



CHOWKIDAR

Volume 5 Number 4 Autumn 1989

Editor: Dr. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR CEMETERIES IN SOUTH ASIA (BACSA)

PRESIDENT

Sir John Cotton, KCMG, OBE

COUNCIL

Mr B.C. Bloomfield
Mr V.E. Davies, OBE
Sir John Lawrence, Bt, OBE
Mrs K.L. Lewis, CBE, MA, FSA
Mr R.B. Magor
Sir Cyril Pickard, KCMG
The Rt Hon Lord Rees, QC
Mr M.G. Satow, OBE
The Rt Hon The Viscount Slim, OBE

HONORARY SECRETARY

Mr T.C. Wilkinson, MBE
76½ Chartfield Avenue
London SW15 6HQ

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY & DEPUTY TREASURER

Mrs Rosemarie Wilkinson

AIMS OF BACSA

This 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 1,300 drawn from a wide circle of interest - Government; Churches; Services; Business; Museums; Historical and Genealogical Societies. More members are needed to support the rapidly expanding activities of the Association - the setting up of local Branches in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Ceylon, Malaysia etc., the building up of a Records file in the India Office Library & Records; and many other projects for the preservation of historical and architectural monuments.

The annual subscription rate is £2, with an enrolment fee of £8. There are special rates for joint membership (husband and wife), for life membership and for associate membership. Full details obtainable from the Secretary.

EDITOR: Rosie Llewellyn-Jones

CHAIRMAN

Mr H.M. Stokes

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mr P. de Jong
Miss S.M. Farrington
Maj A.G. Harfield, BEM, FRHistS, FCMH
Mr J.S. Hewitt, MBE
Mrs C. Langdon-Davies
Mr P.A. Leggatt, MBE
Mr R.N. Lines, MBE
Mrs P. Saul
Mr W.H. Saumarez Smith, OBE
Mr D.W. Stanton-Ife
Mr G.E.D. Walker, MBE

HONORARY TREASURER

Mr J.R.G. Comyn

PRESS & PUBLICITY OFFICER

Mr J. Wall

FAMILY HISTORY OFFICER

Miss E. de Bourbel, MBE

135 Burntwood Lane, London SW17

THE BRITISH CEMETERY IN GILGIT

'Perhaps nothing captures the tragedy of life in turn of the century British India' writes J S Addleton, 'than the several dozen surviving British cemeteries scattered throughout Pakistan. The old cemetery in Gilgit, where only seven inscriptions are still legible, is among the most beautiful, nestled beneath the shadow of the Karakoram. Thanks to Sue Farrington, BACSA now has an almost complete record of all such cemeteries in Pakistan, but it is valuable too, to learn something of the lives and stories behind the often tragic memorials in them. The seven that remain in Gilgit all tell of violent and unexpected deaths, none of which were from natural causes. The fact that in most cases, the deaths were caused by foolhardiness does not detract from their essential sadness. It may be, that isolated from British society and conduct, judgements became impaired and risks taken that would not have been, indeed may well not have existed, in Britain.

Last November Mr and Mrs Addleton met the Gilgit chowkidar, Ali Sarwar, who told them that several dozen foreigners find their way to the cemetery every year. The stones are mostly in poor condition and twigs, leaves and dirt have to be brushed away before their inscriptions can be read. One records the 'deeply lamented' Captain Clay E Ross, killed with '45 brave Sikhs on 10th March 1895'. Ross was on his way with the Sikhs to relieve the besieged garrison at Chitral and was described as 'an officer gallant almost to the verge of eccentricity'. Unfortunately he ignored repeated warnings and marched his company into a deep gorge. Ambushed almost immediately, only fifteen survived, ten of them badly wounded. The tragedy was avoidable, Ross having received warning from a local village headman. He is reported to have 'shown annoyance and to have sternly asked the headman how he dared to tell lies, and say an enemy was on the road' before he led his Indian troops to their deaths.

Another, almost self sought tragedy was the death of the explorer G W Hayward 'Gold Medalist of the Royal Geographical Society of London who was cruelly murdered at Darkut July 18, 1870 on his journey to explore the Pamir steppe'. Hayward himself had written of an 'insane desire to try the effect of cold steel across my throat'. His wish was fulfilled in circumstances romantic enough to inspire much Victorian prose and verse, the most famous being Sir Henry Newbolt's "He Fell Among Thieves". According to the classic accounts, he stayed awake in his

tent all night in a valley northwest of Gilgit, surrounded by assassins. Captured at dawn as he drifted asleep, he requested a final prayer and a last look at the rising sun before being killed.

Months later his body was recovered and brought to Gilgit for burial. His marker is not the original one. Several years ago the Royal Geographical Society had a new stone made and placed on the grave. There was one change: the original stone had included a notation that it was placed there by the Maharajah of Kashmir (an ironic gift if, as some suspect it was the Maharajah who had ordered Hayward's death). This fact is not included in the new memorial.

Captain Harold S Eldred of the Sikh Pioneers, Kashmir Infantry, is buried here too. Together with a fellow officer Captain Cooper, he was on his way to Gor to a shoot there. They were both crossing the river in a motor boat when it struck a rock and the two men were thrown into the water. They got on to the rock and decided to swim to the shore. Captain Eldred was drowned, although his companion survived to raise the alarm. The body was found washed up on a bank down river six weeks later and was carried to Gilgit by coolies on a bed and buried in the cemetery. The accident happened on December 1st 1929, when Eldred had reached his thirty-third year.

A further memorial records the deaths of Ian and Mary Galbraith in 1939, also by drowning, and also avoidable. Ian Galbraith had been Political Agent in Gilgit and 'on leaving he had insisted on going down the river with his wife in a rubber dingy. She had not wanted to do this and the children had been sent ahead. Within fifteen minutes the dinghy had been overturned and both had been drowned in the icy turbulent water'.

Even in recent times tragedy still haunts the area. One of the latest inscriptions (1959) is to five members of the 'Batura Muztagh Expedition' who were lost on the 25,540 ft. Batura Peak in the Himalayas. Mr Addleton concludes his report by suggesting that Gilgit could become the focus of a memorial to such mountaineers, whose tragedy will he fears 'no doubt be repeated many times in the area'. 'There is no doubt that the historical legacy of Gilgit will be impoverished if the old cemetery is neglected completely and simply allowed to disappear.' Now that an increasing number of tourists find their way to this remote area, attracted by its physical beauty and the history and culture of the

region, a concerted effort at preservation could be made that would benefit both the living and the dead.

MAIL BOX

Not many people would think of flying from Costa Rica to spend a six day holiday in Simla but this is just what Mr T A Willasey-Wilsey did in January this year and he has sent us an extremely interesting and detailed report on the cemeteries there. He has also kindly made recommendations on them which have been passed to the appropriate people with a watching brief over the area. He tells us that he has always been fascinated by Simla, 'one of the great capitals of the late nineteenth century world and yet how quickly it reverted to being a small town on a ridge as it is today, albeit a provincial capital'. The writer had gone out to try to trace the graves of relatives and during his short time there visited four of the five cemeteries.

The oldest which once contained about forty graves dating from 1829 to 1840 was the one described by Kipling a century ago. (Chowkidar Vol. 4 No. 4). It was already ruinous in his day and now nothing remains except a few small pieces of broken marble and traces of terraces each about the length of a grave. The second cemetery lies below the goods yard of the Simla-Kalka railway and has been partially squatted. Only the old trees on the site remind one of what it once was, and again there were only fragments of broken stones. The third cemetery is the largest and is known as the Kanlog cemetery. The upper portion unfortunately stands in the way of a new road and its boundary wall has been bulldozed. The entrance gate now houses two families and a 'path' to it has been constructed from smashed gravestones. The site may contain as many as a thousand graves, but many have been systematically vandalised and stones thrown down on to the lower cemetery. Here, although the graves are older, dating from about 1850 to 1911 less damage has taken place and in some areas thick undergrowth has protected the stones. However the writer was unable to find the grave of his great-great-grandfather who died on 5th April 1867 aged 48, never having recovered his health after fighting with the Bengal Artillery at the siege of Delhi. (see page 83)

The last cemetery visited, that of Sanjauli, lies five miles outside the town. Here are over five hundred graves dating from 1921 to the present and although there has been some vandalism the majority are intact or

repairable. Mr Willasey-Wilsey spent four hours looking for the graves of his great-great uncle and aunt, Edward and Jane Wilsey who both died in 1924 and was eventually successful in locating them. He concludes his article by quoting from Kipling, who is of course, inseparable from Simla: 'From Boileauganj to Simla Town/And those grim glades below/where, heedless of the flying hoof/and clamour overhead/Sleep, with the grey langur for guard/Our very scornful Dead.' They would be even more scornful today if they could see the pitiable state to which their last resting places have been reduced, in many cases within less than century. BACSA is aware of the situation and has already sent three instalments of money for restoration of the boundary walls and gates.

Another hill station, Kasauli, near Chandigarh, evokes happier memories. An old church there, Christ Church, appears from a line drawing to be in reasonably good condition and has its own interesting story. It is believed that during the Gurkha uprising two British soldiers buried a sizeable amount of loot under a tree in the church compound. An enthusiastic chaplain even had the tree uprooted in the search to discover the treasure, but nothing has ever been found. The Monkey Point at Kasauli used to be a favourite place for walks and Raj Chatterjee remembers it from the 1940s and the curious name attached to the pine grove at the foot of the hill, the 'Lady's grave'. One local legend told of an Irish woman, a teacher at the Lawrence School, Sanawar, who was disappointed in love and whose lifeless body was found one morning at the foot of the hill. But as Mr Chatterjee points out, she was not buried there. A more prosaic explanation was given him by old Miss Durrani-Warburton, daughter of an Englishman and an Afghan princess, who lived in a large bungalow at Kasauli. Apparently in the early part of this century, a young doctor came out from England to work at the Pasteur Institute. He owned a beautiful white mare called Lady and nearly every evening he used to canter up to Monkey Point with her. When the time came for him to leave India the two went for a last ride together. Perhaps sensing the parting Lady was blinded by a sudden monsoon storm and lost her footing on the uneven path. The doctor escaped with a few broken bones but the mare was so badly hurt she had to be destroyed and was buried where she fell. Nevertheless local woodcutters talked for years about the ghost of a memsahib seen on moonlit nights, waiting in vain in the grove for her lover to return.

From Mrs B Wapshare comes the story of an isolated little cemetery in the Ochterlony Valley, south west of the Nilgiris, and approached by the road from Ootacamund. The site contains only thirteen graves and was known as the Helen Cemetery though today this name has fallen into disuse and it is now part of the Kelley Estate in the Tulloes Division. The name comes from the first daughter of Henry Charles Frederick Wapshare who married Emily Mary Ochterlony on 4th February 1869 although the cemetery was in use earlier because the first burial is that of George Nugent Reynolds who died in May 1863. Other tombs commemorate members of the Wapshare family including James Henry who died in 1937 aged 67 years. Even such a small burial ground has its tragic burden of young children, like Mary Wapshare aged eleven, whose inscription concludes 'He shall gather the lambs with him and carry them in his bosom' and the infant son of Frank and Sophia Clarissa D'Rozario, aged only five months. The cemetery stands on a wooded slope and most of the tombs, though suffering some decay from the passage of time, can be identified. (See p.82)

Lieutenant Colonel Brian Montgomery, brother of the famous Field Marshal, was a distinguished soldier in his own right and a member of the Baluch Regiment, who have now joined BACSA. Before his death earlier this year he asked us to mention the Montgomery churches of India and we are happy to do so as a final tribute. The churches, sixteen in all, were built at the instigation of his grandfather Sir Robert Montgomery GCB, GCSI who was Governor of the Punjab from 1859 to 1865 and their graveyards must contain names familiar to BACSA members. All were built in the short period of four years, between 1860 to 1864 at a total cost of Rs. 60,000. There were three categories of churches, holding 40, 100 and 250 people respectively and they were found at places like Gurgaon, Rohtak, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu and Kohat. Spires and structural additions were also built for the older churches at Peshawar, Sialkot, Kasauli and Ambala. That at Dera Ismail Khan contained plaques with the regimental badges on the walls, memorials to British officers and men, their wives and children and the Colours laid up in the nave of an old regiment raised in the days of the East India Company. (See p.82)

Kabul is still very much in the newspapers these days and there have been several comparisons made, not always favourable, between the most recent withdrawal of the British Embassy in March this year and earlier exits. One reporter who did remain for a time was Christopher Walker and in a despatch to 'The Times' he noted the

small Christian cemetery which today is flanked by a minefield on one side, battered walls and trees burned by magnesium flares dropped from Russian planes. Father Paddy Gattling has conducted every burial in the cemetery since 1965 including many of hippies, victims on the drug trail. But an earlier tomb records Lieutenant Charles Nugent who died aged twenty-five when he accidentally stood on a mine in Kabul during the second Afghan War. Nugent has been adopted as the 'patron saint' of a London-based charity working in the war ravaged city, who are trying to clear the mine fields and provide medical aid to the Afghan Red Crescent. Its head there is Mr Guy Willoughby, a former British Army officer and a direct descendant of Lord Minto, former Viceroy of India. Perhaps one day BACSA will be able to resume its interrupted work on the scattered British cemeteries of Afghanistan.

THE MAHARAJAH'S WELL NEAR OXFORD

It really is extraordinary how India always creeps into the conversation of BACSA members, even in the most unlikely circumstances. Earlier this year the Editor and a friend were pursuing a short course on British pre-history at Braziers Adult College in Oxfordshire. Over lunch we happened to mention our interests and were immediately told by our host, Dr Glyn Faithfull, of an 'Indian' well in the neighbouring village of Stoke Row. Half an hour later we were standing in front of the large domed structure presented by the Maharajah of Benares in 1864 to the villagers. (See illustration on back cover.) How this came about is a fascinating story and a tribute to the friendship of two men, one Indian and one English which survived the troubles of 1857. Edward Anderdon Reade, fifth son of the Squire of Ipsden, left his Oxfordshire home to join the East India Company. (See Chowkidar Vol. 3 No. 3) He was posted to Azamgarh and it was there, in 1831 that he solved a quarrel between two brothers over a piece of land by assuming ownership of the disputed area himself and sinking a well in it that would benefit the local villagers. Though damaged during the up-rising it survived for years after and indeed may still exist today with its engraved inscription: 'The Well-spring, and the Tree-shade are gifts of the Almighty. Rest traveller, refresh, and be thankful'.

Shortly before his retirement to England thirty years later Reade, who by that time had become Lieutenant Governor of NWP, entrusted the care of the well to his friend the Maharajah Ishree Pershad Narayan Singh of

Benares. During their last conversation Edward Reade told him that drinking water could be difficult to obtain in England too and recalled how he had seen a woman at home beating her son for helping himself to a glass of water. This story made a deep impression on the Maharajah. He called the woman 'baghin', a tigress, and in recognition of Reade's well at Azamgarh offered one to the Oxfordshire village. It was dug by hand, all 368 foot of it, into the chalky soil, officially opened on Queen Victoria's birthday in 1864 and was to provide good drinking water until the beginning of the second World War.

The well had to be properly maintained by a warden and the Indian custom of financing it from the sale of local produce was adopted. A four acre orchard was bought by the Maharajah and stocked with cherry trees. It became known as the Ishree Bagh. He also paid for the erection of the warden's cottage, a delightful octagonal little house that still stands today next to the well. A pond in the shape of a fish was excavated (Benares had a carp in its crest) and this was called the Muchlee Pokhra. A small artificial mound which later became a bandstand was the Prubhoo Teela and a 'shady ravine' the Saya Khoona, was dug out. What the Oxfordshire locals thought about all this is not recorded. The benefits of good water obviously outweighed any reservations they might have had about exotic oriental names. Certainly the well strikes one today as a bizarre feature in a quiet English lane, with its gilded cupola and ornamental elephant.

The Maharajah's gift started something of a fashion among rich Indians who sought to emulate each other in their gifts to a thirsty England. Another well was sunk at Ipsden Church, donated by the Rajah Sir Deonarayan Singh KCSI in 1865. The Maharajah of Vizianagram, near Madras offered to fund one in London and with the aid of the Metropolitan Drinking Fountains Association, a drinking fountain was built in Hyde Park, near Marble Arch. Not to be outdone the Bombay banker Radha Muni (known also as Mr Ready-Money!) offered one to Regent's Park and suggested that the gold cup he forwarded should be handed to a member of the Royal Family on its inauguration. During the last decade the villagers of Stoke Row have raised the enormous sum of £30,000 to pay for their well's restoration and this was completed on the day of the present Prince of Wales' wedding, thus maintaining a royal connection over two centuries and two continents.

CAN YOU HELP?

Two years ago Chowkidar published the tragic story of Thomas Carr, a Forest Officer who shot himself in 1914, driven to despair by the loneliness of his remote posting in the U.P. His niece Mrs G Saw Yin Barns wanted to know if his grave still existed at Tanakpur and if so, what condition it was in. David Burnett who recently returned from a visit to the area was able to bring back photographs and to report that it lay in a small, wired-off enclosure in the Forest Lodge garden. The metal guard rail which surrounded it has been badly damaged and is now almost completely missing, but the flat stone itself and its simple white cross are still extant and the inscription was clearly visible. The grave stands near a mission school and Mrs Saw Yin Barns is now in touch with its American headmaster to see if his pupils might be able to tidy up the area, which is covered in debris and litter. Incidentally, our original enquirer has recently come across a small item of information about her 'shadowy Uncle Tom'. Five years before his death he had been awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind medal, which was one of those handed out at the New Year and on the monarch's birthday for various services rendered to the State and was peculiar to the Indian Empire. But why 'Kaiser' she asks, what does it stand for? Perhaps an old India hand could explain.

The Indian Forestry Service is one that has been rather neglected in recent work on British rule in India. Now a BACSA member, Mary Ledzion, (née Currie) herself the daughter of a Forest officer, is collecting material for a book which BACSA hopes to publish. She would be very glad to hear from anyone who has personal recollections, family letters or diaries which throw light on the lives of the officers and their families. Obviously information may come too from families of planters, the PWD, the ICS and others who worked in India. She is particularly short of material on Assam, Bengal, Bombay, the southern tip of India and Sri Lanka and would also be happy to include anything relevant about Burma. She does not want shikar stories unless they are directly connected with Forest Service life. Anyone who can help should contact BACSA Secretary Theon Wilkinson, in the first instance.

The model Residency of Hyderabad, built by Major James Achilles Kirkpatrick for his Muslim wife Khair-un-Nissa was mentioned in last autumn's Chowkidar and concern was expressed about its pitiable state. A worrying letter in May this year told us that the main Residency building

itself, also by Kirkpatrick was under threat. The roof of the dining room, next to the Durbar Hall had caved in and other rooms were showing serious cracking. Now Mrs Bilkiz Alladin, an INTACH member in Hyderabad is able to report progress on restoration of the main building. Money has been promised by INTACH, and the Vice Chancellor of Osmania University, who own the building, together with the State Director of Archaeology, have all agreed to help. The Georgian Society in Britain have also been alerted. Now attention can turn towards the little model again. Mrs Alladin has written a booklet on Kirkpatrick and has generously offered all profits from its sale to the restoration fund. In 1977 she wrote a musical called 'The Nabob' which was staged in the Residency grounds as an amateur production and she hopes that another performance could be given to raise money. For the moment she has had an asbestos sheet placed over the model during the monsoon and with the help of donations from U.K. members, she hopes that work could start on it this year. BACSA will keep an eye on progress and report back. There is certainly enough good will and energy to ensure that the Scotsman's tribute to his Indian wife will not be lost.

A poignant story is emerging from Nahan, a small town to the east of Chandigarh and former capital of the old Sirmur State, sparked off by the donation of four photographs from BACSA member Bani de Jong. They show two beautiful, well kept tombs in a walled enclosure, on raised plinths, with Bengal style chattris over the grave stones. (See page 83) The clear cut inscriptions in marble record the death of Edwin Pearsall, Medical Officer to H.H. of Sirmur for eleven years, on 19th November 1883 and that of his widow Louisa Pearsall, who resided at Nahan for 38 years and died there on 19th October 1921, aged eighty seven years old. According to the story, Louisa went home to England after her husband's death, but found she could not settle there and returned to the place in India where she had been so happy. One wonders how she spent her lonely years of widowhood in the remote area of the foothills. Did she herself have any medical training, or was she able to exist on a pension from the Raja? It is moving to note that her inscription records she had returned to Nahan 'in order at last to rest beside her husband'. It is also good to record that the present young Raja of Sirmur, a MLA in Simla, 'is very much responsible for the upkeep of the cemetery and other monuments'. Any information from people who might remember Louisa would add a welcome footnote to these lovely memorials.

A grand old character who 'deserves to be rescued from oblivion' was John Pigott Nixon (1822-1906) who has been brought to our attention by BACSA member R R Langham Carter. Keen to make his fortune in the East, Nixon ran away to sea, at the age of fourteen on a India-bound ship. He jumped ship at Port Elizabeth, in South Africa and secured employment on a nearby farm as a cow hand. His parents got the Cape Government to arrest him and return him to England. But before he left he told his farming friends that he 'would make a pile in India and return to farm among them in a big way' and this is exactly what he did, after retiring as a General in the Bombay Army. Nellie, his daughter was also unusual for instance, in marrying the Muslim educationist Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Marriage between an Indian and an European was rare in those days and her husband was five years older than her father. Nixon himself died in Bombay aged 86 (much too normal to die of old age, he was run over by a horse and carriage). Surely, Mr Langham Carter concludes, he must have had an unusual tombstone which perhaps readers could tell us about?

An interesting little query has come in from BACSA member Mr A Salisbury who is trying to collect Hindustani nursery rhymes, the kind sung by ayahs to the baba lok in their charge. Some are well known, and quoted by Charles Allen in 'Plain Tales from the Raj' including the memorable 'Humpti-tumpti gir giya phat!' and 'Roti, makan, chini, chota baba nini' but can readers remember any more? Incidentally, it has been suggested to the Editor that some Hindustani 'rhymes' were not quite the sort of thing that parents would want their children to repeat in polite society. We do not want any of these! Again, information please to our Secretary.

THE CURSE OF THE FAKIR

When the 5th Bengal Cavalry were ordered to be stationed at Nowshera in 1869, there was some difficulty in accommodating all the officers. Three of them resolved to club together and build one large house for themselves, as was then the practice in cantonments. They obtained permission to erect it upon a piece of land in the centre of a loop formed by the Kabul river. But the site was already occupied by a fakir, or holy man, who, when evicted, laid a curse upon the officers to the effect that they and their house would come to an untimely end within seven years.

The names of the three officers were Captain Arthur Cortlandt Anderson, Lieutenant Henry Williamson and Doctor Dean Palmer and the curse was fulfilled in the following manner. Captain Anderson went out hawking at Peshawar on 25 May 1870, fell and broke his neck. Lieutenant Williamson fell from his horse while playing polo at Nowshera on 12 March 1871 and died of a fractured skull. He was buried at Nowshera. The third man, the assistant surgeon Palmer was drowned in the Yamuna at Allahabad on 4th September 1876. He had gone out in a yachting party when the boat capsized. Palmer and his companions were good swimmers and all made for the shore, joking over the occurrence, when suddenly he vanished and was never seen again, presumably falling victim to a sudden cramp.

As for the house it was washed away, together with the land on which it stood, enclosed by the loop of the river, when the Indus flooded in August 1876, and a bore ran up the Kabul river as sometimes happens. The story made such an impression on the three officers' companions that the Society for Psychical Research in London took the case up. Lieutenant General Sir George Richardson, with whom the surgeon had been serving in the cavalry lines at Allahabad stated that the death of Palmer, the last of the three, had occurred either on the exact seventh anniversary of the curse, or on the day before the seven-year period was completed.

The story is one that has intrigued BACSA member Lieutenant General Stanley Menezes for years, especially as Captain Cortlandt Anderson's family had a connection with his own regiment, the Bombay Grenadiers. Sue Farrington has been able to trace the inscription on the grave at Peshawar which simply records Anderson's death at the age of 29 years and reads: 'Brief life was here his portion/Brief happiness, short lived joy/ His spirit fled without a tear/Leaving mourning heard behind him'. As for the supernatural element General Menezes concludes his letter by saying he concurs with Carl Jung, who wrote 'I shall not commit the fashionable stupidity of regarding everything I can't explain as a fraud.'

PASSAGE FROM INDIA

These emotive words were chosen as the theme for the first Anglo Indian International Reunion held on 26/27 August 1989 at Harrow, north London. The Editor was kindly invited to attend and learnt from the local organiser George Hillier something of the enormous task

involved in bringing together 1,500 Anglo Indians from all over the world, in a celebration of their past and a commitment to their community. The reunion took two years to organise and it was done solely through word of mouth and letters. There was no public advertising, which demonstrates both the closeness of the now scattered members and the unusually low profile they keep as a minority. After 1947 many chose to settle in English speaking communities outside India. like Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Britain. A few are now in the Canary Islands and have taken the Spanish language in their course. The Harrow Leisure Centre, where the reunion was held, is not the most sympathetic of spaces, with its low ceiling and, it has to be reported, rotten acoustics. But the hall was gay with decorations, balloons and notices dividing it up into Indian regions including 'Calcutta & E.I.R. (Bengal)'. A short ecumenical service opened Sunday's proceedings and was followed by a seminar with speakers drawn from Canada, Australia and India. As the hall filled up, constant appeals for quiet had to be made over the buzz of conversation when long lost friends found each other and caught up on years of gossip. Sister Marisa from Calcutta gave an impassioned speech in which she reminded the audience of their less fortunate brethren left behind in India. Many were living in slum conditions, in bustis, even on pavements and although parents worked in the traditional jobs like teaching and secretarial posts, their children were often neglected in the pitiful struggle to earn a living. Time and again, emphasis was placed on education and the irony that although more people want to learn English than even before, academic standards were slipping among the very people who had founded some of the greatest schools. It was also sad that a community once famed for its musical skills now found it difficult to practice them. There is no doubt that India lost an immense reserve of talent in the Anglo Indian diaspora, talent which is now so evident among the community today. A more intangible loss was the warmth and friendliness of the Anglo Indians, often in the face of adverse circumstances. As Dawn Fernandez from Australia pointed out, most left India with only a few rupees, but they have prospered and this reunion, hopefully the start of many more, was a joyful recognition of a vibrant community.

CALCUTTA CELEBRATION

'August 24, 1690. This day at Sankraal, I ordered Captain Brooke to come up with a vessel to Chuttanuty,

where we arrived about noon, but found the place in a deplorable condition, nothing being left for our present accommodation, the rains falling day and night'. Thus wrote Job Charnock as his party settled in tents under the shelter of a large banyan tree. He had twice anchored before at Chuttanuty (Sutanuti) but on this third occasion, during the monsoon, he was to stay and establish the small factory that became the nucleus of Calcutta. He lies today under a domed tomb in St John's Churchyard there. Historians argue endlessly about the city's name, whether it was indeed called after the goddess Kali and speculate on the three little villages that Charnock pulled together around the first site. There is absolutely no chance that differences will be forgotten as Calcutta celebrates its tercentenary next August. A Bengali without a point of view is like a fish out of water.

What does strike one as odd however, is the way Britons and Indians see the city through totally different eyes, in fact they often seem to be talking about two quite separate places. There have been a number of recent books by Europeans who describe it as the most benighted place on earth, truly the 'City of Dreadful Night'. The latest contribution by Gunter Grass reinforces this view and has been criticised in India for the negative picture it draws, from a purely European perspective. An article in a English Sunday newspaper this Spring took the same didactic attitude. Though ostensibly written as a travel feature, its first paragraphs solemnly instructed the visitor on how to join Mother Teresa's establishment for a short time and was a dismal litany of everything that westerners find wrong with the place. Brief quotes from BACSA members living in Calcutta could not compensate for its lack of balance.

Luckily the inhabitants, though aware of the city's problems are determined to mark that day three centuries ago when Charnock landed in a joyful and positive way. Ambitious plans are afoot for a programme of restoration and celebration, masterminded by Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal. BACSA will be keeping a watch on events, with the help of our sister organisation APHCI, especially where our mutual interests are involved. We are, for example, sponsoring the restoration of the tomb of Begum Johnson and the pathway from it leading to Job Charnock's tomb. We hope to feature special articles next year to commemorate this unique occasion.



The Montgomery church at Dera Ismail Khan (see p.73)



The Pearsall tombs, Nahan, east of Chandigarh (see p.77)



The Helen Cemetery, Ochterlony Valley (see p.73)



Lower Kanlog Cemetery, Simla, 1989 (see p.71)

The British Conquest and Dominion of India Penderel Moon

This appreciation emerges from a close acquaintance with Sir Penderel Moon, whose duty it was in 1935 to supervise, for nearly two years, the district, administrative and judicial training of the reviewer, and Indian Political Service probationer. The respect for him and friendship thus engendered persisted for over fifty years. It is doubtful if anyone could have been better qualified to write this book, a vast mine of meticulously researched and interpreted historical material depicting two centuries of British rule in India and assessing its consequences for the Indian people. It is the product of a distinguished scholar and an able and dedicated administrator. His sense of justice and compassion enabled him not only to keep step with the Indian mind but to retain an instinctive sympathy with Indian aspirations. His declared object in this book was to provide the necessary data for a balanced appraisal. Few, if any, will doubt that he has achieved just that. While more could perhaps have been included about British traders prior to 1747 his account of events up to 1857 is a masterly presentation of historical facts leading to the assumption by the Crown of full responsibility for the government of India. From then on the political, administrative and financial complexities involved in exercising that responsibility are lucidly described and analysed.

India's ancient civilisation enabled its people, despite - or perhaps because of - their diversity, to absorb and survive the external influences to which they had been subjected over thousands of years. No other so-called developing nation was inherently more civilised and better fitted to become independent. As Moon says the Anglo-Indian enterprise in achieving that objective was due in a large measure to Indian collaboration and tacit consent. Many, and in particular the British government and Congress, wanted a united India to be handed over. But a reconciliation between the Hindus and Muslims ultimately proved unattainable. Throughout this book there are numerous references to the insurmountable difficulties in securing such a reconciliation. As early as 1890 Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (Founder of the Muslim-Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh) expressed deep-seated doubts about tranquility in the absence of united ties of race and religion: in 1916 the Lucknow Pact proved no cure for deep Hindu-Muslim antagonism: after the 1937 elections Muslims were alarmed at the threat of Hindu domination;

and in 1942 Congress rejection of the Cripps offer threw away the last opportunity of preserving unity. Although Moon has commented that without Jinnah there would have been no Pakistan, this remark tends to be taken out of context: he was well aware of the obstacles to the transfer of a united India. In the absence of Jinnah and mounting pressure for partition as independence approached it is unlikely that Moon dismissed the possibility that other potentially effective and level-headed Muslim leaders, such as Liaqat Ali Khan, would have emerged.

The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 declaring that she 'would respect the rights, dignity and honour of native Princes as her own' in effect repudiated the past policy of annexing States, a contributory cause of the Mutiny and encouraged the extension of treaty engagements with the Princes. The States, some 600 of them, constituted a large part - at least one third - of India. Thus their retention as autonomous entities albeit within the confines of paramountcy became an important part of British policy. It preserved an indigenous way of life more in keeping with the ethos of Indian India; it was generally liked by the inhabitants and had a stabilising effect. It was the duty of Political Officers, while supporting the Rulers in accordance with the Queen's Proclamation, to intervene if, for example, some form of misgovernment was apparent. But as the author points out, Political Department advice was that a Political Officer should leave well alone: his best work was often what he left undone. In practice a decision not to intervene had to be a positive one based on vigilance and careful judgement rather than inertia.

The loyalty and support of the Princes during two World Wars was of great value. They had good reason to expect proper consideration of their Treaty rights. As India's independence, and with it the lapse of paramountcy, approached many of them hoped to become wholly independent and rejected federation with the rest of India. The complex negotiations that ensued are well described by the author. In the event, all but a few of the Princes signed Instruments of Accession covering only defence, Foreign Affairs, and communications. They did this in the belief that these instruments giving them internal autonomy, would afford them the best chance of survival. Immediately after the arrival of Lord Mountbatten in March 1947 the tempo of action to hand over India quickened. Partition plans proceeded rapidly. By June Congress, the Sikhs and the Muslims had accepted his plan. But when, as the author has described so

vividly, two months of mass slaughter and mass migration started on 15th August, Mountbatten was widely criticised by those who wished to delay the transfer of power for his allegedly over-hasty action. As Moon rightly says this calamity marred what was a remarkable achievement by the last Viceroy. He secured agreement to the transfer of power, partition and acceptance of Commonwealth membership. Had the transfer of power been delayed in the hope of handing over a united India, or for any other reason, the continued involvement of the British in India would almost certainly have resulted in widespread resentment, unrest, violence and loss of life.

There are so many other facets of arresting interest in this magnificent book that, beyond mentioning a few, it is impossible in this limited review to comment on them - for example, the policies and characters of successive Viceroys, British Secretaries of State and Indian leaders; the high quality of the Indian Army; the North West Frontier; the Afghan wars and the 'Russian bogey'; the efficiency and loyalty of so many Indian civil servants and police; agriculture and land tenure; population growth outstripping food production; development and industry; railways, roads and irrigation canals. Bulky though it is, this is a book of immense interest - to be read at leisure and enjoyed with a cushion on the reader's knee! (AWR)

Duckworth 1989 £60.00 + £2.50 P&P pp 1235 (The publishers have kindly agreed to donate £5 to BACSA on every copy sold to members.)

India Revealed Mildred Archer and Toby Falk

The sub-title explains that this is about the art and adventures of James and William Fraser 1801-35, two Scots brothers who went to India, one as a merchant in Calcutta and the other, William as a Company servant in Delhi. James, like many Europeans at the time, was a gifted amateur artist and both brothers commissioned paintings of the 'Company School', that is work by Indian artists in the European tradition. It is only a decade ago that the archives and paintings were discovered by BACSA Council member, Joan Lancaster, in Scotland and it is sad to note that they were auctioned a year later so that today the lovely pictures are scattered round the world, many in private collections. The publication of this book is therefore all the more important, bringing them together for the last time and providing an entertaining commentary on the adventurous lives of the two Frasers.

William met his death at the hands on an assassin, shot from his horse in March 1835 after visiting his friend the Rajah of Kishangur in Delhi. He is buried in St. James's Church, Delhi (Skinner's Church) to the left of the main steps and it was Skinner who paid for the magnificent marble memorial. A granite stone was erected by his mother at the family home in Inverness. But the true memorial lies in the exquisite paintings of Indian men and women that the brothers commissioned. For the first time features and costumes were accurately depicted, not in the former generalised way, but with a new skill that reveals them as individuals with their foibles clearly portrayed. One would be extremely chary of doing business with the eight horse merchants of Delhi painted between 1816 and 1820, conversely the charming dancing girls, Malaguire, Pyari Jan and Amir Bakhsh would wile away many a hot evening. Retired soldiers will like the portraits of new recruits from Haryana, sizing them up to see what kind of sepoys they would have made. For those interested in landscapes there are a series of village pictures where the interpretation of mud houses has produced a startlingly modern style that is quite unique. A very good book to give as a present, if you bear to part with it! (RLJ)

Cassell 1989 £17.95 + P&P pp 144

Oil Paintings by Sir Charles D'Oyly, 7th. Baronet, 1781-1845 Maurice Shellim

This small but profusely illustrated book is by a prominent member of BACSA, who has previously written on the work of the Daniells. In the current book he records a group of oil paintings by the gifted amateur artist Sir Charles D'Oyly which have in the past been overlooked in preference for his watercolours and prints. We are consequently in his debt for bringing them more substantially to our notice. As the author mentions, the numbers of oil paintings by D'Oyly known today is not large, but through undertakings such as his, it is hoped that further examples will be recognised, especially those which may still be in the subcontinent (one at least is listed here as being in an Indian private collection).

A Foreword by Giles Eyre briefly sets the scene and is followed by the author's short introduction; this ends with a chronological list of the events of the artist's life. One notes here the substantial nature of D'Oyly's official career both in Patna and later in Calcutta - as

well as the repeated references to South Park Street cemetery, a reminder that while a nabob's life could be lucrative, it could also be short. The main part of the book is taken up with reproducing D'Oyly's 26 known oil paintings; all are reproduced in black and white with brief descriptions (the descriptions for nos. 9 and 10 seem to have been reversed) and details of provenance. Two of them are reproduced in colour on the covers. A View of Sikri Gully, Colgong Hills, on the River Ganges. c. 1820 (front cover) and Indian River Scene with Mosques and River Craft. c. 1838 (back cover). The mellow, glowing colours, especially of the former, enable one, in imagination, to provide colours for the other 24.

D'Oyly was born in India though educated in England. One of his early postings was in Dacca, in eastern Bengal and it is this city that the first oil paintings depict. In these the interest in the romantic and the picturesque is apparent, and this concern seems to have continued throughout his artistic career. Typically, as also in some of his watercolours the oil paints contain a ruined building or a craggy landscape, reminding one of the continuing perception of India, in Europe, as a land of romantic exoticism. It was while in Dacca that D'Oyly met and worked with George Chinnery, the extent of whose influence upon D'Oyly is still disputed. What seems undoubted though is that the older, professional artist encouraged D'Oyly and in some general sense influenced him, especially in his handling and appreciation of the Indian landscape. From Dacca he moved up country to Patna and it is from Bihar and even Benares that the other major group of oils take their subjects. The Ganges clearly fascinated him, despite his oft-quoted injunction to British residents (preserved in Heber) to 'stir a little from the banks of the Ganges' to find the 'India [which] is full of beautiful and picturesque country'. Not only do the waterways appear frequently in the paintings, but also the many different types of craft which sailed on the river. It is easy for us to forget that in the days before the great system of Indian railways was laid out, the major mode of transport, certainly in Upper India, was the river systems. Sailing ships and barges of all types figure in these paintings.

The third, and smallest group of paintings is of four Scottish scenes and the author has investigated the connection between the subject matter and the family of the second wife of Sir Charles D'Oyly. By an interesting chance it involves the British work of William Daniell, one of the other important early painters of India during the British period. D'Oyly always remained an amateur,

despite the pioneering lithographic press which he set up in Patna, and his Behar School of Athens which operated in Patna as a forum for like-minded artists - he, anyway came from a class which would not have earned its living from such undertakings. Nevertheless he produced a huge output, in a number of different media and with a generous understanding and feeling for India which gives all his too few oil paintings an evocative character which few can resist. (TRB)

Spink 1989 £10 + P&P pp 32 plates 26

Elixir of Empire P J Rich

Anyone interested in the consequences of the 'secret curriculum' of schools will find this book intriguing. The English public school, that peculiar institution which was not public in any accepted use of the word, kept company with the Empire for as long as it survived. The Empire is gone, but the schools are robustly alive, and they remain controversial. Their existence has been an issue in recent British elections. The public school ideology was one of self confidence and deference. Subject peoples were treated as small boys who were expected to know their place, and the raj was the benign praepostor. The equivalent of prize day was the durbar, when loyalty was rewarded with the Bath or Star of India. Imperial freemasonry added to the pageantry, growing into a complementary but clandestine honours system. The connection between the schools and the Empire was a classic case of symbiosis. They shared a complex system of rituals that were carried all over the world. Moreover, both became involved with freemasonry and its controversial expansion. When Britain lost her colonies, the problem remained of a unique school system that in many ways was still Imperial. In 'Elixir of Empire', P J Rich provides an engaging insight into the world of the old boys and their masonic lodges, as well as a suggestion about how the schools might find in their past an answer to their critics.

Regency Press, 125 High Holborn, London WC1V 6QA 1989
£9.95 + P&P pp 156

Mountains of the Sun Evelyn Hart

After the success of 'Spring Imperial', which has now gone into paperback, the author (known to BACSA members as Desirée Battye) has followed it with a new novel set mainly in India, from the 1930s to the present day. This

time the hero is an English man, Lawrence Sword, known inevitably as 'Talwar', who returns to the land of his birth to join the famous Rohilla Corps. On his first leave he visits his parents in the Residency at Srinagar. It is here that he meets the two women whose paths are to cross and recross his throughout the book. The first is Monique, who seems initially to be the natural companion for the young officer. The second, Clavdia, recently orphaned, is still a child, and a strange one at that, half Russian and forever talking about her beloved ayah Lala, a woman from Zaskar. The author is too good a story teller to allow a conventional conclusion to Sword's romance, and even though readers may guess at the eventual outcome, they will nevertheless be carried along by the suspense of the tale. There is plenty of action on the military front too, in border skirmishes with Afghanistan and as Independence draws nearer, with the awful turmoil arising from Partition. Perhaps this time there is a little too much on Regimental life and it is not always easy to make the transition from it to the romantic episodes which are so well done. Nevertheless Evelyn Hart's growing readership will not be disappointed and this is a highly enjoyable book for anyone interested in a good story set in the recent past. (RLJ)

Century Hutchinson 1989 £12.95 + P&P pp 491

'Hellfire Jack!' VC Peter Collister

Subtitled 'the life and times of General Sir William Olpherts, VC, GCB 1822-1902' this is the story of a man known throughout the army for his legendary courage and shortness of temper, (hence the nickname!) who served through a turbulent half century of British involvement in India. The author draws on family papers to compile this personal account of Olpherts' life and sets it against the political and military background of the times with descriptions of many leading figures, both British and Indian. Olpherts came from an old Irish family of Dutch extraction. Joining the East India Company he was on active service in Burma at 19 with the Bengal Artillery, followed by action in central India, Gwalior, Sind, the Sikh wars and the Crimea with the Turks. During 1857 he won the Victoria Cross with Havelock at the relief of Lucknow and took part in the later actions under Colin Campbell. He also saw service on the Frontier and later became Colonel Commandant Royal Artillery.

BACSA 1989 £9.00 + 75 pence P&P pp 198

British Cemeteries of Patna & Dinapore Vincent Davies

If the Patna City Cemetery is not one of the earliest in India it certainly has one of the most clearly documented origins. Mr. Ellis the chief of the Patna factory, had long been at odds with Mir Kasim, the upstart Nawab of Bengal. When the latter was installed in Patna Fort, open hostilities broke out and after a botched attempt at escape a total of 53 men were put to death in 1763. They included, apart from the factory people, men from Calcutta, Cossimbazaar and Murshidabad, and 9 free merchants. They had been held in custody in the house of one Haji Ahmed and under the direct orders of Walter Reinhardt, known as Somru, their bodies were buried or thrown down the well in the prison house. Soon after the recapture of Patna a monument was erected over the grave of the massacre victims and a couple of years later the whole of Haji Ahmed's garden was taken over as the first official burial ground there. All the names of the first victims are still known. This is just one of the interesting stories in this latest BACSA book (in the series on selected cemeteries) and is well up to the standard of its predecessors, with good illustrations and background on the tombs themselves. (RLJ)

BACSA £3 + 30 pence P&P pp 24

BOOKS BY NON-MEMBERS (that will interest readers)

* The Last Days of the Raj Trevor Royle

Trevor Royle has attempted to write two books in one; a history of the handover and the politics leading up thereto, intertwining a social history of the expatriate Briton in India in the years immediately prior to and after the Independence. It is a book that should have been written in the year 2010, when all those who were present during the fateful years had either passed over or have memories which are suspect.

Since this review is being written for Chowkidar, it is assumed that the majority of those who read it will have first hand experience of the sub-Continent - it is obvious that Mr. Royle has not; they will enjoy the book as nostalgia creeps in, but will be irritated by some of the fundamental statements which might be challenged 'none (of the ICS)... were to misplace the trust invested in them...' '...although there were numerous examples of

friendships between British and Indian colleagues, the colour bar was never far from peoples' minds...'

There is no doubt that a great deal of research has gone into the production of this work, and there are stages when it is difficult to lay the book aside, but to write of the period without even mentioning the names of Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, or C. Rajagopalachari who was one of the big three in the Wardha Conference, and who succeeded Mountbatten as Governor-General is, to say the least, eccentric.

It is also surprising that Mr. Royle has not sought the views of Calcutta industrial burra-sahibs of the time; and in spite of Sheila Caldwell's admirable commentary, it would have been very interesting to have heard from one of the Mems brought up in the Country, who lived through the pre- and post-Independence era; the name of Nancy Foster (née Godden) immediately springs to mind.

As one who spent much of his time in the Sloth Belt, it was disappointing to have to infer that Mr. Royle's India ceases south of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway. In spite of these criticisms, many old koi-hais will read and enjoy this book, as being a work of history in which they played a part. (HH)

Michael Joseph 1989 £15.95 + £1 P&P pp 291

The Devil's Wind Manohar Malgonkar

Malgonkar sets out to write the story of the Nana Sahib of Cawnpore from the Indian point of view, in autobiographical form. He is particularly suited to do this, having grown up with the legends of the Nana told him by his grandfather, a minister at Gwalior. Later, army service with the 5th Mahratta Light Infantry just before Independence, rubbing shoulders in camaraderie with British officers, may have given him an insight into the Nana's mixed feelings: genuine liking for some of the Englishmen at Cawnpore, while hating their presence in his country. Was Dhondu Pant Nana Sahib the arch villain of the 'Indian Mutiny', a great patriot, or a man caught up in events beyond his control? Malgonkar writes about him as a national hero, the man whose name is revered on modern postage stamps as one of the six leaders in 'The First War of Independence 1857'. He claims this story is fiction, 'but takes no liberties with verifiable facts or even with probabilities'. The result is not fiction but faction, that dangerous mix, a propaganda weapon where

the author appears to be telling the truth and at the same time has a licence to embroider and distort. Throughout the book there is a sobering and sometimes shocking picture of the British seen through the eyes of an Indian. Well researched, skilfully presented and vividly written, the story moves along easily and includes many steamy sexual scenes. The Nana's life at Bithoor is particularly interesting and provides details on his family background, the curse on his brides, religious rituals and his relationship to his tutor, all new to English readers. Descriptions of Bithoor and Nawabganj are convincing, too. When Hillersdon, the Collector, mounts the steps of the verandah at Nawabganj to explain that he cannot after all entrust his wife and children to the Nana's protection, there is a powerful sense of realism. So the introduction of distortions and romantic indulgences, when they occur, are all the more irritating.

For instance, in order to portray Sir Hugh Wheeler as having 'gone native', Malgonkar describes only an Indian bibi and the son and two daughters who were in the British entrenchment. The 'official' Lady Wheeler whom Sir Hugh married in 1842 after a passionate attachment of over sixteen years and who bore him four sons, is never mentioned, nor the fact that it was she who died beside the old General at Sati Chaura Ghat. Or again, the weapons and ammunition that fell into the hands of the rebels when the siege began are played down: the 200,000 lbs of gunpowder and 30 boatloads of shot and shell, not to mention the two eighteen pounders abandoned at the magazine, are dismissed as a mere 'artillery junkyard'. The impression is given that the Nana's men were hardly serious in attacking the entrenchment, but its ruined state bore pitiful witness to the three week bombardment. The Nana's presence at Massacre Ghat and the Bibighar are glossed over in a couple of pages. Malgonkar attempts to explain and justify the brutal killing of the women and children that so shocked Victorian England, in terms of the horrendous reprisals taken by Renaud and Neill on their march from Allahabad. He forgets the march was in response to the uprising in Delhi and murder of Europeans there.

He also has an emotive scene in which Havelock's men set fire to the Nana's palace at Bithoor where Champa the favourite bibi is trapped underground and burned to death. In fact the palace was so little disturbed at the first attack that four weeks later Lord Roberts was able to go through letters found there at leisure. Similarly there are horrid descriptions of the cruel destruction of

the zoo animals. In reality the wanderoo monkey was sent to London Zoo and Sherer, the Cawnpore magistrate, tried to save the Nana's squirrel, but because he was ignorant of its diet, it died 'poor beautiful creature'. Not surprisingly Malgonkar cannot resist flights of fancy that one of the Miss Wheelers survived. His version suggest a Rama and Sita idyll in the Nepalese jungles between her and the fugitive Nana. Every rumour of sightings of him is included and built into the story.

The enigmatic story of the last ruler of Cawnpore is surely sufficiently colourful to require no fiction and too important to romanticise. It seems a pity the author sets out to portray him as a man innocent of involvement in the terrible events at Cawnpore when PC Gupta, in a serious and balanced historical appraisal writes 'It is difficult to see how he (Nana) can be absolved from responsibility'. Curiously, without responsibility the Nana's stature as a patriotic leader crumbles away, as a painting revealed as a fake loses its magic and numinosity. (ZY)

Penguin Books (first published in 1972 by Hamish Hamilton) this version 1988 £3.95 + P&P pp 315

Princely Pageant Christopher Armstead

If you want to know who the author is and which Prince he is writing about, then look at the title page of his fascinating book: he was 'one time Mint Master, Superintendent of Stamps, Chief Electrical Engineer, Director of State Workshops, Warden of Weights and Measures and Currency Officer to His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad and Berar'. Not surprisingly he has a good story to tell. Trained at London University as an engineer and apprenticed subsequently to a Lancashire factory, he answered an advertisement for a job in the Bombay Electric Supply and Tramways Company and went out to India in 1925. At the end of his three year contract he thought he was saying goodbye for ever when he returned to England to gain more experience and qualifications. But his expertise had been noted and by 1933 he was back again as the Director of the Electricity Department in the princely State of Hyderabad. The previous incumbent, Robert Gamlen, is described by Armstead as a man almost out of the eighteenth century who had built up his own little empire and the first years were spent bringing the Department into the present century. The many problems and challenges that the young author had to face make most interesting reading, even

for the non-technical. The Hindu festival of Diwali imposed a great burden on the still fairly primitive electricity supply which had to provide for thousands of tiny lights. Then there was the headache of forged notes circulating in the State, the rationalisation of the coinage and the drama of a burglary at the Mint. Armstead is at his best when describing practical events and not so good when he lapses into generalities about the country. But this is a book to be recommended, for describing a unique career, where the tribulations of running a medieval State with modern technology are candidly, and often amusingly, examined. (RLJ)

Thomas Harmsworth Publishing, London 1987 £10.05 + P&P pp 248

Uncivil Servant John Butter

This reminiscence of a former servant of the British Empire is unusual and holds extra interest in that the author served immediately before and after Independence in three very different territories - India/Pakistan, Kenya and the Middle East.

The appeal to BACSA readers will lie mainly in the first part on the Punjab and Manipur, recounted with a style and humour which is sure to evoke memories of those who shared in those events.

The later sections on Kenya and Abu Dhabi are important as a historical commentary from one in a position of considerable influence as a top financial adviser, meeting many of the key people at the very centre of power during a molten period of their history and yet remaining detached and independent in his judgements.

His observations on the dilemma of this post-colonial era of how the tribes, races and religious groups which had been welded into some form of an administrative unity within arbitrary boundaries, searched for a form of nationhood using inappropriate forms of Westminster-style democracy which perpetuated sectarianism, make for thoughtful reading and his Conclusion is compulsive.

The book is well produced with charming sketches of camels by his wife and excellent maps uncluttered with

names; my only complaint being the transpositioning of Manderla and Moyale on the Ethiopian frontier, two places in which the reviewer served! (TCW)

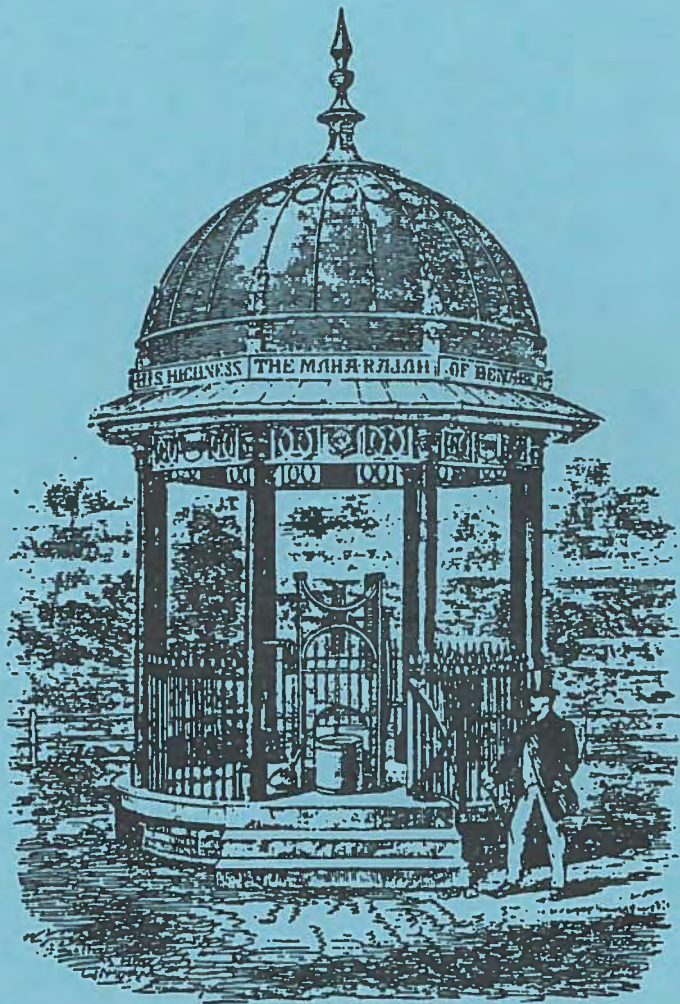
The Pentland Press Ltd, Kippielaw, Haddington, East Lothian EA41 4PY 1989 £10.50 + P&P pp 170

Calcutta - the Home and the Street Raghbir Singh

This photographic essay on India's former capital is the first of many books to be published marking her tercentenary. But few, I suspect, will match it in providing such a handsome tribute. It is beautifully produced with 95 full page colour pictures and a long introduction by the Calcutta writer RP Gupta. He examines succinctly the many facets that make up the city, some expected, others less so. He places as much emphasis on the story of a pavement dweller as he does on the Bengal renaissance of the 19th century. The Naxalite movement is to him as important as the annual Durga puja celebrations of the city's 'patron deity'. The passion for theatre reveals no less than 370 little groups of players, and then of course there are the writers, poets, artists and film-makers, including Sayajit Rai, who would not want to live anywhere else. The contradictions of a city which boasts the first underground railway in India, (far cleaner than London's) yet at the same time remains the only place in the world where men still pull rickshaws, are captured vividly in the photographs. The nostalgia of the few remaining grand Calcutta houses with their 'chipped marble busts, dusty chandeliers, silent music salons, and crumbling Corinthian columns' is juxtaposed with the vigour of street life. A pair of skinny calves share a once handsome courtyard with a brood of hens, a cat and a naked marble Grecian goddess. The awfulness of monsoon life in streets waist high with water and obviously without a decent drainage system is not glossed over either. An honest portrait of a city that has become isolated by the prejudice of outsiders (no western airline touches down at Dum Dum today) but which nevertheless is one of the most interesting in the sub-continent. (RLJ)

Thames & Hudson 1988 £28.00 + P&P pp 117

The Maharajah's Well



Stoke Row, Henley-on-Thames