

## **PARADISE LOST ?**

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### **Preface**

Over many years a long and deep relationship was carved out between Cheltenham and British India. Investigating this can be a fascinating and rewarding experience. The many connections that resulted provide portals to what at times was the colourful exotic world of Mughals and Maharajahs and, at others, one in which great adventures and sometimes dreadful tragedies unfolded. The story here is hopefully a useful starting point for anyone wishing to explore those paths. Welcome to a world long gone!

Here the term Anglo-Indian is used for consistency with some older usage to denote British people who served in India. In India that same term could be used to denote people of mixed race. India of course, in the context of this document, means a territory far larger than the current boundaries of that country.

### **Hiding in Plain Sight**

So much of our history happened overseas. That is true, however, unlike some of its former colonies, Britain has never been good at remembering those who served overseas. As far as Cheltenham is concerned overseas means one place in particular .... India ...and with that The Honourable East India Company; an organisation whose tentacles, at times, reached across all the oceans from New England to Nootka Sound. Yet Cheltenham, indeed, seems to have done its best to forget those many Anglo-Indians, distinguished or otherwise, who came to take its waters as a restorative, to sojourn or to live in the town whether during the times of the Company or later during the Raj.

Whilst it might be unreasonable to expect a display of encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of the British who lived and worked in India, as I once witnessed on an Indian edition of 'Mastermind', it is perhaps surprising that such history is to a large extent simply ignored today in this town that was once dubbed an 'Anglo-Indian Paradise', second only to London in the number of Anglo-Indian residents. Cheltenham, 'Calcutta in the Cotswolds', a town where like-minded Anglo-Indian families could socialise and intermingle and where 'all - or, at any rate, very many - good Anglo-Indians go before they die'. Cheltenham became synonymous with India. The 'nabobs' brought their money and perhaps their servants, seeking to emulate their grand lives in India; some sent their children to be educated, others just brought meagre pensions and had to make do.

The town developed at the height of Empire and there are many hugely fascinating tales, often military and sometimes inter-linked, surrounding the Anglo-Indians who visited, lived in and retired to Cheltenham. Whilst the East India Company received its Royal Charter from Queen Elizabeth in the year 1600, the most engaging period was probably that when the Company held sway in India; the 100 years or so commencing with the 1757 Battle of Plassey and ending with the Mutiny and the Company's demise. That was the time of swashbuckling, sometimes rapacious, adventures when the big names of history were made and which more or less coincided with the rise and fall of

Cheltenham's Spas and, through them, the development of the town's wonderful architecture.

Bengal, in particular, was the 'Paradise of Hondoostan'. There, great fortunes were to be made. It was during this period that the notorious Cheltenham born nabob Paul Benfield made and lost a spectacular his fortune.

Initially the steady trickle of returning Anglo-Indians, with a need to recover from prolonged periods in the subcontinent, would have made a ready market for the promoters of Cheltenham's Pump Rooms. From its early days as a fashionable place to recuperate, Cheltenham became a desirable place to visit, for entertainment and to retire. The Anglo-India presence continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century far beyond the development of the town and the decline of the Spa trade and was as much a part of Cheltenham's story as the remarkable Regency and neo-classical architecture and the Spas themselves.

In the same way as when I walk into town through Lansdown and Montpellier or Bayshill, it is nigh on impossible not to pass a multitude of grand Grade II\* (and up!) listed buildings of the East India Company era, it is hard to escape meeting the ghosts of those colonials and military men who once occasioned some of those spaces and bringing to mind their stories.

I start near the beautiful Christchurch, built for the residents of the Lansdown estate and nearby Alstone. Lansdown and surrounding areas became the British base for many Anglo-Indian families, several, such as the Gaitskells, being rooted both in Cheltenham and India. Many of the church pews were rented to such families. A coincidence maybe but the pinnacles of Christchurch in Shimla do show a remarkable resemblance to those of Christchurch in Cheltenham.

A fine collection of memorials to many who served in India is to be found in the church including a particularly poignant one to Captain Christopher Codrington, a casualty of that fatal First Anglo-Afghan War. There are reminders of the Vellore Mutiny, and the Anglo-Maharatta and Anglo-Sikh Wars. Others commemorate illustrious careers such as those of Lieutenant General Sir Henry Sheehy Keating, who distinguished himself in the Mauritius campaign and Lieutenant General Thomas Fiddes whose service in Java and Burmah is recorded.

In 1881 the Reverend Robert Pargiter performed a baptism in the church in the medium of the Tamil language. Ruth, an *ayah* from Madras, and who had accompanied Colonel and Mrs Rowlandson from India, was the recipient.

Proceeding towards town I might recall Lieutenant Colonel Charles Pratt Kennedy, the founder of Shimla, the 'Cheltenham of the Indian Presidencies', who retired to live at 13, Lansdown Crescent and was buried in the New Cemetery. Nearby, in a house in Lansdown Terrace and marked by a blue plaque, lived Surgeon General William George Nicholas Manley VC who served with the Quetta field force in the Second Anglo-Afghan War. The construction of Lansdown Terrace having earlier been financed by the East India Company for its retirees.

Another local resident who was well known in the town, Lieutenant General Sir William Samson Whish, commanded the 1st Brigade of Horse Artillery at the second Siege of Bharatpur. His involvement in campaigns against the Sikhs in the Punjab,

where he commanded the Multan Field Force, engaged the attention of the 'Cheltenham *Looker-On*', the social media of the day for the gentry. One of the sons of Sir Charles Henry Darling, former governor of the Australian Colony of Victoria and resident of Lansdown Place, pursued a military career much of which was spent in India.

A large percentage of the homes in Lansdowne, Montpellier and elsewhere played sometime host to often sizeable Anglo-Indian families. Extensive Mews for the horses, carriages and, presumably, storage of sedan chairs lay behind many of the large terraces which were also furnished with quarters for governesses, servants and *ayahs*. Such households in Cheltenham would, however, have had to manage with a far smaller compliment of servants than in India. Lieutenant General Richard Tickell of the Bengal Engineers, whose memorial appears in Christchurch, came with his wife, five sons and two daughters, mother-in-law, butler and five other servants. Some families, such as the Prinseps, were very prominent in Anglo-Indian Society.

Lauriston House, for example, became the home of surgeon Thomas Richardson Colledge who, on qualifying, joined the Company's service in China where he founded the Medical Missionary Society.

In Montpellier I might be prompted to wonder whether the forerunner of the present Pump Room was the one where Major-General Arthur Wellesley, fresh from the Army in India where he had both defeated Tipu Sultan in the Anglo-Mysore Wars and shone in the Battle of Assaye, rescued the Vicomtesse de Gontaut-Biron's new ill-fitting garter on leaving the salon. Wellesley, later to become the Duke of Wellington and then Prime Minister, was to visit and reside in Cheltenham on several occasions. Just before his first coming to Cheltenham he had his one and only meeting with Admiral Lord Nelson. General Richard Podmore, whose grave is in Leckhampton, served at Seringapatnam, one of the famous battles where Wellington played a role.

Before I reach the once splendid Montpellier Arcade where in Mr Brown's Coffee and Cigar Divan one might have enjoyed the fragrance of 'Indian weed', I pass the former Mr Davies's Montpellier Library, publisher of the 'Looker-On', which adjoined the Montpellier Rotunda. During the Indian Mutiny, Cheltenham most eagerly awaited the 'Looker-On's' reports of the dispatches carried by the Overland Mail for this was a very worrying time. The Montpellier Walk is also where the well-known Bick Brothers once plied their trade as Portmanteau, Trunk and Bag Manufacturers specialising in Indian and Colonial Outfits, Tin and Air Tight Cases and Officers Barrack Furniture.

Turning around briefly, looking back towards Rotunda Circus, the caryatids of Montpellier Walk bring the wilful Lieutenant Colonel Kendal Coghill to mind, his flogging as a College lad for painting the statues of those 'armless ladies red, blue and green; his participation in the storming of the Kashmir Gate during the Mutiny and his amputating fellow Cheltenham College pupil Edmund Warrant's severely wounded arm with a penknife, throwing the severed arm into a ditch. Coghill was to receive Bahadur Shah Zafa, the last Mughal Emperor, as his prisoner. The memoirs of Colonel Edward Vibart, some-time resident of Cheltenham, provided some of the best observations of the violence that took place at Delhi. His father, a Cavalry Officer, died from wounds at Cawnpore whilst trying to escape by boat with his wife and children.

Another former College boy and Cheltenham resident, William Fraser McDonell, distinguished himself during the Mutiny and was awarded a rare civilian Victoria Cross for an heroic action that saved the lives of 35 European soldiers whilst under incessant

fire during an escape by boat from Arrah. An ornate drinking fountain stands in his memory opposite the High Court in Calcutta. A fourth Old Cheltonian, Captain Andrew Bogle, was also awarded the Victoria Cross for leading an attack into a loop-holed house in Unnao under heavy fire. Out of a total of 143 former Cheltenham College boys 19 lost their lives during the Mutiny including Bogle's brother, who was killed in the relief of Lucknow. A great many more took part.

In all probability there would have been particularly strong connections between Cheltenham and Officers of the Bengal Native Infantry Regiments, many of which mutinied. When the news of the Mutiny finally arrived much was cheerless, often concerning family and friends. That concern gave way to anger and, in India, retribution on an epic scale. It became a tragedy of monumental proportions. A fund was established for the relief of the British sufferers in India.

Further on, the Queen's Hotel invokes memories of the famous and highly respected General Sir Charles Napier who led the conquest of Sindh. Napier had retired to Wolseley Terrace in less than good health and had been occupying himself with writing his thoughts on baggage trains for the Indian Army but was to return to India at Wellington's behest to deal with the consequences of unsettling events in the Punjab, where Whish's forces had been engaged in the Siege of Multan.

The farewell dinner at the Hotel was attended by the Earl of Ellenborough, the controversial former Governor-General of India under whom Napier had served. Ellenborough's time on India was a troubled one and he owed a great deal to Napier. Amongst the many fellow Officers present at the dinner there were a good number who had themselves assisted Napier in India and were then in Cheltenham. Later quite a crowd turned out to wish him well at the station. Today his portrait presides over the hotel dining room, the name of the adjoining bar once commemorating his supposed one-word despatch that first appeared in Punch magazine '*Peccavi*'; I have sinned. The solid wooden bar itself came from India.

Ellenborough had purchased an estate in Southam, just outside Cheltenham, for his home, now another hotel, Ellenborough Park overlooking the Prestbury Park course he made available for racing. His portrait can be found behind reception. There is also a memorial to those who served under him in India as well as a number of relics he recovered from Indian Palaces. In the delightful tiny village Church of the Ascension nearby, once Ellenborough's private chapel, stained-glass commemorates those who fell in Afghanistan, the Sindh and Gwalior. There are busts of Ellenborough and his first wife, tributes to Wellington and Ellenborough's family and friends, a sword and shield and a marble font all of Indian origin.

That Great Game between Russia and the British Empire was triggered by Ellenborough's moves to expand the Company's trading into Central Asia when he was President of the Board of Control in Wellington's government and responsible for overseeing British India. The First Anglo-Afghan War and Ellenborough's subsequent troubles were in some way a direct consequence of that. When the dust finally settled, the Punjab was under Company control and the Koh-i-Noor diamond was on its way to England. Later Ellenborough became the de facto author of direct rule in India and the creation of the Raj.

In front of the Queen's Hotel stands a memorial to the Crimean War and, amongst others, honours Captain Richard Surtees of the 1st Bombay Lancers who died of

wounds received in action at the head of a detachment of Turkish Cavalry. It also speaks to me of the celebrated diarist Fanny Duberly who is mentioned in Queen Victoria's journals. Mrs Duberly insisted on following her husband's Regiment, the 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars, into battle. Not only had she witnessed the Cavalry charges at Balaclava but also later travelled out to India on the *S.S. Great Britain* with the Regiment and took part in a punishing 1800-mile journey on horseback through rural Rajputana in pursuit of the notorious Tantia Tope. Eventually Fanny found herself following the charge at Kotahki-Serai where another outstanding woman, the Rani of Jhansi, was fatally wounded. The Duberlys retired to the Park in Cheltenham.

A good number of the neo-classical stuccoed houses in Cheltenham display a white and primrose yellow colour scheme. Kings House on the Upper Promenade is one such building and on seeing that, I remember the excitement I felt when turning up a forgotten photograph that I had taken of the similarly painted and rather grand Saint James' Church in Delhi. Saint James' Church was badly damaged and pillaged during the Mutiny since however being much restored. The building of the church was commissioned by Colonel James Skinner, the famous Cavalry Officer. It was also designed in a neoclassical style and, even though Skinner was not a Cheltenham man, one might imagine it to be in some way another little piece of 'Cheltenham in India'.

The reality however is rather the opposite with neo-classical architecture in Madras and Calcutta, the 'City of Palaces', substantially predating any in Cheltenham. Cheltenham was still little more than the High Street when such fine buildings had already been erected along Chowringhee, opposite the Calcutta Maidan. No wonder those returning Anglo-Indians felt 'at home' in Cheltenham when they eventually discovered the new villas around Bays Hill and Imperial Square. Indeed, in Thackeray's world of *Vanity Fair* the fashionable places of the day were 'Cheltenham, all Chowringhee, all Calcutta'.

Interestingly St John's cathedral in Calcutta, which is loosely modelled on St Martin's in the Fields, was designed and built by Major James Agg. On his return to England Agg used his handsome fortune to acquire The Hewletts estate on the Cotswold scarp. He married the daughter of the local Gardner brewing family at St Mary's Church in Cheltenham and, with a certificate from Doctor Edward Jenner, retired early from the East India Company Service on health grounds. A memorial to James Agg can be found in St Mary's Church in Prestbury.

The foundation stone for the cathedral, now a church, then one of the first public buildings erected by the Company in Calcutta, was laid with full masonic honours under the auspices of Warren Hastings, the head of building committee. Zoffany donated his painting of the Last Supper to the church when it was consecrated. That church has huge historical importance with connections to many famous Calcutta residents of the day including the Reverend and Begum Johnson, and the Thackery family. One, Bishop Heber, died as result of taking a cold bath on a particularly hot day. A biography of him was published by the vicar of St James, Cheltenham, in which church a grandson of the zealous Elijah Impey, first Chief Justice of Bengal and a close friend of Hastings, was commemorated by his parents, then resident in Cheltenham.

Another famous Cavalry officer, this time with local connections, was the ruthless Brevet Major William Hodson who very much distinguished himself during the Mutiny by capturing the last of the Mughal Emperors. He was born just outside Gloucester.

Behind Kings House stands Cheltenham Ladies' College where the daughters of numerous Anglo-Indians received their education. The *Ladie's College Magazine* is a real treasure and records elements of life in India, sometimes in considerable detail. One edition recalls the journey to Kabul of former student Lillias Hamilton, a pioneer doctor and author and court physician to Amir Abdur Rahman Khan in Afghanistan. Others talk about life as a Collector's wife, living under canvas, the marriage of an Indian Prince, nursing in the Indian Army, Zenana Mission work, meeting the Dalai Lama, trekking in the Himalaya and a variety of other subjects. It seems to be the women that wrote about life in India. The men wrote about their exploits.

For a period in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, girls at the College wishing to learn Sanskrit would have been taught by the prominent Indian scholar and author Pandita Ramabai Saraswati whose parents had died in that terrible 1877 famine. Ramabai was a Christian convert, social activist and champion of women's rights in India. She was one of the few Indian women of her day to find a place in the *Dictionary of Indian Biography*. Ramabai was awarded the Kaisar-i-Hind medal for her services to India.

One of the girl's boarding houses was run by a Mrs Fraser, a survivor of the Indian Mutiny. Florence, her daughter and only 2 years old at the time of the mutiny, was to become a student at the College.

A little further down, close to the present-day East India Café, at what was once number 10 Promenade Terrace, I find the birthplace of Robert Bruce Foote, a geologist. Foote served in the Geological Survey of India and, in the process of geological mapping, discovered countless prehistoric artefacts. His personal collection, now a national treasure, can be found in the Madras Government Museum.

On many occasions Anglo-Indian Officers and Indian troops served beyond the boundaries of India. Equally many members of the British Army served in India. The Boer War memorial outside the Municipal Offices on the Promenade records the names, of those who served and died in South Africa including several linked to service in India. Colonel Dick-Cunyngham VC of the Gordon Highlanders had earned his Victoria Cross for conspicuous gallantry and coolness at the attack on the Sherpur Pass, also during the Second Anglo-Afghan War.

The present-day Regent's Arcade, the side entrance to which I pass on my right, occupies the site of the once well-known *Plough*; a coaching Inn with stables and once the focal point of the High Street. Warren Hastings, a particularly important figure in the story of the East India Company and occasional visitor to Cheltenham, once inherited an interest in that establishment. Hastings was present in Bengal during the 'Black Hole of Calcutta' episode and married a widow of one of its victims. After a brilliant career, where in effect he became the first Governor General of India and a later impeachment and seven-year long political trial, Hastings was fully acquitted and retired, with his second wife, to Daylesford House near Stow-on-the-Wold. Hastings' time in India saw the demise of Mughal power, opening up a large part of the Ganges Basin, and the Carnatic Wars resulting in the diminishment of French influence in India.

Arriving in front of what is now Waterstone's book shop on the Promenade I recall the former Imperial Club which once occupied that building, the former Assembly Rooms on the High Street, where Anglo-Indian members of the Cheltenham and Gloucestershire Club could enjoy 'the finest curries' in all England and the later and still extant New Club. Club life was an important feature of their time in India and these

were havens where members could partake in convivial conversations about events in far-flung places without, for the sake of politeness, feeling the need have to suppress their 'war stories' or the vernacular expressions they had acquired in the subcontinent. Even today returnees can sometimes find it difficult to share some of their experiences with those less adventured.

As I walk on I spy St Margaret's Terrace, developed by the Honourable Katherine Monson, daughter of the 4<sup>th</sup> Baron Monson, and whose relative Lieutenant Colonel William Monson, on Wellington's watch, was fated to endure a retreat that now bears his name and may have been one of the greatest humiliations a British Army ever endured. Monson's entire army of more than 10,000 was virtually wiped out in very much the same region visited years later by Mrs Duberly. This eventually led to the fall of Deeg and the first Siege of Bharatpur by the Company's forces. Lieutenant General Richard Tickell was present at both actions as was General George Swiney who is memorialised in Leckhampton. The Anglo-Maratha Wars continued for some years.

Nearby is the Masonic Hall built for Foundation Lodge 82 with the support of James Tynte Agg-Gardner, a descendent of James Agg's youngest son, who inherited the grandparental brewery business. At the time there were already Masonic Lodges in Calcutta and it became popular for new Company employees to become Masons before embarking for India. Kendall Coghill was one such man. Many of these continued that association on return to the British Isles, including in Cheltenham.

Continuing further I find Trinity Church exhibiting, just as the later Christchurch and to some extent the earlier Minster, so many memorials to Anglo-Indians with East India Company and Indian Military connections. Many of those who served in India had strong Irish connections and this is also borne out by some of the memorials. A good number of the memorials in the church and its crypt predate Cheltenham College and its own very extensive connections with India, forged over many years. Interestingly the crypt contains the remains of both Amelia Fancourt, survivor and widow of the 1806 mutiny at Vellore and her husband Colonel St. John Fancourt, commandant of the fort, who was murdered in the uprising. One wonders how the husband's remains were repatriated to England!

Were I to venture beyond Trinity, I would find plaques marking the homes of William Fraser McDonnell and Charles Sturt, the Australian explorer, the son of a Company judge, born in Bengal. I would find Kenilworth on Pittville Lawn where, the Coghill family and later that of the Francis Day the pioneer ichthyologist lived. Many old India hands, such as the Whinyates, lived on the north side of Cheltenham and in and around Pittville and the squares.

As I retrace my steps I divert along the High Street looking for the location of a relatively modest house once numbered 349 which I find near to St Mary's and facing the site of the onetime Moghul style archways of the New Market Arcade. This was once the home of Sophia Hull, a young lady who in 1817 married Sir Stamford Raffles, another very notable East India Company man who was largely responsible for the Company's expansion into the Far East, then best known for the capture of Java and, later, founding Singapore. The acquisition of Java was one of a number of opportunities that arose to increase the Company's sphere of influence during the Napoleonic Wars. Raffles had leased number 3, Royal Crescent for six weeks at the same time as the Hull family moved to Cheltenham.

Seven years later, returning to England from the Eastern Archipelago, Sir Stamford and Lady Raffles came directly to Cheltenham to visit their last surviving daughter who had been sent to Sophia's mother for the sake of her health. They also needed to convalesce and recover from an overlong and difficult journey home and remained for several months. Gloucestershire Music Academy's gamelan is a fitting reminder of Raffle's visits to the town; Raffles himself having brought a fine example of such instruments from Java.

Both Raffles, the founder of the Zoological Society of London and its later Fellow, Francis Day, the greatest authority of his day on the fishes of India, made significant contributions to the Society. Another naturalist donating work to the Zoological Society of London was Colonel Samuel Tickell who made significant contributions in the fields of ornithology and mammalogy. Colonel George Basevi was yet another. He was a microscopist and retired to from India to Prestbury. George was, for a period, Grand Master of Foundation Lodge 82. His younger brother, James Palladio Basevi, was one of a couple of notable surveyors educated at Cheltenham College. James was one of the College's brightest pupils and became deputy superintendent of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India. Three pendulum clocks were installed at the Survey of India offices in Dehradun in his memory. The other was Lieutenant Colonel Charles Henry Dudley Ryder, Surveyor General of India who the Royal Geographical Society honoured, for important explorations in Tibet, the Himalayas and Brahmaputra.

Another famous visitor to the Royal Crescent was the young Princess Victoria, later to become Empress of India, who came to Cheltenham to visit the Duke of Gloucester when he occupied number 18.

In the main, Cheltenham's churches and graveyards are littered with memorials that resonate with connections to India and the East India Company however I find myself unable to pay my respects to any Anglo-Indians who might have passed through the doors of St Mary's Chapel to make their final resting place in the New Cemetery, as all their memorials have long disappeared. For better or for worse, such is how Cheltenham chose to remember publicly. Even in Delhi, in the Company's old Lothian cemetery, not too far from the Kashmir Gate and Saint James' Church, I was able to find memorials of much the same vintage as in Trinity Church and which although badly neglected at the time have recently been renovated. The nearby Christian Nicholson's cemetery was well tended for as was the grave of 'the Hero of Delhi', Brigadier-General John Nicholson, whose mother was in Cheltenham at the time of the Mutiny. Anglo-India built most of its grand memorials in India. The Archaeological Survey of India is faced with a formidable task and it is sad that, there also, not all sites are always as well cared for as one might wish.

St Peter's Church at Leckhampton has a substantial number of memorials to Anglo-Indians including McDonell and the Duberlys. Another, Major General Joseph Graham was a one-time assistant to Major General Sir William Henry Sleeman, the Superintendent for the Suppression of Thugee. There are also several successful indigo planters including James Cox, David Russell Crawford and George Nevile Wyatt. A measure of Cox's success was his ability to purchase Thirlestaine Hall.

The most striking memorial one is to the wife and children of Major Henry Lloyd Evans who were crushed when the barracks roof collapsed during the Siege of Cawnpore and 'thus by God's Mercy .... were rescued from the final Massacre'. It also remembers Mrs Evans' brother Lieutenant Charles Gambier who was mortally wounded in the assault

on Delhi. Another casualty of Cawnpore from a well-known Cheltenham family was Lieutenant Charles Battine.

St Mary's, now Cheltenham Minster, also had a memorial to a casualty of the Mutiny: a Captain Charles Steevens who was killed in a sortie against the mutineers at Lucknow. By the time of the Mutiny the Company had been in India for more than 250 years. The events that then passed in what was, in some ways a civil-cum-religious war rather than one of independence, were as complex as they were dreadfully barbaric. On all sides the excesses knew no bounds. Angry religious zealots bore a considerable responsibility for the carnage. To the Hindus and Moslems there was a strong belief that the British had offended their religions, in the case of the latter creating an opportunity for Islamic Jihadists. To hard-line evangelists such as St Mary's former Rector, the Reverend Francis Close, non-Christians were simply heathens. The past, of course, was a different place, and mediaeval India was itself another whole world apart. It would be a mistake to judge those events wholly by today's standards, especially when not having shared the same experiences. Catastrophic and appalling brutality on an epic scale was to reappear when Independence inevitably arrived, this time between Hindus and Moslems.

Among the other interesting memorials in the Minster is one to Brigadier General John Pennycuik and his son, both of whom were killed in the fighting at Chillianwalla that proved so disastrous for the Company. Their story became the subject of a painting by Walter Stanley Paget. In Cheltenham. Sir Charles Napier made the effort to personally meet Mrs Pennycuik to express his high appreciation for her husband's services and to deliver the medals to which he was entitled. She eventually retired to a grace and favour apartment in Hampton Court with her large household of children, grandchildren and servants. Another son of Pennycuik, an alumnus of Cheltenham College, is still revered in Tamil Nadu for the personal sacrifices he made to enable the construction of the Mullaperiyar Dam. Lieutenant General Jackson Muspratt-Williams of the Madras fusiliers, once Chairman of Cheltenham General Hospital, was also able to include dam building in the list of his achievements.

Many more memorials can be found in the older part of the extensive Bouncers Lane Cemetery including one for Colonel Charles William Hodson who, like Raffles, met Napoleon in St Helena, then an important staging post for shipping on the India routes. Stained glass windows in the magnificent All Saints Church placed, in remembrance of General Charles Phayre Hildebrand of the Indian Army, are well worth a detour. The eventful 1895 Chitral expedition is also featured there in another memorial to Captain Allan Peebles. A memorial placed in memory of General Sir David Leighton, another veteran of Seringapatnam, can be found in the Charlton Kings St Mary's parish church. There are others in Prestbury and elsewhere.

Sadly, in several churches, a number of memorials, such as that of Steevens, are no longer on display.

On my way home, I wonder about the veracity of that anecdote once told that Cheltenham College holds the Public-School record for the number of former pupils killed by tigers. I wonder where exactly did Sir James Outram, 'the Bayard of India' stay when he visited in Cheltenham, how was the disastrous retreat from Kabul reported in the *'Looker-On'*, what connections did Cheltenham have with intelligence work in the Great Game or other prominent episodes of British involvement in India and what

interesting artefacts from the time of 'John Company' and the subsequent Indian Empire might be squirrelled away in the repositories of the Wilson Museum or elsewhere?

The Wilson, in fact, always does have a small number of items with Anglo-Indian connections on display although rather more in its storerooms including artefacts from the 1903-4 Younghusband expedition to Tibet – actual relics of the Great Game. It was in this campaign that a former College student, Colonel John Duncan Grant, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions in the storming of the Gyantse Dzong. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the Company period pre-dates photography and of course film.

Dean Close School, a relatively late arrival on the scene had its own connections with India. Harry Verrier Holman Elwin a former student and supporter of Indian Independence enjoyed a particularly notable career, abandoning the clergy to work with Mahatma Gandhi.

Without guidance, evidence of the Anglo-Indian connection is hard to find for the casual passer-by. Thankfully we do have the Cheltenham College and Chapel and the wonderful other listed buildings that many of the Anglo-Indians frequented including some fine hotels with strong Indian connections. Within easy reach is The Cockerell's extraordinary neo-Mughal Sezincote House, drawing on the Indian landscape artwork of the Daniells and creating the inspiration for the extravagant Brighton Pavilion. Serving under Colonel John Cockerell in India was Major General George Prole, whose memorial is in Trinity. Further afield is Daylesford, the former home of Warren Hastings, whose memorial can be found in Daylesford churchyard.

Perhaps the most visible reminders of this time in Cheltenham are those scattered memorials and, for those with time to spare, endless volumes of the 'Looker-On' in the library. For the armchair detective, the *Cheltenham College Register 1841-1910* is another gold mine, chronicling numerous connections with India throughout that period. The College archives provide snapshots into quite a different era where duty and sportsmanship were paramount. Hunting and pig sticking were clearly popular pastimes for some. Many former Cheltenham College boys distinguished themselves in India whether in the military, the law, education or the sciences. One notable example is General Sir Arthur Power Palmer, one-time President of the Old Cheltonians and Commander-in-Chief, India. Another is Colonel Sir John Underwood Bateman-Champain who was very much instrumental in delivering the first telegraph line between India and the UK. His family was based in Cheltenham for many years.

The College chapel and Library, with its medal collection, are well worth a visit when open to the public.

Many of the stories of those individual Anglo-Indians are today, at best, opaque and, where they exist, sometimes inconsistent. However, with some dedicated research it is possible to connect many of the town's Anglo-Indian visitors and residents with every phase of that era from when the Company dominated life in India right through the Raj; the military episodes probably being the most accessible. Of all of those, prior to the First World War, the Sepoy Mutiny of the Bengal Army was the one that impacted Cheltenham most directly. There are tales of quite remarkable and heroic actions and others of a far more salutary kind. But, for better or for worse, it is all our history, unknown to many residents of Cheltenham and probably invisible to modern day visitors. In fact, that history is hiding in plain sight all across the town.

Maybe not Paradise Lost, rather Paradise Mislaid.

It is nevertheless entirely possible to enjoy an Indian experience in Cheltenham. For the inner man there are a good number of absolutely excellent Indian restaurants. For those wishing to rejuvenate there is a beautifully Indian themed Spa at Ellenborough Park and for those eager for the authentic experience of tasting that uniquely alkaline Spa water, the wonderful Pittville Pump Room. In season, sports fans can find world class polo close by in Cirencester Park and look for the former home of Charles Brookes, one of the White Rajahs of Sarawak. Shopaholics can find a wide selection of Indian artefacts in Tetbury's many antique shops while those who enjoy reading can search for books written by Cheltenham authors such as those by Brigadier Reginald General George Burton, a historian and author in later life. His passing was recorded by the Bombay Natural History Society whose journal noted his extensive experience of tiger hunting and lamented the loss of a significant sportsman-naturalist.

The breadth and depth of the historical connection between Cheltenham and India is so great that it is impossible to be captured in a mere few pages, it at all in total. It seems highly likely that descendants of some of those Anglo-Indian families still reside in the town. Given the great interest in India that exists there is undoubtedly more that can and should be done to remember that profound Anglo-Indian connection and make it more accessible today. Many went to India for reasons other than purely military and all sorts of professions were represented. Working in India was always a challenge whether the purpose was business, to administrate, to ply a trade or profession such as the law, medicine and engineering or to run a household.

Whilst it might be fashionable in some circles these days to focus on the high-handedness of British rule there is extensive evidence of good intentions and excellent work being done. There were many positives to Colonial rule. British rule created a very professional civil service and introduced and maintained law and order in a land divided into many and varied competing fiefdoms. There is good reason to be proud of its achievements in such fields as transport and communications, medicine, language and education, water supply and irrigation, cartography, natural history and geology. Some of its greatest successes stem from the protection of human rights; especially in the context of women's welfare. where, for example, sati and slavery were outlawed and the age of consent raised. All of these are worth celebrating.

For better or for worse, this is our history.

Enjoy exploring the connection between Cheltenham and India and bring the characters, the extraordinary stories and adventures of that episode back to life.

Rediscover Incredible India!

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Societies and Foundation Lodge 82 have all tendered their kind assistance. Any errors are mine and mine alone.

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## Notes

There are a-good-many documents that contain information connecting Cheltenham and India, some more expansive than others. Others concentrate on the History of British India. The following would make a good start for anyone wishing to explore further.

Bailey, Eva, 'Cheltenham and the Indian Connection', *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* **14**, (CLHS 1998) identifies many people with Anglo-Indian connections in Cheltenham.

Buettner, Elizabeth, *Empire Families* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

Dalrymple, William, *Return of a King* (Bloomsbury Publishing 2012) explores the times of the First Afghan war.

Dalrymple, William, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi, 1857* (Bloomsbury Publishing 2006) gives a very detailed account of the events in Delhi.

Fancourt, Amelia, 'An Account of the Mutiny at Vellore', *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 14 June 1842, p.2

Fraser, Stuart, *Exiled from Glory*, PhD Thesis, (University of Gloucestershire, 2003) looks at the lives of Anglo-Indians in Cheltenham.

Hunter A., A., *The Cheltenham College Register 1841-1910* (G. Bell and Sons 1911) contains very many references to the careers of former college boys in India as do the records of the Old Cheltonians. Available on-line.

Keay, John, *The Honourable Company* (Harper Collins 1991) chronicles the history of the East India Company.

Cheltenham Ladies' College Digital Archives contain copies of the *Ladies' College Magazine* (CLC). For example: Boothman, Mrs K. 'Adventures of an early Housemistress', *Cheltenham Ladies' College Magazine*, **118**, (CLC 1998) records the story of Mrs Fraser.

The Cheltenham *Looker-On* (Montpellier Library) contains extensive references to the India, particularly the events surrounding the Mutiny. Available from the British Newspaper Archive and the Cheltenham Local History Library.

Hopkirk, Peter, *The Great Game* (Oxford University Press 1990) explores the tensions that developed between Britain and Russia over India.

Margery, H., Edgar, D., and Waller, J., *How the Other Half Lived*, Chris Green Editor, (published privately 2008) provides background regarding Anglo-Indians in Lansdown. Available from the Wilson Museum.

Miller, Eric, 'Eminent Cheltonians and their memorials at Leckhampton', available on-line, is invaluable when visiting St Peter's. His 'Plantocrats and Rentiers - Cheltenham's Slave-owners', *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* **34**, (CLHS 2018) and 'From Rajahs to Rogan Josh', *Cheltenham Local History Society Newsletter* **85**, (CLHS July 2016) are also useful sources.

O'Connor, David, A., 'The Burtons of Hambrook and Bafford Grange', *Research Bulletin* **50**, (Charlton Kings Local History Society 2004) gives much detail regarding two members of the large Burton military family. Reginald George Burton wrote several books and papers on Indian History and Tiger hunting.

*Pittville History Works* is an online source identifying a number of Anglo-Indians living in Pittville.

*Queen Victoria's Journals*, available on-line, offer a fascinating insight into what was happening on the 'home front'.

Rudman, Stanley, *Victorian Legacy* (published privately), 1998 records the history behind memorials in Christchurch. Available to inspect at the Local History Library.

Tisdall, E., *Mrs Duberly's Campaigns* (Jarolds Publishing 1963) summarises her journals from both the Crimea and India. The original Indian reference is Duberly, Mrs H., '*Campaigning experiences in Rajpootana and Central India during the suppression of the Mutiny, 1857-58*' (Smith, Elder and Co, 1859).

Vibart, Edward Daniel Hamilton, *The Sepoy Mutiny as Seen by a Subaltern: From Delhi to Lucknow* (Smith, Elder and Co 1898), describes that episode.

Much other information relating to the history of India can be found online including numerous biographies and texts. Many older documents are long out of copyright. Archive.org is a very useful source. Gloucestershire Archives also hold a variety of information on the period.