smell of the candle and the hot wax....there was a reassuring sense of continuity in knowing that it went on at those places, and thousands more all over India.'

Poor though they were, Noel's father scraped together enough money to send him to St George's College in Mussoorie for a year, with its memorable Irish brothers. But the arrival of another baby meant that his father could no longer afford the fees of Rs35 per month. So another Mussoorie boarding school was found - Oak Grove School, where the fees for railwaymens' children were subsidised. It is reassuring to know that some things never change, school dinners being one of them: 'My first impression of the poorness of the food, even compared with that at St George's never altered, but as time went on I found it possible to eat some of it.' Constant boyish hunger led to an obsession with food, and excursions to the humble (and unhygienic), Jharipani food stalls, where two annas bought sixteen *puris*. Happily, the author survived. This is a delightful but unsentimental walk (or perhaps a *dandy* ride) into the past. (RLJ)

2000 Available from The Bookshop, 100 High Street, Crediton, Devon EX17 3LF ISBN 9528290 4 5 £12.95, plus £2.39 postage & packing pp301

**Travelling to Darjeeling in 1830** JD Herbert, ed. Fred Pinn

This is the first in a series of reprints of rare documents of Indian interest, published by BACSA member Hugh Rayner. In February 1830 the Deputy Surveyor-General, Captain Herbert was asked to visit Darjeeling and to advise on its suitability as a sanitarium for the East India Company. The Captain was most impressed with the site of this abandoned Lepcha township and warmly recommended it to the Company. The details of his trip were printed in a publication started by Captain Herbert called *Gleanings of Science*, soon after his return from Darjeeling, and it is this report that is republished and edited by the Darjeeling expert Fred Pinn. Captain James Dowling Herbert, a Dubliner, born in 1791, was a soldier and surveyor, working in the foothills of the Himalayas on the Geological Survey. He was also a leading figure in the Asiatic Society of Bengal and a man of enquiring, scientific bent. He died suddenly at Lucknow in 1833, where he had been appointed Superintendent of the Nawab's observatory. His grave in the Lat Kalan ki Lat cemetery at Lucknow survived until 1992, when the site was illegally occupied. His report is typical of that careful, investigative manner of the best kind of 19th century explorer.

He marvels at the extensive ruins of the ancient city of Gaur 'which gave me a lively idea of the former magnificence of a place which is now almost a desert.' He finds a still more ancient city in the Parwa jungle, and the remains of the Edina Masjid, 'the history of which I could gain no account'. The Lepchas and their villages are described in detail. 'They are cheerful, frank and bold people', but at the same time sunk in superstition 'each wild spot with its peculiar demon'. Herbert recognises that this has something to do with 'the deep glens and narrow valleys, the tracts of dank and luxuriant vegetation', where the *bhuts* lurk. Rationally he explains that these demons 'may be considered rather to be the embodied spirit of malaria.' Herbert's surveying party encounter not uncommon problems when a local raja refuses to supply half a dozen porters for the next stage of the journey. 'The royal ambassador...like all diplomatists, seemed never tired of telling lies; and assured us in the strongest terms of the respect and deference his master felt for the British Government all the time he was making a difficulty of allowing us to proceed a step farther.' This is fascinating source material, well worth reprinting, and enjoyable reading too. (RLJ)

2000 Pagoda Tree Press, 4 Malvern Buildings, Bath BA1 6JX £6.00 plus 50 pence postage & packing pp35

**Residents of Simla 1898** ed. Hugh Ashley Rayner

This is the second in the series of reprints from Pagoda Press, and the subtitle is 'An Alphabetical List of the Principal British Residents and their addresses'. The original list was printed in 1898 as a foolscap folio pamphlet, and although the compiler and publisher are not known, it is likely to have been produced by the Simla Municipality. It is not a complete register of British and foreign residents of the town, but does give a fairly good listing of those inhabitants in Government employment, both in the Indian Civil Service and the Army together with Church and Missionary figures and school teachers. The main omission is in the commercial sector, with very few business men, or shop owners mentioned, presumably, as the editor says, because they were not deemed important enough, being mere 'boxwallahs', though Simla's Bank Managers are listed, together with the all important Manager of Meakin's Brewery! To browse through this pamphlet is to enter a vanished world. Here are the names of the great and the good; Mrs A Battye at 'Morvin', Mr A.U. Fanshawe, Director General of the Post Office of India at 'Knockdrin', Sir James and Lady Lyall, staying at the Grand Hotel, and Major GJ Younghusband, also at the Grand. A very useful list especially for family historians, trying to track down that elusive great aunt.

2000 Pagoda Tree Press, 4 Malvern Buildings, Bath BA1 6JX ISBN 0 9528782 0 8 £10.00 plus 50 pence postage and packing pp21



**Books by non-members that will interest readers [These should be ordered direct and not through BACSA]**

**Soldier Artist in Wartime India 1941-1945** James Fletcher-Watson

The ability to sketch and paint was a desirable asset for officers in the East India Company's Army, especially when they were sent out on surveying parties. Colonel James Manson, for example, was assistant to the Superintendent of the Geological Survey of Kumaon and he made an album of watercolours showing the mountain ranges, temples, and Himalayan villages. Colonel Robert Smith, who joined the Bengal Engineers in 1805, and who was responsible for restoring the Mughal monuments of Delhi, was a skilled artist, whose oil paintings fetch five figure sums these days. Like his contemporaries, Smith had been taught to draw while he was a cadet at the East India Company's College at Haileybury. Before the invention of photography, it was these Army drawings that informed the Company of the extent and grandeur of their possessions, and more importantly, the strategic landscape from the military point of view. The close links between artist and soldier weakened in the mid 19th century, as the camera was quickly taken up by Indian enthusiasts. So it is nice to find the old tradition revived in this admirable book by Major Fletcher-Watson, one of the first Emergency Commissioned Officers to arrive in India during the second World War, with the Royal Engineers. He served all over northern India, from Karachi to the North West Frontier Province, from Kashmir to Darjeeling, and on to the Burma Front.

There is a sympathetic and intelligent text detailing the adventures of wartime life and the occasional escapes on leave. Particularly interesting however are the 'military' paintings, like the gun emplacement, where concrete is being poured onto the roof, studded with reinforcing rods. 'During these hard-pressed months' Fletcher-Watson writes, 'we talked of nothing else but concrete. Our uniforms were covered in concrete, we dreamt about concrete, we almost ate concrete - at least we swallowed a lot of cement dust.' Siting an airfield often involved private talks with the malik on the spot to iron out local worries, and here is the officer in his sola topee pointing out across the fields to show the red-shawled, turbanned owner what he wants. Other paintings have a deliberately 18th century feel about them, like the 'Carpet wallahs' spreading their goods in the sunfilled courtyard, with its harsh shadows. All are highly professional pieces of work, and it is no surprise to learn that the artist had exhibited at the Royal Academy and is a member of the Royal Society of British Artists. You might feel this book would make a good present for a friend, but you are likely to end up buying the friend something else and keeping this for yourself. (RLJ)

2000 Country Heritage, Windrush House, near Burford, Oxon OX18 4TU ISBN 0 9538491 0 4 £19.95 plus £3.00 postage & packing pp160

**The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes** Jamyang Norbu

The two 'missing years' at the beginning of the 1890s have always puzzled Sherlock Holmes' fans. The story was given out at the time that the celebrated detective had met his end at the Reichenbach Falls, but thankfully this was not the case. Holmes was annoyingly vague about where he had been, merely informing Watson airily that he 'travelled for two years in Tibet....and amused himself by visiting Lhasa.' Dr Watson's own exploits in the sub-continent are of course well-known, including the incident at Maiwand, that saw him invalided home. But Holmes in the British Raj, exchanging his deerstalker for a pith helmet, is harder to conjure up. It was only in 1988, with the discovery of a rusting tin despatch box at Darjeeling, that the real story came out. 'Inside the box was a flat packet, carefully wrapped in waxed paper and neatly tied with stout twine.' When opened, the packet revealed Hurree Chunder Mookerjee's own account of his travels with Sherlock Holmes, from the arrival of the great man at Bombay, to the Simla hills, and ultimately to the Forbidden City.

This was the time of the Great Game, and although Holmes is not himself a player, he does meet those who are, including Captain Strickland, nominally an Indian Police Officer and the mysterious Lurgan Sahib. But it is Hurree Chunder Mookerjee (M.A.) who engages us most. Based on the great Bengali scholar and spy, Sarat Chandra Das, Hurree is babudom personified, as he would be the first to admit, with his Latin tags and circumlocutory vocabulary. When Holmes demonstrates the use of graphite powder to enhance a fingerprint, Hurree exclaims 'This is most wonderful verification, Sir; *quod erat demonstrandum,* if I may be pardoned the expression.' Interestingly enough, it was the Inspector General of Police in the Hooghly District of Bengal who, in 1896, first introduced the system of fingerprinting for identifying criminals - no mere coincidence, one feels after reading this book. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of all, is that the author is not a contemporary, or even a fellow countryman of Conan Doyle and Kipling, but the Director of the Tibetan Centre for Advanced Studies in today's Dharamsala. The discerning reader is indebted to him for an excellent tale. (RLJ)

1999 HarperCollins, India ISBN 81 7223 364 7 Rs295 pp287 *and*
2000 John Murray, London ISBN 0-7195-5640 6 £16.99 pp 279

**Events in the Womb of Time: a damfool career** JLC Strang

Born in Calcutta in 1923, the author first arrived in Britain, along with his parents, when he was one year old, and grew up in Scotland and Hampshire. In 1940, he joined the RAF, flying Spitfires and Hurricanes, and serving in the Western Desert. After the War he originally opted for an extended service commission, but



he soon decided to transfer to the Reserve of Air Force officers, and sail to the country of his birth, to become a tea-planter in Assam. The varied life the author led there is the basis of this ostensibly fictionalised biography. It is both evocative and emotive, and inevitably it is more 'faction' than fiction. 'Hamish MacStorm's' sudden change of career, to learn to plant tea in Assam, almost proves a mistake, arriving as he does during the troubled times contemporaneous with the advent of Independence in India. He soon settles down to make good in his new career, totally identifying himself with the new milieu he finds himself in. He finds time for studying wild life, Indian languages, and Eastern religions, painting, reading the biographies of those who had served in the region, playing polo and rugby, and concomitantly *shikar* and fishing. Of all the events recorded, the most prominent are the bonhomie and camaraderie achieved by the author, as well as the many genuine friendships he forges with the Assamese, the hill tribes, and the tribal labour from central India, who had travelled vast distances to Assam to find work on the tea estates in order to eke out an existence.

This book is an excellent read for all those still interested in Assam, and is, in effect, a very graphic reconstruction of actual events in that region spanning the three and a half decades (in some individual cases more), after Independence, that British planters continued working in Assam. (SLM)

2000 Pentland Press ISBN 1 85821 741 5 £15.00, plus postage & packing. pp236

**Sunset at Srirangapatam** Mohammad Moienuddin

The looting of Tipu Sultan's palace at Srirangapatnam (the modern spelling) by the Company's Army in 1799 is comparable only to the sacking of Lucknow in 1858. Here treasures accumulated over a century and more were taken or destroyed, but Srirangapatnam and its riches were almost entirely the creation of one man - the Tiger of Mysore. Several recent attempts to analyse the character of Tipu, who was revered and reviled in almost equal measure, have been made but it has so far proved impossible to separate the man from the monarch, or to trace personal ambition in his kingly gestures. He remains a one dimensional figure, though admittedly a gorgeous one. The author, Mohammad Moienuddin, is Chairman of the Tipu Sultan Research Institute and Museum at Bangalore, and formerly Chairman of the Tipu Sultan Wakf Estate. He is clearly an expert on the Tiger and his treasures. This is not a recapitulation of the Tipu story, but a detailed, well-researched catalogue of the items stolen after the Sultan's death in defending his palace. However, Moienuddin is really too partial to be able to provide a dispassionate review of Tipu. To say that Tipu went to war because he 'realised that the freedom of the subcontinent was at stake' is to posit an idea of pan-Indian nationhood that was not to come into being for another 150 years.

The inventory of Tipu's belongings is fascinating and extensive. Not surprisingly, there are more of his treasures here than in India, because what was not taken in private loot was seized by the East India Company to be sold, or presented as gifts in England. The golden tiger head finials from Tipu's throne, and the wooden tiger automaton in the Victoria & Albert Museum are well known, but there were scores of other items including silk banners, tent pieces, personal clothing, jewels, *alams*, swords, furniture, and watches. The paragraphs on Tipu's firearms are particularly interesting because the author has given the Persian or Arabic inscriptions on the weapons, with their translations. The book is nicely illustrated but poorly edited. There are many mistakes in proper names. Tipu did not employ the Comte de Lally (page 11), but Henri Lallée, an equally brave French officer. 'Port Nova' on the Coromandel Coast should of course be Porto Novo. Sir Eyre Coote's name is mis-spelled, as is that of Sir John Soane and I suppose 'Major Pultney Mein' is a member of the Mayne family. But this is nevertheless a very worthwhile catalogue. (RLJ)

2000 Orient Longman, New Delhi ISBN 81 250 1919 7 Rs675 pp153*

**Out in the Midday Sun** Margaret Shennan

The story of British Malaya, from the days of the Victorian pioneers to Independence, is a momentous episode in Britain's colonial past. The British came as fortune-seekers to exploit Asian trade. They found a mature Asian culture in a land of palm-fringed shores and primeval jungle. Like modern Romans, they built townships, communications and hill stations, superimposed their law and established an idiosyncratic political system. They developed the tin and rubber of the Malay States, encouraging Chinese and Indian immigrants by their open-door policy. The outcome was a vibrant, multi-racial society, the most cosmopolitan in the East. Yet the press was unsympathetic. Noel Coward called Malaya a 'first-rate country for second-rate people'. The halcyon years were interrupted by two world wars, economic depression and diaspora. The fall of Singapore was, in Churchill's words 'the worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history since the war of American Independence'. Yet in 1945 the British came back, only to be impelled in 1948 to counter a twelve year insurgency by Malaya's Chinese communists.

Through memoirs, letters and interviews, the author chronicles events, explores the anomalies and conflicts of a benign but flawed regime, and reveals the attitudes of diverse, quixotic characters and a sociable, intoxicating and now quite vanished world.

2000 John Murray ISBN 0 7195 5716 X £25.00 pp400



**Monuments of the Raj** PN Chopra and Prabha Chopra

The first post-Independence book on the buildings of the British Raj was by the Swedish historian, Sten Nilsson, in 1968 ('European Architecture in India 1750-1850'). Since then there have been studies of individual towns, and recent Indian writers have looked at the hill stations. This new book is the first comprehensive account of British buildings in the subcontinent, by Indian authors. Usefully, their definition of 'subcontinent' includes Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Burma, in fact the area embraced by the British Empire at its zenith. This allows us to appreciate the vast amount of building that went on, the pragmatic adaptation to the local environment and the imperial impress that imported classical Greece to the East.

The buildings are grouped together by types, a valuable device that allows the reader to compare, for example, what Patna, Poona, Simla, Darjeeling, Bombay, New Delhi and Calcutta got in the way of legislative councils and town halls. The ranking of building types is one that the British probably would have agreed with, the most important category, the Government Houses, coming first. These are followed by; Secretariats, Legislative Councils and Town Halls; Educational Institutions and Museums; Courts; Hospitals and Medical Institutions; Railway Stations and Bridges; Churches; Post and Telegraph Offices; Clubs, Gardens, Parks, Markets, and Hotels.

Entries usually include a brief history of the site, an architectural description and interesting little snippets. The clock tower of the University of Bombay originally contained carillon machinery with 16 bells that played different tunes during the day, including Rule Britannia, Home Sweet Home, the National Anthem and The Bluebells of Scotland. 'Sadly' the authors add, the clock chimes of Home Sweet Home and God Save the Queen are now rarely heard.' Not all entries are as entertaining, those for buildings in Pakistan being particularly sparse, no doubt due to lack of recent information. It is clear that the experienced authors have not visited every site themselves. The photograph of the 1798 Iron Bridge at Lucknow, confidently listed and captioned on page 76, is in fact the Lalwala Pul, or Hardinge Bridge, erected in 1911. The most serious criticism is that none of the many handsome black and white photographs are dated, so we have no idea when the buildings looked like their pictures, or what they look like today. It must be a very long time ago since the only traffic outside Howrah Railway Station consisted of one buffalo cart and a hansom cab. An Index would seem essential in this kind of reference work, but it is unfortunately missing. A more wide-ranging and modern bibliography could have updated many of the entries. But this is a very useful book and nicely produced. (RLJ)

1999 Aryan Books International, New Delhi ISBN 81 7305 094 5 Rs900 pp114*

## THE STORY OF BERHAMPORE

Dr Peter Stanley, of the Australian War Memorial Museum wrote an evocative account of his visit to the cantonment town some years ago, which is well worth reproducing today. Located in West Bengal, some 120 miles north of Calcutta it is one of the least visited sites of 18th century military life. Berhampore was abandoned as a military station by the British in 1870, but over a hundred years later it remained 'in a remarkably complete state of perservation'. Nothing about it had appeared in print since 1914, says Dr Stanley, writing in *Soldiers of the Queen.*

Berhampore was founded by the East India Company in 1763, as an auxiliary cantonment to Murshidabad, then the seat of the Nawab of Bengal, with its magnificent Grecian-style palace. Around the central maidan or 'military square' lay the Lal Diggee tank, the Officers' quarters, the Library, the Fives Court and Skittles Court, the Sergeants' Mess, the Chapel and parade ground, the sepoy lines, and of particular interest to us, the Officers Cemetery. The west face of the fortified area overlooked the Bhagirathi river, and a broad Esplanade here used to provide entertainment for army families in the evenings, as they strolled along the river bank listening to the band playing. The most surprising survival from the past are the three double-storey barrack blocks, completed in the 1760s. They are probably the earliest remaining British barracks in India, and predate the great military building boom in Britain by thirty years or so.

The area, north east of the maidan, including the library, two skittle sheds and two enormous Fives Courts, show that the Company took a progressive approach to the health and recreation of its European soldiers. Unfortunately this could not counteract the underlying insalubrity of the place. Berhampore was described as 'one of the most unhealthy of the river stations of Bengal' with a high mortality rate. The cemetery, already sadly overcrowded by the 1860s, was a testament to disease. The 'chaste and elegant' monuments within it include the grave of Henry Sherwood, the infant son of Paymaster Sherwood of HM 53rd Regiment, who died in 1807. Mary Sherwood, the grieving mother, wrote the popular sentimental story 'Little Henry and His Bearer' in which she imagined the childhood denied to her son. His grave cannot be identified today, as vandals have stolen virtually all of the marble tablets from the memorials, inlaid with lead inscriptions.

The European soldiers cemetery, which later became the civilian cemetery has fared little better. Many of the soldiers who died of dysentery, cholera and other diseases lie in unmarked graves. The exception is Sergeant John George, HM 59th Regiment, who died on 10 October 1827, aged thirty-six years. His epitaph reads movingly 'Being dead yet speaketh', a fitting phrase, concludes Dr Stanley, to describe this old, evocative cantonment.



### Notes to Members

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

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

3. If planning any survey of cemetery MIs, either in this country or overseas, please check with the appropriate Area Representative or the Hon Secretary to find out if already recorded. This is not to discourage the reporting of the occasional MI noticed, which is always worth doing, but to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

* Books from India: where prices are given in rupees, these books can be obtained from Mr Ram Advani, Bookseller, Mayfair Buildings, Hazratganj PO Box 154, Lucknow 226001, UP, India. Mr Advani will invoice BACSA members in sterling, adding £3.00 for registered airmail for a slim hardback, and £2.00 for a slim paperback. Sterling cheques should be made payable to Ram Advani. Catalogues and price lists will be sent on request.

*left: grave of Bruce Murray Sewell at Bolarum*
*(see page 51)*

*below: memorial stone to Major Milligan, the Chin Hills*
*(see page 50)*