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**'EXILED FROM GLORY':
ANGLO-INDIAN SETTLEMENT IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHELTENHAM**

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Abstract

The thesis is a study of the Anglo-Indians, many of whom settled in Cheltenham during the major part of the nineteenth century including a database of Anglo-Indians connected with Cheltenham compiled from a wide variety of sources. A number of conclusions are made about the role of the Anglo-Indians and their position in the middle class. These include estimates of the number of Anglo-Indians in Cheltenham and their contribution to the development of the town. Studies of a number of individuals has provided evidence for an analysis of Anglo-Indian attitudes and values, especially in relation to such issues as identity, status, beliefs and education. Separate chapters deal with the middle-class life-style of the Anglo-Indians as it developed in Cheltenham and elsewhere. The importance of the family and friendship links is examined and compared to the experience of other middle-class people in the Victorian period. The strength of religion and its contribution to Anglo-Indian values is investigated, especially the influence of the evangelical movement. The crucial role of education is highlighted especially with the growth of the public schools. The role of the middle class, and especially the Anglo-Indians, in the rise of voluntary societies and other public work is examined. It is also demonstrated how the Anglo-Indians represented a wide range of incomes, despite the sharing of particular values and beliefs. A study of Anglo-Indian women further develops an understanding of the position of the family and how it differed from the normal middle-class expectations. The study concludes with an appreciation of the circumstances which led many Anglo-Indians to feel alienated to some degree from their fellow countrymen, while at the same time recognising that many of their attitudes and values

were very similar to the section of the middle class referred to as the pseudo-gentry.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed Date 28 August 2003

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

When William Hawkins landed at Surat on the west coast of India on August 24th 1608 he began a British presence in India that was to last for almost 350 years. He was sent by the East India Company with instructions to establish a trading station or, as it was then called, a factory. The venture was the result of a charter granted to a group of London merchants eight years earlier by Queen Elizabeth. In time, the company's activities grew by the issue of successive charters, giving it the right to acquire territory, exercise jurisdiction, make alliances, declare war and conclude peace, command troops and coin money.

Much of this came about at a time of upheaval in the history of India. In 1707, after the death of the last of the great Moghul emperors, their empire began to disintegrate. Foreign invaders marched in to seize what lands they could. Former Moghul governors, dispossessed Hindu nobles and soldiers of fortune founded independent principalities. Caught up in these events, the East India Company were obliged to enlist soldiers for the defence of its now valuable trade. In these troubled times, the Company became a military as well as a mercantile power. The need to protect its commercial activities from hostile rivals was eventually to result in the Company running its own private army. This caused some people, including George III, to observe that a trading company had no business to have an army. This anomaly, however, continued until the end of the Company's rule in India, and, in fact, by end of the eighteenth century the East India Company had acquired no less than three armies, one for each of the

three presidencies - Bengal, Madras and Bombay. They consisted of a small European contingent and a large native force, comprising cavalry, artillery and infantry.

When war broke out between France and England in Europe, this new military power was soon in conflict with the French who had themselves established trading posts in India and likewise had enlisted soldiers to protect them. An army raised by the Company and commanded by a former clerk in its Madras office, Robert Clive, defeated the French and their Indian allies; and at Plassey in 1757 Clive won a victory which effectively made the British masters of that rich part of the subcontinent known as Bengal.

During the rest of the century the East India Company extended its power and influence by defeating those princes who challenged its expansion, entering into alliances and treaties of protection with others who were prepared to see their own power decreased, and by reducing some to the state of Company pensioners. In 1773 Parliament, long disturbed by the virtually uncontrolled empire being established by the East India Company in India, passed a Regulating Act which made the Company responsible for governing the territories it controlled, and appointed one of its senior officials, Warren Hastings, Governor-General of Bengal with supervisory authority over the other two Presidencies, Madras and Bombay. In 1784 Parliament, increasingly alarmed by the Company's omnipotence and the behaviour of its servants, passed a new India Act which brought them more firmly under the control of the British Government. The Board of Directors still appointed the Company's officials in India; but these officials were now under the ultimate authority of a minister of the Crown, known as

the President of the Board of Control. The Governor-General in Calcutta, in whose appointment the Government in London was to have the final say, was also brought more securely under the control of the Cabinet.

The East India Company, in fact, became the agent of the British Government in India. Gone were the days when its ill-paid employees made vast fortunes by trading on their own account: they were now officials of a centralised bureaucracy whose reputation for integrity became widely respected.¹ This reputation was much increased after 1833 when the Company, compensated with an annuity of £630,000 charged on the territorial revenues of India, was made to surrender its monopoly of the India and China trades and became a kind of sovereign agency, administering its Indian possessions on behalf of the Crown, and only incidentally paying its stockholders their guaranteed 10 per cent dividend.²

In addition to its responsibility as the British Government's representatives in the civil administration of India, the Company was also responsible for the armies which each of the Presidencies - Bengal, Madras and Bombay - separately maintained. These armies were manned by native soldiers, but most of their officers were Europeans. As well as these regiments of the East India Company's armies, there were also stationed in India various regiments of the British Army, known in the reign of Queen Victoria as Queen's Regiments and serving for the period of their overseas duty under the orders of the

¹Hibbert, C. *The Great Mutiny: India 1857* (London: Allen Lane, 1978) pp.17-19

² Morris, J. *Heaven's Command* (London: Faber & Faber, 1973) p.116

Commander-in-Chief, India. The involvement of royal troops in India dated back to 1662 when King Charles II received Bombay from the Portuguese on his marriage to Catherine of Braganza. He sent out as a garrison a battalion of 400 regulars under Sir Abraham Shipman but the Portuguese had not heard of the arrangement and refused to let the troops land. They had to wait on an inhospitable island near Goa until authority arrived from Lisbon. Eventually, in 1665, Bombay was handed over, but by that time only one officer and 113 men of the king's troops survived and Mahrattas were recruited to make up the numbers. Three years later the king made Bombay over to the Company in return for a loan of £50,000 at 6 per cent and a rent of £10 a year, which was paid until 1739. The mixed regiment was transferred to the Company's service. This was the first instance of royal troops being sent to India, but it was not until 1754, with the arrival of the 39th Foot, that the first complete regiment began its service in India. From that date British regiments were to be stationed in India until 1947. At any time in the nineteenth century, soldiers were the largest part of the British population of India, including a large contingent of the regular British army. During the first half of the century this comprised a force of nearly 30,000. They were supplemented by a rather smaller number of European soldiers directly recruited by the East India Company.

The East India Company was a major employer, with its own civil service, its own fleets and armies, its own military academy and its own administrative college. In 1856 the Company employed in India 6000 army officers, 800 civil servants, 160 chaplains, 862 surgeons and 260 Indian Navy officers.³ Any young man wishing to become an officer,

³ McCosh, J. *Advice to Officers in India* (London: W.H. Allen, 1856)

but lacking the necessary financial endowments, could join the Indian forces. If he was prepared to face the high probability of dying in the attempt, especially in the early days, the East India Company's military service was an attractive proposition. The risks were enormous; between 1760 and 1834 about one cadet in four sent to India lived to return to England.⁴ Nevertheless, it provided a means of outdoor relief for substantial numbers of the upper and middle classes. India gave the prospect of gentlemanly employment, with young men of the "propertyless leisured class" eagerly competing for service as officers in the East India Company's armies in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁵ The attractions of a military career in India were self-evident to those for whom money was a major consideration. In India the cost of living was low. Servants were cheap and plentiful. The officers of the local forces were not expected to keep up the same level of expenditure as those of the British Army, nor did British Indian society offer the same opportunities for conspicuous spending as that in the United Kingdom. The average officer of the Indian Service was able to enjoy a far higher standard of living than that to which he could have aspired at home. After the 1857 mutiny, the Company's European forces were merged with those of the crown, while the number of British troops in India was greatly increased. The British garrison in India at full strength at the end of the century consisted of some 75,000 British soldiers.⁶

⁴ Woodham-Smith *The Reason Why* (London: Constable, 1953) p.9

⁵ Bourne, J.M. *Patronage and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986) p.32

⁶ Marshall, P.J. 'British Immigration into India', Emmer, P.C. & Moerner, M. (eds.) *European Expansion and migration: Essays on the intercontinental Migration from Africa, Asia and Europe* (New York & Oxford: Berg, 1992) p.181

Even when the East India Company's rule was handed over to the British government, India continued to supply ample employment outlets for a professional or 'service' middle class.⁷ In most cases these men went to India to further their careers, and had no intention of settling in India for good. Those who survived long enough returned to Britain when they retired:

About half the Civilians, worn out by their labours and by the climate, would retire on a generous pension in their early 40s. They rarely remained in India. Their custom was to return home to England and to set up house as independent gentlemen, whole communities of them clustering together in such places as Cheltenham. Many did not live to taste the pleasures of Cheltenham; they fell victim to local disease and died in India.⁸

It is with those Anglo-Indians who retired to Cheltenham that this thesis is primarily concerned.⁹

Until the middle of the eighteenth century Cheltenham was a small market town of some 1,500 inhabitants. Although the mineral springs had been discovered as early as 1716, it was only in the second half of the century that Cheltenham started to become popular as a summer resort and spa. Even then growth was slow with travel difficult and a severe lack of good lodgings. In the summer of 1788 King George III paid a personal visit to Cheltenham and stayed for some five weeks.

⁷ Judd, D. *Empire: the British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present* (London: Harper Collins, 1996) p.4

⁸ Cross, C. *The Fall of the British Empire* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1968) p.39

⁹ The term *Anglo-Indian* was used to describe the British in India until 1911, when people of mixed blood adopted the label for themselves instead of the term 'Eurasian'. Due to the fact that it frequently occurs in the sources referring to the British in India, I have chosen to use the term 'Anglo-Indian' in its original definition.

Although not in itself a remarkable event, the royal patronage of the spa helped to bring the attractions of Cheltenham to the attention of fashionable society and encouraged the leisured classes with money to spend to visit the town themselves. The growth of the service economy resulting from this development caused Cheltenham to increase from a small town with a population of 3,076 in 1801 to a resort of 35,062 fifty years later.

Cheltenham continued to grow because of the patronage of the ever-expanding numbers of leisured wealthy, rather than the custom of the limited and finite ranks of the landed classes.¹⁰ Cheltenham attracted retired people of means, including military and naval officers, and Indian and colonial servants, rather than the aristocracy. This new type of middle-class visitor was more inclined to settle in the town on a more or less permanent basis. As the fashion for visiting inland watering places declined, Cheltenham was able to continue to expand because of the increase in the number of people choosing to stay:

House-rent is comparatively low, whilst articles of consumption are all very cheap, and many visitors, in consequence, become permanent residents.¹¹

As a result the character of Cheltenham gradually changed, becoming well-known as a retirement resort for middle-class people with independent means including a significant number of Anglo-Indians. As the number of people with shared experiences in India grew, still more decided to settle in the town:

¹⁰ Thompson, F.M.L. 'Town and City', *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950* Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) p.21

¹¹ Henriques *Cheltenham and its Vicinity* (1851) p.175

Those who have lived in India, and have there acquired tastes in some measure proper to the country, find many with whom they can talk over familiar scenes and events. Cheltenham is found to agree remarkably well with this class of residents.¹²

The 'class of residents' referred to by Lee in 1851 included persons from a variety of backgrounds with a common experience - they had lived in India. The term 'Anglo-Indian' as used in the nineteenth century referred to these people; quite simply they were British people who had lived in India at some time in their life, whether because they were born there or because their work took them there.

It is well known that Cheltenham was a favourite place for Anglo-Indians to live in retirement, and it is only in recent generations that it has lost its 'curry and colonels' reputation.¹³ However, little has been written about this group. In the only modern history of Cheltenham by Gwen Hart, the importance of the Anglo-Indians is recognised, but the scale of their contribution and the ways in which they influenced the town is not explored in any detail.¹⁴ This neglect has meant that the history of the Anglo-Indians has remained largely unrecorded and prey to myth and anecdote, not only in Cheltenham but in Britain as a whole.

The Anglo-Indians did not live in isolation; they formed part of the middle class. An exploration of the structure of the middle class and an inquiry into middle-class attitudes takes the thesis beyond the confines of a local study and firmly places it in the debate on the role of the

¹² Lee, E. *Cheltenham and its resources: mineral waters, climate, etc.* (London: Whitaker & Co., 1851) p.36

¹³ Cross, C. *The Fall of the British Empire* p.39

¹⁴ Hart, G. *A History of Cheltenham* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1965, 1991 edition)

middle class in nineteenth-century towns and cities. A still further dimension is determined by the fact that the Anglo-Indians had been actors on a wider stage. In order to fully understand their lives it is necessary to look at how their experience of service in India shaped their attitudes and distinguished them from other members of the middle class. The study examines the beliefs and values of the Anglo-Indians. Private memoirs, contemporary literature and the press provide insights into these beliefs and values. These aspects of middle-class identity, especially in relation to service in India, have received scant attention by social historians. In order to explore the attitudes and values of the Anglo-Indians of nineteenth-century Britain, and to examine their place in British society at that time has required the completion of several objectives. A database of Anglo-Indians associated with Cheltenham has provided the means to gather and present information about these people. In addition the database has been an aid to interpreting the information and suggesting further areas of inquiry and issues that need to be examined. Issues have also been identified by a study of the literature and historiography of the subject. Key areas include the origins of Cheltenham's associations with the Anglo-Indians, the effect they had on the development of the town, their social and cultural values, the significance of family and friendship links, the role of the Anglo-Indians compared with other members of the middle class, their moral and religious attitudes and the role of education in cultivating and perpetuating these values and the idea of service in India.

The database contains the names of 1181 individuals associated with Cheltenham.¹⁵ The data includes details on dates of birth and death, rank, service information including regiment and dates, address in Cheltenham, family connections, notes on any positions held in the community, and place of death if other than Cheltenham. An important part of the database also gives details of sources for the information. In addition to the main database shorter lists have been compiled of Anglo-Indians in Cheltenham: for example, a list of Anglo-Indians from the 1861 Census Returns for Cheltenham, which includes useful information such as the size and composition of Anglo-Indian households. Lists have also been made of all the pupils who entered Cheltenham College in July 1841 and 1900. This provides details of family and subsequent career of the 128 boys who attended the school in its first year and similar information about the 146 boys who joined the school 59 years later. This gives the opportunity to make comparisons and chart any changes that occurred in this time. These lists have supplied data for the main database and in addition have been analysed in their own right. It has also been noted that, although in the public sphere most of the Anglo-Indians were male, a significant proportion of them were women with husbands, brothers or other relatives with experience of serving in India. No account would be complete without taking into consideration their role especially in relation to the importance of the family.

The thesis investigates the significance of family and friendship links. The family was the central institution of the Victorian middle class. The cult

¹⁵ 590 Indian Army Officers, 331 British Army Officers, 130 Naval Officers, 130 Civil Service and Medical officials.

of the home and the sanctity of the family were at the heart of all aspects of middle-class life. The home was a potent symbol for Victorians, evoking ideas of peace, harmony, stability, love and contentment. The family had also become a central feature of religious life. It was enshrined in the evangelical movement which provided a model for many middle-class families.¹⁶ By the time the East India Company's rule came to an end in 1858, many families had sent several generations of sons to serve in India. In many cases this tradition of service in India continued into the following century; some families could claim an association with India spanning more than 150 years, only ending with Indian independence in 1947.

Since the Anglo-Indians were a distinct group it has been possible to measure to some extent their contribution to the social and cultural life of nineteenth-century Cheltenham. The influence of religion on Anglo-Indian attitudes and beliefs has also been considered as well as education which was an area closely connected with religion and was seen as important by many Anglo-Indians in Cheltenham. Cheltenham College was established to serve the children of retired servants of the empire and many of its pupils were the sons of retired or serving Anglo-Indians.

We are told that the history of the British Empire is still too often written as if it were completely separate and distinct from the history of the British nation, and yet the truth of the matter is that Britain was very much a part of the empire, just as the rest of the empire was very much

¹⁶ Turner, F. 'The Victorian Crisis of Faith and the Faith that was Lost' in Helmstadter, R.J. & Lightman, B. (eds.) *Victorian Faith in Crisis* (1990) p.21

part of Britain.¹⁷ It is now increasingly common to assert that empire was crucial to the identity of colonizers as well as colonized, and that Britain's domestic and overseas histories cannot be disentangled.¹⁸ The history of the British empire and the history of Britain itself are inseparable and should be studied as a seamless whole. The subject of this study is by its very nature a mixture of British domestic and imperial social history. Although the focus is on the Anglo-Indians living in Cheltenham, their links with India are of very real importance and crucial to any understanding of them.

The period covered by the thesis is approximately 1833 -1903, from when the East India Company lost its monopoly to the Delhi Durbar, which has been described as 'the end of an era'.¹⁹ Of course, there were several retired army officers living in Cheltenham in this period that had served much earlier, either in India or during the Napoleonic Wars. Their experiences and the friendships gained on active service were still important to them in retirement.

The thesis examines the origins and impact of the idea of service in India and how this affected those involved. Much has been made in the past of the effect of colonialism on the native peoples of the empire, but the consequences for the imperialists themselves have not received as much attention. When referring to the term Anglo-Indian in

¹⁷ Cannadine, D. *Ornamentalism* (Harmondsworth, Allen Lane, 2001) p.xvii

¹⁸ Buettner, E. 'Reviews in History': Hall, C. (ed.) *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Reader* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) February 2002 (www.ihrinfo.ac.uk/reviews/paper/buettner.html)

¹⁹ Mason, P. *The Men who ruled India* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963) Vol 2 p.199

connection with Cheltenham, traditionally it evokes the 'curry and colonels' reputation of the pre-war town. But a more inclusive interpretation demonstrates that a wide range of people had connections with India or were linked in some way to the Anglo-Indian community. There were also groups in the middle-class society of Cheltenham who had regular contact with some of the Anglo-Indians either through living in the same parts of the town, attending the same churches, through family connections or sharing similar interests and pastimes.

While the focus of the thesis is fixed on British families who were attracted to Indian service, the thrust of the argument concentrates on the process by which at the end of the nineteenth century it was appropriate to write about a 'service middle class'. It also re-evaluates the concept of the 'pseudo-gentry', and examines whether it is a valid concept to apply to those who regarded themselves as aspiring to genteel status and the occupations appropriate to it, such as the church, the law, medicine, the civil service, finance, and the armed services.

This thesis aims not only to construct a comprehensive description and analysis of the Anglo-Indian population of Cheltenham in the nineteenth century, but also to show to what extent the Anglo-Indians in general were a self-sufficient group separated from the bulk of the middle class and whether this resulted in a distinctive set of beliefs. The hypothesis is that the experience of service in India produced deep and long-lasting effects on those who were engaged in this enterprise. The impact and significance of this is explored as well as the cultural identity that was associated with it. The aim is to show to what extent

the Anglo-Indians were a separate group and whether this resulted in a distinctive set of beliefs.

Although there is no doubt that the Anglo-Indians were part of the middle class, it is not so certain whether their particular circumstances, and especially their experience of service in India, caused the Anglo-Indians to have an outlook on life at variance with the middle class as a whole. Many Anglo-Indians do seem to have felt alienated when they returned to Britain on retiring and many of their concerns were unfamiliar to those who had stayed 'at home'.²⁰ But their determination in most cases to return at the end of their working life and their insistence on maintaining a middle-class life-style suggests that they may not have been very different from many other sections of middle-class society in Britain. By consulting a range of primary sources such as private papers, memoirs and journals it is hoped to gain an insight into the minds of the Anglo-Indians and to determine how attitudes evolved in the course of the nineteenth century. As part of this process the thesis will make use of the concept of the 'pseudo-gentry', and consider the evolution of a 'service middle class'. The thesis employs these ideas and what they tell us about the middle-class identity to explain the attitudes and values of the Anglo-Indians.

²⁰ Buettner, E.A. *Families, Children, and Memories: Britons in India, 1857-1947* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 1998) p.21

Chapter 2

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The thesis aims to investigate the Anglo-Indian population in Britain during the nineteenth century focusing on Cheltenham. It was believed that Cheltenham would be a good place to investigate them because it was well-known as a place where the Anglo-Indians settled when they returned from India at the end of their working lives. Since little has been written about this group, much of the work involved researching primary sources. The few published texts on the history of Cheltenham provide only slight evidence on the role of the Anglo-Indians in the town. However, in spite of their distinctiveness, they formed part of a broader section of society in nineteenth-century Britain. For various reasons, which will become apparent, the Anglo-Indians have been treated as a special group within the Victorian middle class, extending the context of the research into an exploration of the structure of the middle class and an inquiry into middle-class attitudes. This presents the potential to draw conclusions concerning the nature of the middle class of Britain in the nineteenth century. The lack of a systematic study of the Anglo-Indians has meant that any study of the literature must principally deal with the historiography of the middle class. Treating the subject as primarily a matter of class makes several assumptions about the idea of class and its supposed power to explain how men and women organised themselves.

There has been no shortage of literature on this subject, especially in the field of urban history, which has suggested a number of areas of interest. Morris, in his studies of the industrial towns of the north, has

offered several possibilities, such as gender, party, community, religion, race, nationality and status, all which present themselves as ideas which demand loyalty, guide and compel action, or offer opportunities for understanding.¹ The class dimension has received most attention from social historians, and in this field the literature is considerable and of varying quality. The historiography is characterised by what Morris has called the elusive and insubstantial nature of middle-class history and a glorious confusion of the concepts of middle class, middle classes, bourgeoisie, and elite.²

Any attempt to understand the nineteenth-century middle class, and the position of the Anglo-Indian community, must make clear the meaning of the concept of social structure. Morris has suggested a basic definition. A social structure consists of perceived regularities in social actions and relationships.³ He claims that the strength of this definition is its generality and its unbiased nature. However, the concept as used by the social historian differs from the way in which it is applied by the social scientist. Whereas the latter is looking for analytical abstractions, the historian is wary of generalities, respecting the particularity of individual events, people and places.

Many of the early analytical studies of urban history used class as a major issue in the understanding of social organisation, and class continues to preoccupy social historians. The problem is that historians have not always been clear about what they mean by the concept of class. Class as a sociological term often involves treating it as an

¹ Morris, R.J. *Class, sect and party* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990) p.3

² *ibid.* p.10

³ Morris, R.J. (ed.) *Class, power and social structure in British nineteenth-century towns* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986) p.3

abstraction. This is countered by the historian's insistence on the individuality of specific people, places and events. To understand the role of class in urban history it is important to explain it in the terms of the actions and attitudes of people as both individuals and as a group. However, we need some indicators in order to distinguish between different groups and individuals. At one time or another historians have used such characteristics as income level or occupational title, and these can serve to give a provisional estimation of an individual's class position. Any more definite understanding of class has to take into consideration a wide range of other factors which together make up a profile of class attributes against which individuals and groups may be compared.

Much of the pioneering work dealt with the industrial towns of the north, encouraged by the rapidly developing literature on class structure and the response to social change. The late eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries were seen as a period of class formation. Urban historians have showed clearly that the pace and nature of class formation depended on the nature of the local economy and society.⁴

Traditionally many social historians have concentrated on the working class, but the nineteenth-century town was increasingly a middle-class place. Social historians of nineteenth-century urban Britain now recognise the middle class, and groups within them, as significant subjects in themselves and as major influences in urban society generally.⁵ The town became the focus around which the middle

⁴ Morris, R.J. & Rodger, R. (eds.) *The Victorian City: a Reader in British Urban History* (London: Longman, 1993) p.29

⁵ Trainor, R. 'Urban Elites in Victorian Britain'; *Urban History Yearbook*

classes developed a varied culture of voluntary societies, church and chapel, and family networks. The town was the arena in which middle-class political influence was felt, while national politics was still in part controlled by the aristocracy in spite of the middle-class votes created in 1832.⁶

Many historians have attempted to calculate the size of the middle class as a whole, using a variety of measures from income tax to census returns.⁷ But, even defining the middle class as a whole is problematical. There has been no agreement amongst historians whether a definition should be based on income or on occupation. The concept has been applied to groups as varied as intellectuals, professionals, small independent producers, retailers, tradesmen, artisans, and salaried white-collar employees. It has been used as an analytic construct to differentiate between social groups sharing a common economic experience and status relationship with other groups; it has also been used as a cultural construct to refer to individuals sharing common moral ideals, norms, and behavioural standards.⁸ This has made it difficult to establish any precise figure. Rubinstein has estimated, on an income basis, that about 15-20 per cent of the population in mid-Victorian Britain belonged to the middle classes.⁹ Based on men with incomes of £100 or more in 1859-60, and

(Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1985) pp.1-17

⁶ Morris, R.J. 'The Middle Class and British Towns and Cities of the Industrial Revolution 1780-1870', in Fraser, D. & Sutcliffe, A. (eds.) *The Pursuit of Urban History*. (London: Arnold, 1983) pp.286-305

⁷ Hoppen, K.T. *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846-1886*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) pp.32-6

⁸ Mintz, S. *A Prison of Expectations* (New York: New York University Press, 1983) p.203

⁹ Rubinstein, W.D. 'The Size and Distribution of the English Middle Classes in 1860' *Historical Research*, 61 (February, 1988) pp.65-81

who were thus liable to pay income tax, it is subject to fairly wide margins of error. This is largely because of the significant gaps in the available sources. The 1861 return, on which Rubinstein's findings are based, excluded women taxpayers and all public office-holders, including military officers, both serving and retired, and colonial administrators resident abroad. It also excluded income from rentals, which included non-rural rentier incomes accrued to the owners of houses, flats and lodging-houses, and profits arising from the dividends of government securities. Therefore a number of people who could reasonably be said to be members of the town gentry were excluded from Rubinstein's calculations. What is clear is that the distribution of the middle class varied from one town to another.

Although the prominent position of the middle class is recognised, little work exists about the structure, income and wealth of the middle classes that addresses important questions about the institutions, aims, recruitment, backgrounds, coherence, independence, methods and influence of local middle-class groups, such as the Anglo-Indians. Morris's work on the middle class in Leeds characterised the history of social class as the way in which men and women gained power over others, about how they used that power, about how they thought about, justified and maintained that power, about how those subordinated responded and how those with power reacted to the conflicts created.¹⁰ Although this may be appropriate for some of the larger industrial towns of the north, the majority of the middle class were not manufacturers aggressively accumulating capital as the basis for the employment of labour. Indeed historians have pointed out that

¹⁰ Morris, R.J. *Class, sect and party* (1990) p.1

the concentrations of wealth were not in the hands of entrepreneurs and captains of industry, but in the hands of widows, spinsters, rich farmers, clergymen, academics, squires and rentiers claiming gentility.¹¹

The increasing number of monographs on British towns show that the composition of the middle class was very different between towns, and it is only through detailed local studies that the distinctive features of the middle class in a particular instance can be described and accounted for. However, some general characteristics have emerged from such studies. One aspect which was common to most towns, and which may shed some light on the Anglo-Indians, was the segregation of housing with residential zones for rich and poor. This has led urban historians to study the 'suburb' as a typical example of a segregated middle-class residential area. But many aspects associated with the idea of the suburb are also relevant to exclusive resorts, such as Bath, Cheltenham and Leamington, which depended for their success and reputation on keeping their considerable population of servants, builders and paupers at a discreet distance from the dwellings and public buildings constructed for the enjoyment of the 'leisured' classes. It was the combined influences of population growth, landowners' preferences, and middle-class attitudes and actions which created the unprecedented degree of residential segregation in the early and mid-nineteenth century.¹²

¹¹ Vincent, J.R. *Pollbooks: How Victorians Voted* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) p.41

¹² Cannadine, D. 'Victorian Cities: How Different?'; *Social History*, 2 (1977) pp.457-87

Although the extent of research into suburban areas has continued to expand, the conceptual framework is still little more than a generalised description of the situation in individual towns and cities. Cannadine's analysis of the Calthorpes' Edgbaston Estate in Birmingham studied what he called a classic example of landlord influence and middle-class preference combining to produce a segregated neighbourhood. The estate was bought by Sir Richard Gough, a retired East India merchant, in 1717. It was located on relatively high, well drained, undulating land a mile south west of the town. The tenants were typical of certain groups within the middle class, who 'having a moderate competence, wished to retire to a small country house'. Cannadine's findings were similar to other subsequent studies of nineteenth-century suburbs. Some historians have emphasised the cultural or ideological reasons for segregation.¹³ This interpretation suggested that the demand for certain types of suburban housing was stirred by fashionable and aristocratic example. The Anglo-Indians were likely to be susceptible to this pressure, since they were anxious to model themselves on what they took to be gentlemanly habits, and they were less likely to develop a distinctive and assertive bourgeois culture. According to this argument, the *rus in urbe* resulted from the middle class in pursuit of the illusion of bringing the country and gentrification into the urban setting.¹⁴ This reasoning remains to be tested by further research.

A number of studies have shown how wealth and income were diverse and how the distribution between individuals within the middle class

¹³ Thompson, F.M.L. (ed.) *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982) p.13

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p.16

was unequal. Field's work on the middle-class elite of Portsmouth tackled the problems of wealth distribution within the middle classes in a town with a small professional elite dependent on the state for employment.¹⁵ The strength of this work was that Field used a variety of data to analyse the distribution of wealth in the town.

This was an improvement on Rubinstein's survey, published in 1981, which relied heavily upon probate figures, and so only reflected a valuation made at the time of death.¹⁶ Field used, in addition, a range of other indicators, such as landownership, rateable values, subscribers to railway companies, the distribution of servants, and assessed tax statistics. The latter category includes tax levied on such particular items of consumption as private houses with eight or more windows, carriages, riding horses, game licences, manservants and hair powder. The items listed here provided an index to the resources allocated towards a life-style which middle-class groups, such as the Anglo-Indians, might aspire to by copying aristocratic models. This demonstrates the relationship between status and conspicuous consumption, which was a marked feature of middle-class aspirations.

Other studies suggest that there were different types of middle-class people located in different types of urban environment.¹⁷ Jones highlighted the fact that different types and sizes of towns produce differing social structures, patterns of conflict and class interaction. In

¹⁵ Field, J. 'Wealth, styles of life and social tone amongst Portsmouth's middle class, 1800-75', in Morris, R.J. (ed.) *Class, power and social structure* (1986) pp.68-106

¹⁶ Rubinstein, W.D. *Men of Property: The Very Wealthy in Britain Since the Industrial Revolution* (London: Croom Helm, 1981)

¹⁷ Jones, P. 'Perspective, source and methodology in a comparative study of the middle class in nineteenth-century Leicester and Peterborough'; *Urban History Yearbook* (1987) pp.22-32

contrast to the provincial capitals like Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds, he considered the small market towns which serviced large agricultural hinterlands. Whereas the larger towns and cities had substantial independent middle classes, small towns, such as Peterborough were dependent on aristocratic patronage, in both political and social life. Morris identified several categories of urban types.¹⁸ He called them Little Towns, County Towns, Producer Towns, Agricultural Markets, Retirement Towns, the Regional Metropolis and London, which for many reasons was a special case. Inevitably such a diverse range of different types of towns reflected a variety of social structures and economic situations. The majority of towns in Britain could be classed as Little Towns, 'the Banbury's of England'.¹⁹

The extent of the middle-class involvement in the County Towns and Retirement Towns meant that the Anglo-Indians were present in places such as Lincoln, Exeter, Bath and Cheltenham. The middle class in these places were, in the main, made up of bankers, professional men, resident gentry and retired families of independent means. They formed a significant elite and in recent years social historians have now recognised the importance of understanding their role in the social structure of the middle class. Various terms have been used to describe this section of the middle class - resident gentry, urban gentry, town gentry, rentier, fundholders, annuitants, etc. A term coined by Everitt - pseudo-gentry - has been proposed as a useful collective term, since it describes town dwellers who lived in the style of the gentry, but without

¹⁸ Morris, R.J. 'The Middle Class and British Towns and Cities of the Industrial Revolution 1780-1870' in Morris, R.J. (ed.) *Class, power and social structure* (1986) pp.286-305

¹⁹ Everitt, A. 'The Banbury's of England'; *Urban History Yearbook* (1974) pp.28-38

a substantial land base. According to Everitt the pseudo-gentry was characterized by living in the style of country gentry, possessing independent sources of income, but lacking the support of a landed estate to root it in the countryside, and hence as a rule preferring to take up residence in a provincial town on grounds of convenience, economy and sociability.²⁰ The term has commended itself to other historians largely because it seems to capture such people's self-image.²¹

At the time, Everitt remarked that, in spite of all that had been written about 'the rise of the gentry', there had been no systematic study of this interesting and influential class. Despite the progress in the study of the middle class that has undoubtedly occurred since then, there remains some confusion about the concepts of middle class, middle classes, bourgeoisie, and elite. It is time to re-evaluate the term 'pseudo-gentry', and examine whether it is a valid concept to apply to those who regarded themselves as aspiring to genteel status and the occupations appropriate to it, such as the church, the law, medicine, the civil service, finance, and the armed services. Although Everitt used the word 'pseudo-gentry' in relation to a newly emerging urban gentry in the seventeenth century, there are reasons to believe that it could be a useful concept to apply to later periods of social history. The problem with the term 'middle class' is the wide distinctions

²⁰ Everitt, A.(ed.) *Perspectives in English Urban History*. (London: Macmillan, 1973) p.7

²¹For example David Spring 'Interpreters of Jane Austen's Social World: Literary Critics and Historians' in Todd, J. *Jane Austen: New Perspectives* (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 1983) pp.53-72. Spring credits Alan Everitt as having invented the term "pseudo-gentry" as a "helpful substitute for the word bourgeois, having in mind the latter's misleading overtones".

of status and wealth to be found within it, greater than in either the working class or the upper class.²² The middle classes were distinguished from the aristocracy and gentry because they worked regularly for a living. The pseudo-gentry formed a special group within middle-class society. They were socially below the aristocracy and most of the landed gentry, and yet retained either real or assumed links with both groups. By aspiring to genteel status the pseudo-gentry can be contrasted with the 'real gentry'. Although very much part of the middle class, there were characteristics which differentiated the pseudo-gentry from other middle-class groups. Of course the Victorians would not have used the term themselves, but it is a useful label to apply to that section of the middle class which differed from other sections of the middle class in fundamental respects: such as their sources of income, in their dedication to ideals of public service, and in their aspiration to genteel status.²³ Judged by these criteria and on the basis of their place within the local hierarchy and their dependence on the vertical bonds of patronage, it can be argued that the Anglo-Indians were essentially drawn from the pseudo-gentry.

One of the most numerous sources of the pseudo-gentry was the new professional men: especially the wealthier lawyers and doctors but also occasionally schoolmasters and clerics, and a growing number of bankers, apothecaries, architects, surveyors and engineers. However, historians are usually cautious in defining the professions in the nineteenth century. Traditionally, they included anyone who earned their living by selling their specialised knowledge to clients who

²² Tosh, J. *A Man's Place* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1999) p.13

²³ Mintz, S. *A Prison of Expectations* (New York: New York University Press, 1983) p.206

required them, receiving their earnings in the form of fees or salaries rather than in rent or profit, as did landowners and businessmen.²⁴ The older, socially prestigious professions comprised the Anglican clergy, a few hundred physicians and barristers, and officers in the armed services. Membership of these 'old' professions was often taken to confer gentlemanly status, partly because of the requirement of formal education, and partly because giving advice or service for a fee carried little of the commercial taint attached to buying and selling in the market-place.²⁵ To complicate matters, many, but by no means all, of those who filled the most senior professional positions prior to the mid-nineteenth century were close relatives of the aristocracy and landed gentry. The Anglican clergy and the army were favoured careers for the younger sons who, because of primogeniture, would not inherit landed estates. Primogeniture and entailment have always meant that there has been a supply of younger sons to take up careers in the armed services, the church and the law. Although these occupations were followed in a manner that allowed time for other gentlemanly pursuits, sooner or later they usually did necessitate leaving the family seat and moving into a wider environment. The untitled gentry were an intermediate group with, on the one hand, ties to the nobility by marriage and similar life-styles, and on the other linked by family ties and farming interests to farmers and the middle class.²⁶ They might have been the younger sons of country squires, with a modest competence of their own, but insufficient to support a house and estate in the countryside.

²⁴ Rubinstein, W.D. *Britain's Century, a Political and Social History 1815-1905*. (London: Arnold, 1998) p.286

²⁵ Tosh, J. *A Man's Place* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1999) p.11

²⁶ Davidoff, L. *The Best Circles*. (London: The Cresset Library, 1973) pp.20-1

The professional classes were in fact largely a creation of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. They are an important group because they became inevitably the leaders and originators of most of the social and cultural life of the time in provincial towns: the spas and watering-places of Britain, such as Bath and Cheltenham owed much of their meteoric rise to the expanding fortunes of the town gentry and professions.²⁷ By the second half of the nineteenth century a far wider range of occupations was coming to be marked by the presence of independent practitioners, qualifying and disciplinary associations, specialised knowledge, a self-conscious identity, and sometimes even a legal monopoly over practice.²⁸ Some writers have argued that the rise of the modern professions contributed to the gentrification of the Victorian middle classes.²⁹ Other writers have also pointed out that the urban economy benefited from the expansion of the economic elite.³⁰ Despite their pretensions to gentle status and life-style they played a role of real importance for the town economy. Their presence was influential in a number of ways: first, it stimulated the urban land market and house-building; secondly, it encouraged internal demand for urban products and services; thirdly, it provided an important new source of local capital, for loans and credit. Middle-class wealth was being created by selling a vast offering of goods and services both at home and abroad. Many of these goods

²⁷ Everitt, A. (ed.) *Perspectives in English Urban History* (1973) p.9
 Professionals still accounted for only 3.9 per cent of the total workforce according to the 1851 returns as stated in Corfield, P.J. *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700-1850* (London: Routledge, 1995) p.33

²⁸ Hoppen, K.T. *The Mid-Victorian Generation* (1998) p.40

²⁹ Wiener, M.J. *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

³⁰ Clark, P. & Slack, P. *English Towns in Transition 1500-1700*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) pp.9-10

and services were consumed by the middle class itself, its consumption patterns sometimes leading, at other times following that of the gentry.³¹

Widows and spinsters were also a significant section of the pseudo-gentry. They were keen investors who required a steady income, and they favoured safe investments like annuities. An annuity was the purchase of an income out of capital for a fixed, regular sum to be paid to a beneficiary. Annuities could be perpetual, even a type of property to be inherited, but were often for life or a fixed period with conditions attached, for example with a prohibition on remarriage, or to take care of the testator's children.³² This type of income was closely related to a pension, and one of the groups beginning to set the social tone in provincial towns was military officers, who since the mid-eighteenth century had enjoyed the option of retiring on half-pay as well as having pensions provided for their widows and orphans.

Although the pseudo-gentry rose mainly during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in certain areas their influence continued into the first years of the twentieth century. But in many ways they were a backward-looking group believing in traditional values and a semi-feudal social structure. This was partly because the gentry were identified with the countryside and with land. So despite the fact that the pseudo-gentry were distinctly urban in character, residing comfortably in small towns and the suburbs of the major cities, they still had an affinity with the landed gentry through the possession of leisure and a similarity of interests and outlook, and often, moreover, through

³¹ Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. *Family Fortunes: men and women of the English Middle Class, 1720-1850*. (London: Hutchinson, 1987) p.196

³² Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. *Family Fortunes* p.212

a direct blood relationship.³³ Instead of resenting their social superiors, the pseudo-gentry eagerly sort to imitate them, aspiring to gentility, by copying the education, manners, and behaviour of the gentry.³⁴ It is this pretension to gentle status and life-style that is implied in the description of this new elite as a pseudo-gentry. It also gives a clue to what distinguished them from other social groups. Although many members of the pseudo-gentry realised their place in society was a result of economic and financial considerations, it was cultural influences, such as their particular view of their status within society, that made them different. These influences arose from a variety of circumstances which affected their attitudes and values and which gave the pseudo-gentry a separate identity. Concepts such as gentility, respectability, quality and duty were notions which were central to their attitudes and values. A belief in these values and the cultivation of an appropriate life-style helped to sustain the existence of the pseudo-gentry throughout the nineteenth century and into the early years of the next century.

The sources of their cultural beliefs included ideas associated with the traditional gentry. The intellectual and moral standards of an industrialised society were rejected in favour of the conservative orthodoxy of a landed rural class. Gentlemanly qualities of character were preferred to the competitive attitudes of a profit-conscious mercantile interest.³⁵ The latter were able to take advantage of the

³³ Mingay, G.E. *The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class*. (London: Longman, 1976) p.3

³⁴ Stone, L. & J.C.F. *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) p.409

³⁵ Harries-Jenkins, G. *The Army in Victorian Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977) p.276

belief that 'the possession of land is the guarantee of respectability, and the love of respectability and land is inveterate in our race'.³⁶ For the pseudo-gentry this was not possible since in general they did not have sufficient finances to buy into the landed gentry. However, many of the pseudo-gentry had links with the landed gentry through family connections. Despite the hierarchical nature of the English aristocracy and gentry it was fluid enough to allow family mobility in both directions. This was necessary because primogeniture and entailment gave rise to what the Victorians called 'the younger son question'. From the early nineteenth century more of these sons - and their sisters - survived, with the result that there were plenty of titled and untitled upper-class young men to fill the expanding positions of an economically buoyant society.³⁷ It also meant that generation after generation, younger sons were left to trickle downwards through the social system, with only some education, some money, and influential patronage to give them a head start in life.³⁸ This 'aristocratic bourgeoisie' adopted genteel cultural patterns of behaviour as a way of maintaining gentry status despite having to leave the family seat and take up careers in the armed services, the church and the law. No longer having ties to the land these younger sons became pseudo-gentry. This softening of the class barriers encouraged the consolidation of a 'gentrified' bourgeois culture and helped to root aristocratic attitudes in middle-class opinion.³⁹ This process was typical also of the untitled gentry who were an intermediate group with, on the one hand, ties to the nobility by marriage and similar life-styles, and

³⁶ Escott, T.H.S. *England: Her People, Polity and Pursuits* (1879)

³⁷ Davidoff, L. *The Best Circles*. (London: The Cresset Library, 1973) p.20

³⁸ Stone, L. & J.C.F. *An Open Elite?* (1984) p.5

³⁹ Wiener, M.J. *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p.10

on the other linked by family ties and farming interests to farmers and the rural economy. There were landed families for whom entry into the ranks of the pseudo-gentry threatened a loss of status, and there were other families for whom it offered an opportunity to enhance their status. For both groups the common ethos adopted by the pseudo-gentry and consolidated by the expanding public schools, was very much based on the values of the traditional landed ruling class. This helped to preserve the old privileges and influence of the landed aristocracy because the pseudo-gentry chose to be imitative rather than rebellious. Davidoff has stated that the middle-class adulation of the country gentleman ideal led to the absence of a truly urban, bourgeois life-style.⁴⁰

Social historians agree that the middle class in the nineteenth century had a near-permanent sense of insecurity and fear of impoverishment. The search for security was one of the most potent themes in the occupational goals and strategies of the middle classes. Shonfield has showed that even relatively successful professionals shared the same sense of being precarious in their newly elevated situation.⁴¹ This was partly because their property was mainly in the form of income based on fees for services, small investments, pensions, annuities, subscriptions, rents or mortgages rather than land, buildings, stocks or machinery and tools. A nineteenth-century expert on banking practice declared that clergymen, naval or military officers, professional men and salaried officials of every degree, along with annuitants of all kinds, unless they had other property which extended beyond their life incomes were,

⁴⁰ Davidoff, L. *The Best Circles* p.13

⁴¹ Shonfield, Z. *The Precariously Privileged*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)

'manifestly ineligible' to borrow from banks, or to stand surety for others.⁴² Indeed, some of the town gentry found it a struggle to maintain the extravagant life-style that was demanded by their supposed station in life.

A substantial drain on the resources of the pseudo-gentry was the need to provide for their children. They believed it was imperative for their children, especially their sons, to go to the right private, or public, school. A considerable literature has developed around the Victorian public schools and their role in class formation. A controversy has built up concerning the role of the public schools in creating a gentrified bourgeois culture based on pseudo-aristocratic attitudes and values. Weiner, in particular, has argued that this public school ethos accounts for the decline of British industry when it lost its position as the 'workshop of the world'.⁴³ Rubinstein, on the other hand, has argued that Britain's pre-eminence was due to the strength of the commercial and financial interests rather than manufacturing.⁴⁴

Alongside his premise that Britain's economy remained primarily 'commercial/financial-orientated', he challenged the view that Britain's international competitiveness has been badly served by her emphasis on classical education, and the unhelpful effects of public schools which turned manufacturers' sons against manufacturing and discouraged others from entering it. The evidence for this argument came from a random sample of the backgrounds and subsequent careers of entrants to eight public schools (Eton, Harrow, Winchester,

⁴² Davidoff, L. & Hall. C. *Family Fortunes* p.211

⁴³ Wiener, M.J. *English Culture* p.10

⁴⁴ Rubinstein, W.D. *Capitalism, Culture, and Decline in Britain 1750-1990*. (London: Routledge, 1993)

Rugby, Cheltenham, St Paul's, Dulwich and Mill Hill) in 1840, 1870 and 1895/1900; 1,802 boys in all. He showed that most of them came from professional families and went into the professions.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, Davidoff has pointed out that for many middle-class parents the cold-blooded pursuit of profit was as deeply suspect on moral grounds as was the desire to shed the taint of trade.⁴⁶ For them, their children's inheritance should be their education and their religious principles. The religious census of 1851 made it abundantly clear that attendance at church or chapel was a practice much more associated with the middle class. It was the evangelical revival starting in the late-eighteenth century which made religion so central to middle-class culture. The Evangelical movement, allied to the older puritan traditions of Dissent, reached its greatest influence in the early Victorian years. Evangelicalism was a call to public and political action in almost every sphere. It was also, first and foremost, a creed and a code for the conduct of personal and family life.⁴⁷

Rubinstein claims that organised religion was the central social force in Britain during the nineteenth century.⁴⁸ This was particularly true for the middle class. Evangelicalism gave the middle class a distinctive identity based on a Christian way of life, so much so that by mid-century adherence to evangelical protestant forms had become an accepted part of respectability, if not gentility. Attendance at church or chapel was a social necessity even when it was not a religious

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 118-9

⁴⁶ Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. *Family Fortunes* pp.21-2

⁴⁷ Thompson, F.M.L. *The Rise of Respectable Society* (London: Harper Collins, 1988) pp.250-1

⁴⁸ Rubinstein, W.D. *Britain's Century* p.298

imperative.⁴⁹ Morris has put forward the view that evangelical religion was a dominant strand of ideology, which acted not so much as a basis for religious belief but as a vehicle for transmitting certain powerful views of social structure and social responsibility.⁵⁰

Membership of church or chapel provided men and women with a community of like minded people, albeit a community based on moral superiority. This moral position was held despite the conspicuous consumption of some sections of the middle class. The justification for their way of life was in terms of a vague but complex idea of 'social duty': duty to themselves, their families, their social strata and the community as a whole. One strand in this ideal derived from simple economic ideas about the benefits of middle-class consumption in providing work for other classes. But, according to Davidoff, the lavish expenditure of time, energy and money sometimes weighed heavily on the individual conscience, for the ideals of duty were based on Christian precepts of individual conduct and behaviour.⁵¹ One outward sign of this ideal was charity work. Charity work was part of the wider ideal of social Christian duty.

Charity work was helped by the growth of voluntary societies, which Morris has shown were essentially a middle-class movement.⁵² The range of voluntary societies extended far beyond charitable purposes, and embraced such diverse activities as mechanics institutes, literary societies, circulating libraries, friendly societies, temperance societies, medical charities, and clothing societies. In general, the important

⁴⁹ Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. *Family Fortunes* p.76

⁵⁰ Morris, R.J. *Class, sect and party* p.321

⁵¹ Davidoff, L. *The Best Circles* pp.38-9

⁵² Morris, R.J. 'Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites, 1780-1850: an analysis' *The Historical Journal*, vol. 26, no.1(1983) pp.95-118

voluntary societies were concerned with poor relief, medical aid, moral reform, public order, education and thrift, the diffusion of science and culture and the organisation of leisure. The membership was mainly drawn from the middle class and most societies were dominated by the elite of that class. In fact, to some extent, voluntary societies enabled the elite to assert their economic and cultural authority within that middle class. To be a member of one of these societies you had to pay a subscription. The funds so collected, were distributed and activities organised by a committee and officers elected by the subscribers. Normally the result was rule by an oligarchy selected from the higher status members of the society. The hierarchical nature of the middle-class community was reflected in an elaborate hierarchy of patrons, vice-presidents, trustees and different grades of membership. There is no doubt that in the case of voluntary societies pursuing charitable aims, it enabled the middle class to tackle crucial social problems without having to face the contradictions in their own value systems and social situation.⁵³

However, the central institution of the Victorian middle-class ideal was the family. The cult of the home and the sanctity of the family were at the heart of all aspects of middle-class life. As an effective instrument of social discipline the middle-class family had few equals. It exerted a pressure for social conformity which was all but overwhelming and which extended ultimately throughout most of society.⁵⁴ Feminist historians, in particular, have stressed the central role of women in the middle-class household.⁵⁵ They have explained how middle-class men

⁵³ Morris, R.J. 'Voluntary Societies' p.113

⁵⁴ Harrison, J.F.C. *Early Victorian Britain*. (London: Fontana, 1988) p.116

⁵⁵ Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. *Family Fortunes*

relied on wives, daughters, sisters and female servants to provide a stable family environment. Women were intensely preoccupied with furnishings, decoration of rooms and gardens, with the appearance, behaviour and language of household members and the minutiae of social interaction within and outside the family.⁵⁶ They could also call upon a network of kinship and friendship bonds. The middle classes were characterised, in particular, by strong bonds between siblings; brothers and sisters who grew up together and stayed close all their lives. These family links helped to create a sense of identity for groups within the middle classes. In addition, families were able to use relationships to further their interests. Bourne has showed how patronage remained an important way in which middle-class men could further their careers.⁵⁷ In particular, he has demonstrated how the East India Company was a major source of non-aristocratic patronage.

Despite the middle-class obsession with the family, in 1851 almost 40 per cent of all women in England and Wales between twenty and forty-four were unmarried.⁵⁸ It was also in spite of the fact that marriage was the most socially approved goal for women.

Nevertheless, in order to maintain an appropriate middle-class standard of living, young men were advised to postpone marriage until they could afford the trappings necessary to their status. The concept of a middle-class standard of living was clearly developed by the 1830s. It provided a set of standards by which members of the middle class could be recognised, and a set of goals and minimum

⁵⁶ Davidoff et al. *The Family Story* p.124

⁵⁷ Bourne, J.M. *Patronage and Society in Nineteenth-Century England*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1986)

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p.17

expectations to be striven for. But many aspects of middle-class society went beyond the more obvious material considerations.

Although much research remains to be done, historians have begun to explore a wide range of middle-class activities and attitudes. As with much historical debate, research tends to generate more questions and lead to further aspects becoming part of the investigation.

However, the historiography of the middle class, as with research into other aspects of social structure, continues to be based firmly on the analysis of specific localities, each with their own individual and special circumstances. The value of the term 'middle class' as an historical concept can be questioned, but the quest for the middle class has generated an increasing literature. It has even been claimed that the history of the middle classes has become very much the vogue topic in university faculties.⁵⁹ More often the middle class is not now conceived in terms of specific occupations or amounts of income, but as a social and cultural formation embodying distinctive economic, political, and ideological characteristics.⁶⁰ As part of this approach is a concern to explore the concept of 'identity'.⁶¹ Social identity is understood as a cultural construction based on key ideas such as class, gender, race, nation, generation, place and custom. The view that the middle class is not necessarily a homogeneous formation is widely accepted and the study of distinctive groups within the middle class is likely to produce more convincing findings than a more general survey. The Anglo-Indians are an example of a section of the nineteenth-century middle class which so far has received less systematic attention.

⁵⁹Hunt, T. 'Victory of the middle class' *The Guardian* (Friday, May 10, 2002)

⁶⁰Mintz, S. *A Prison of Expectations* p.204

⁶¹Kidd, A. & Nicolls, D. (eds.) *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) p.6

Nevertheless, the history of the British empire in India has produced and continues to generate a considerable amount of academic literature.⁶² There is an ongoing debate on the material and cultural origins, experience and implications of British imperialism. Recent years have seen an increasing divide develop between scholars who locate imperial power primarily in the sphere of economics and those who emphasise instead the overwhelming importance of social and cultural considerations, such as perceived racial differences, gender hierarchies and conflicting interpretations of British nationality. Feminist historians have contributed new insights regarding these areas.⁶³ Studies of Anglo-Indians also tend to focus on social and cultural influences and include works by a new generation of historians, such as Elizabeth Collingham and Elizabeth Buettner.⁶⁴ The issues these writers address mean that instead of treating the study of Imperial rule in India as something self-contained without reference to circumstances in Britain, they provide a more inclusive and comprehensive analysis which recognises that the history of the British empire and the history of Britain itself are inseparable.

⁶² For instance the 5-volume *Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

⁶³ Midgley, C.(ed.) *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Hall, C.(ed.) *Cultures of Empire: colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: a reader* (New York: Routledge, 2000)

⁶⁴ Collingham, E.M. *Imperial Bodies* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001); Buettner, E.A. *Families, children, and memories: Britons in India, 1857-1947* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 1998); 'Parent-child separations and colonial careers' in Fletcher, A. & Hussey, S. (eds.) *Childhood in Question* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); 'From Somebodies to Nobodies: Britons Returning Home from India' in Dauntton, M.J. & Rieger, B. (eds.) *Meanings of modernity: Britain in the age of imperialism and world wars* (Oxford: Berg, 2001)

Chapter 3

SOURCES

The scope of this study is reflected in the wide range of sources examined. This is in part due to the fact that the thesis is concerned both with individuals and with the society in which they lived. A further complexity is caused by the need to look at both the local situation in Cheltenham and the wider context of the social history of Britain in the nineteenth century as well as Britain's empire in India.

Since the study is concerned with an elite group in nineteenth-century Britain, it was decided that prosopography would be a suitable approach. Prosopography has been defined as the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives.¹ Basically, the method involves establishing a group to be studied, and then asking a set of uniform questions - about birth and death, marriage and family, social origins and inherited economic position, place of residence, education, amount and source of social wealth, occupation, religion, experience of office, and so on. Although prosopography can suffer from a lack of information, as far as the Anglo-Indians are concerned they are a fairly well-documented group. This is to be expected from an elite and is typical of other prosopographical studies. The most popular subject for prosopography has been political elites, but other groups such as civil servants, army and navy officers, clergy, lawyers and doctors lend themselves readily to such treatment. Most of the

¹ Stone, L. 'Prosopography' *Daedulus* Vol C 1971 p.48

Anglo-Indians covered by the study fall into one these categories. The value of any prosopographical study depends on the wealth of evidence drawn upon. Ideally it should be informed by a wide variety of sources which complement and enrich each other. Fortunately there are plenty of sources for the Anglo-Indians. The documents maintained by the East India Company and its successors include a wide range of biographical material that in many cases records an individual's career from educational and social background through to retirement. There are also several compilations of service records and genealogical data that were in part derived from these primary sources. Other sources of evidence include town directories of residents, census returns and memorials. By linking and cross-referencing this material it is possible to build up a profile for many of the Anglo-Indians. As with any historical group, the scope of the evidence can be variable between individuals. Whereas some members are amply recorded, others have significant gaps in their history which can only, if ever, be filled after extensive research.

The amount of archive material available is considerable and readily accessible in a variety of collections. The bulk of the sources is in printed form, and in many cases there are multiple copies to be found in the various archive repositories. There are also a range of guides and catalogues which help the researcher make sense of this mass of material.² The main collections of local material are to be found in the Cheltenham Local Studies Centre and the Gloucestershire County Record Office. The principal source of national importance is the

² e.g. Farrington, A.J. *Guide to the Records of the India Office Military Department* (London: British Library, 1982)

British Library Oriental and India Office Collections, and an extensive archive of published and manuscript sources can also be found at the Centre for South Asian Studies at Cambridge University.

One of the main criticisms of prosopography is that it is not very good at dealing with ideas, prejudices, passions, ideologies, ideals, or principles. In order to understand the beliefs and values of the Anglo-Indians it is necessary to look elsewhere for the type of evidence which can provide an insight into these aspects. Although intimate personal records are a rarity among historical records, Anglo-Indians were keen on writing about their careers and exploits, and this type of source does exist either in private papers or in published form. Such issues as the evolution of attitudes to service in India during the nineteenth century, as reflected in private memoirs, contemporary literature and the press can provide insights into their beliefs and values.

Memorials and Gravestones

One of the first things that brought my attention to the Indian connection in Cheltenham was seeing the memorials and stone tablets commemorating the lives of the middle class inhabitants of the town. Many of these memorials were put up by the relatives of people from the Anglo-Indian community. There are particularly good sets of memorials in Christ Church and Holy Trinity. The location of these memorials gives a good indication of the areas in Cheltenham settled by the Anglo-Indians. Both of these churches are in parts of the town developed as middle class housing in the early Victorian period. They

served the growing population in the Lansdown estate area in the case of Christ Church, and the Pittville estate in the case of Holy Trinity.

The practice of erecting monuments to their deceased relatives was enthusiastically taken up by the Victorians. In previous centuries this was the preserve of the aristocracy and landed gentry, but more and more middle class families felt the need to advertise their names and proclaim the spiritual virtues of their relatives who had "passed on".

Many of the memorials record little more than name, age and date of death, sometimes quoting a short passage of scripture. Some of the monuments give a much more detailed description of the achievements and character of the person. For instance the memorial to Lieutenant-Colonel Robert LePoer Trench in the parish church of St Mary's, apart from recording the date of death as March 14, 1823 at the age of 40, gives a very full appreciation of the man:

His excellence as a father, husband and a Christian, is deeply engraved in the minds of his surviving family and friends ... but the principle that made him victorious in death 'Christ crucified', was the great object of his dependence. He trusted in Him alone for salvation. An encreased attachment to the duties of his profession, and an anxiety for the welfare, both spiritual and temporal, of all under his command, made it evident during the last five years that 'the love of Christ constrained him' to live not unto himself but to the glory of God: and when death approached he was found ready. Let it be remembered that of all the honours enumerated on this tablet that of a true believer in Jesus Christ is the only one of importance to him now.

Then follows a simple list of his campaigns: Pyrenees, Fuentes d'Onor, Salamanca, Toulouse, Badajoz, Vittoria, Neville, Busaco.

There are several surveys of church memorials in Cheltenham, but only one church, Christ Church, has been studied in detail.³ Apparently, more than half the monuments in Christ Church relate to the 1850-80 period. About a third relate to military service in India, 29 either referring to the HEIC (Hon. East India Company) or British involvement in India. Some of the memorials commemorate people who had connections in Cheltenham but died in India. An inscription in St. James' Church is an example:

Elizabeth Mary Anne Nicol - died of cholera at Kurrachie in the East Indies 28 April 1865 - youngest daughter of late Rev. David Young of Bombay establishment.

Given the presence of military families in Cheltenham it is not surprising that some monuments record deaths on active service overseas. This one is in St. Luke's:

Major Arthur Gibbings, King's Dragoon Guards, died of fever on march from Meerut to Agra, 1881, aged 35.

Memorial inscriptions can provide evidence of the religious beliefs of those who could afford to have these monuments erected. Victorian families usually took great care in their choice of gravestone inscriptions, sometimes to impress, but more often because they wanted their choice to be appropriate. They can provide a source of information that is not normally appreciated, and can supply insights not always available from the more conventional sources.

³ Rawes, J.A. *Memorial Inscriptions of Cheltenham*. (8 vols.) 1977-83. The Christ Church memorials are described in detail in Rudman, S. *Victorian Legacy* (Privately published, 1998)

Newspapers

The Cheltenham Local Studies Centre has an impressive series of local newspapers dating back to the early years of the nineteenth century. As with most contemporary newspapers, the contents are very mixed, often with rather tedious and verbose columns of small print on topics that do not seem important today. Nevertheless, these newspapers do tell us what the reading public at the time were interested in, and the views expressed in the newspapers reflected public opinion; in some cases it probably influenced public opinion.

Cheltenham in the nineteenth century was well served with a variety of newspapers. The *Cheltenham Looker-on* commented on the social scene and catered for the fashionable residents and visitors. Its secondary title was *A notebook of the sayings and doings of Cheltenham and containing also lists of arrivals and departures*. This meant that observers of society could be kept up to date with the names of visitors to Cheltenham. It was also a way of maintaining the network of people of "quality" as they went from one fashionable resort to another.

The lists of arrivals and departures testify to the continued popularity of Cheltenham in the early Victorian period as a resort for the military. As well as giving their names, it also states where the visitors stayed. It shows that there was a thriving hotel business which depended on the influx of fashionable society for their prosperity. It is interesting to note that the people on these lists were expected to put their names forward themselves. The arrivals and departure section usually included the following instruction:

The influx of strangers into the town is very great ... such persons as are desirous that their names should appear, will be kind enough to enter them in a book kept for that purpose at the Montpellier Library.

This means that the *Looker-on* cannot be used as a complete account of the total number of comings and goings. But it does show us who thought they mattered enough to have their names announced in print.

Another useful section of the *Looker-on* is what is called "Fashionable engagements". An example of such events was Lady Maclaine's Fancy Ball, reported in the edition of January 13, 1849. This gives a list of the guests and the number of military names is notable. On this occasion much prominence was given to the name of Sir Charles Napier, who it seems, was something of a hero at the time.

On a more serious note the *Looker-on* did report from time to time on events abroad, especially if it involved people known in Cheltenham. One such example was in the edition of January 6, 1849:

The circumstance of General Whish having been long a resident in Cheltenham, and being consequently intimately known amongst us, gives a more than ordinary interest here, to whatever relates to the perilous service in which he is at present engaged.

Most of the Anglo-Indian officers did not, of course, make history and their actions went unreported, but they do appear in the columns of the newspapers in many different guises. Apart from the guest lists and the index of arrivals and departures in the *Looker-on*, there are mentions of births, marriages and deaths. Sometimes the death of a prominent inhabitant was marked with an obituary, which can fill in the details of a person's career. Another useful section is devoted to short

notices under the heading "Removals". This shows how some middle class inhabitants would move from one property in the town to another, which might mean a move up the social scale to a more fashionable area.

The *Bath and Cheltenham Gazette* is available for the years 1812-44. It was a weekly publication, describing itself as a "family newspaper". Being published in Bath, much of the information relates to the Bath area with only a relatively small section devoted to Cheltenham. However, this section does contain notices of births, marriages and deaths, including ones taking place in India. For instance, these notices were in the edition of Tuesday 14 February, 1843:

Marriages:

November 24. At Bangalore, Lieut. and Adjutant Frederick Secretan Gabb, 52nd Regiment of Native Infantry, to Elizabeth Ann Ewart of Madras.

Deaths:

At Attock, on the march from Afghanistan, Capt. Alexander Webster of the 43rd Bengal Native Infantry aged 39 eldest son of James Webster esq. of 3, Lansdown Place, Cheltenham.

As this second entry shows, there is a fair amount of information contained in a relatively insignificant announcement. But it also refers to events of more than passing significance. Although the *Gazette* covers mostly domestic issues, occasionally they report at length on international affairs, especially events touching on India. The war in Afghanistan came in for comment, much of it hostile. This was particularly the case when the *Gazette* reported the systematic

rampage of what was called the Army of Retribution.⁴

The details of our latest military operations in Afghanistan are marked by a bloodthirstiness and ferocity, on the part of the Indian Army, which is perfectly appalling. (17 January 1843)

Another weekly newspaper was the *Cheltenham Journal*. This reported on both domestic and international news. There were regular columns on the Quarter Sessions and meetings of the Town Commissioners, as well as accounts of the activities of the fashionable members of society. Of course, all of these newspapers carried advertisements for all manner of products and services, which in themselves provide insights into the life of the town. In the *Cheltenham Journal* the local estate agent and auctioneer regularly advertised forthcoming auctions of houses for the gentry. These advertisements often had descriptions of the houses for sale providing details about location, building costs, number of rooms, standard of decoration and provision of domestic offices. These advertisements were aimed at the middle-class readers of the newspaper, and so it is not surprising that some of the houses described were bought by members of the Anglo-Indian community. The *Cheltenham Journal* for the 16 December 1850 has an advertisement for the auction of a newly erected house called *Arundel Villa*. Research from other sources reveals that *Arundel Villa* was bought by Lt. Colonel Barker of the 33rd Bengal Native Infantry Regiment. Being able to make this link makes it possible to understand the purchasing power of officers returning from India, and to realise the sort of property they were looking for.

⁴ James, L. *Raj, the Making and Unmaking of British India* (Uxbridge: TSP, 1997)

Directories

There are several Cheltenham directories in the Local Studies Collection. A typical example is the *Cheltenham Annuaire*. Its full title gives some idea of its scope: *The Cheltenham Annuaire and Directory of the Resident Gentry and tradespeople, with a guide to the Principal Streets and detached residences*. Of most use to this study is the list of the "Resident Gentry". They are listed in alphabetical order with their address, and army and naval officers are usually given their rank. This is very useful for identifying the areas of the town settled by the middle classes, but it does not differentiate between retired officers and those still serving. Neither does it distinguish between British and Indian Army officers, since there is no indication of what regiments or units they belonged to. However, the lists do provide a good overall indication of the number of military officers living in Cheltenham at any particular time. A further useful section in the *Annuaire* is the guide to the principal streets and detached villas. Here it takes in turn the streets occupied by the middle classes and for each one lists the "Resident Gentry".

Pollbooks

Another source for the names of middle-class people in Cheltenham are the pollbooks published until the change to the secret ballot in 1872. Pollbooks are lists of voters at a given election, accompanied by indications of which candidate or candidates they voted for. As well as the names of voters, most pollbooks give their address, and a certain number also give the occupation of those who voted. Of course they only record the names of male voters and they are subject to the

limitations of this type of material. For instance, the electoral pool of potential voters was always much bigger than those who actually voted, and those who cast their vote with any degree of regularity or consistency were in a minority.⁵ Occupational analysis using pollbooks can provide miscellaneous information about voting behaviour if only of strictly limited significance. This could include information about the existence of anomalies, archaisms, pressure groups, economic and local interests, and institutionally, ecclesiastically, or educationally shaped voting.⁶ Some of the pollbooks for the Cheltenham elections are available, although not all of them have details about occupation, making them of limited value for analysis.

Census Returns

The census returns for Cheltenham, amongst other things, demonstrate the staggering growth of the town in the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1801, the first national census recorded that Cheltenham had 3,076 inhabitants and 710 houses. By 1851, however, the corresponding figures are 35,031 inhabitants and 6,356 houses, representing around a ten-fold increase in just 50 years.⁷ As historical documents, the actual census returns from 1841 onwards are important sources of information on the inhabitants of Cheltenham. They are readily available on microfilm and generally include plenty of

⁵ Taylor, M. 'Interests, parties and the state: the urban electorate in England, c.1820-72' in Lawrence, J. & Taylor, M.(eds.) *Party, State and Society* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997) p.52

⁶ Vincent, J.R. *Pollbooks: How Victorians Voted* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) p.7

⁷ Blake S. & Beacham R. *The Book of Cheltenham* (Buckingham: Barracuda Books, 1982)

details on individual households. The 1851, 1881 and 1901 censuses are also available on the internet.⁸

In each case, the head of the household is identified, giving his/her age and occupation. Other members of the family are listed, giving their age and relationship to the head of the household. Also any other visitors or residents are included, and any resident servants are documented. It is therefore possible to construct a profile of a typical middle class household from this information. In the case of the Anglo-Indian population, there are several ways in which they can be identified. First, their occupation, especially the head of the household, may give a clue. Army officers are usually given their rank, even when they have clearly retired from active service. For instance, in the 1861 Census Charles Pearson, of 3, *Bays Hill Lawn* aged 61, is described as "Lt. Col. (retired)". From this information it is not apparent that he served in India or that he was even in the Indian Army. However, some returns are more helpful and they often refer to the "East India Service". Other Indian connections are to be found in those who served in the Indian Civil Service. For example, in the 1861 Census, William Inglis, aged 52, of 1, *Lansdown Villas* is recorded as a "Retired Madras Civil Servant". The occasional entry gives further detail, as with William Benson, aged 58, of 7, *Queen's Parade*, whose occupation is described as "Bengal Civil Service (Judicial Branch) Retired List".

Often the occupation of the head of the household has a more indirect link with India. This is particularly the case when the head of the

⁸ 1851: www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/GLS/Cheltenham/Census51.htm
 1881: www.familysearch.org
 1901: www.census.pro.gov.uk

household is a widow. In most cases, as was the custom at this time, the woman's role was described in terms of her husband's occupation. This practice continued on the death of the husband, and the census returns reflect this. In the 1861 Census, Jane Gill, aged 49, of 2, *Queen's Parade*, is described as the "widow of surgeon in Indian Army".

Incidentally, her place of birth is given as East India, so it is not clear from the census returns alone, whether she lived in Cheltenham with her husband before he died, or whether she retired to Cheltenham after the death of her husband abroad.

A more tenuous link with India is evident in some of the census returns. John Freeman, aged 56, of *Glenlee Lodge*, is described as a "proprietor of lands in India". Further research would be needed to establish whether he could be included within the Anglo-Indian community. What it does suggest is that the confines of those with links with India are not limited to those actually serving in India.

One element apparent in most of the large households is the number of servants. The names of the servants are listed, together with their position in the household. The number of servants gives some idea of the relative wealth of the family that employed them. Some of the wealthier houses had a whole range of different servants. For instance, John Freeman employed a butler, a footman, a housemaid, a kitchen maid, a lady's maid and a governess.

Since the number of households in Cheltenham in the middle of the nineteenth century is in excess of 6,000, a detailed survey of all of them is beyond the scope of this study. It is only necessary to identify the streets and quarters of the town where the middle class, and hence

the Anglo-Indian community, lived. This information can be gained from an exploration in the field of the large number of substantial houses still remaining in Cheltenham, and the fact that several quality residential areas can easily be recognised despite later demolition and rebuilding. Moreover, other documentary evidence, such as the directories, also give clues as to the areas favoured by the middle class sections of society.

Cheltenham College Register

Cheltenham College, founded in 1840, was intended to serve the children of retired servants of the empire. The College Register has been published and has been successively updated.⁹

Essentially, the Register is a list of all the boys who entered the school, arranged chronologically, one term at a time. There is an index, so names can be researched with ease. Each individual entry varies in detail. Some merely give the name of the pupil, and record when he joined and left the school. Most provide the name of the pupil's father, and the majority give a minimum of information on the subsequent career of the pupil. Several entries, especially in the case of army officers, add a summary of their army career. As an example here is an entry among the boys who entered the College in February 1860:

Abbott, Augustus Keith, son of Colonel Augustus Abbott, Bengal Artillery, Douglas, I.o.M.; born 16th July, 1844. Left June, 1860. R.M.C. Sandhurst, 1863, Ensign, 9th, 98th and 107th Foot; Lieut. Bengal S.C. 1868; Major 1884; ret 1889. Lushai, 1871 (Med. with cl.); Duffla Hill Tribes, 1874; Naga Hills (desp); Afghan War, 1879 (desp., Med.); Angami Tribes Exped. (cl). Died at Cheltenham, March 1904.

⁹ Skirving, E.S. (Ed.) *Cheltenham College Register 1841-1927* (Cheltenham: The College, 1928)

This is typical of many of the entries, although the majority are not quite as detailed as this. Not only does it give the chronology of his career after attending Sandhurst, it lists the major actions in which he was involved and any medals or mentions in despatches. We can presume that Augustus Abbott was a boarder, since his father's address was in the Isle of Man. Some of the names in the Register are listed as day boys. Augustus Abbott retired to Cheltenham at the end of his career in the army, so perhaps he had pleasant memories of his time as a pupil at the College.

Contemporary Guide Books and Histories

After Cheltenham became a fashionable spa, especially following the visit of George III in 1788, a host of guide books were published to cater for the growing number of visitors. The first one was in fact published in 1781.¹⁰ Its secondary title - *useful companion, in a journey of health and pleasure to the Cheltenham Spa* - gives an idea of the main appeal of the town at the beginning of the Regency period. A hundred years later, at the end of the Victorian period, the character of the town had changed considerably, and this is reflected in the more sober tone of the contemporary guide books.¹¹

Obviously, during the intervening years the steady stream of guides produced books of varying quality. At worst they are merely superficial and very sketchy, at best they can provide an interesting insight into the life of the town with a wealth of information. Very few have much

¹⁰ Butler, W. *The Cheltenham Guide* (1781)

¹¹ Burrow, E. *Cheltenham: the Midland Educational and Health Centre* (1897)

to say about the Anglo-Indian community apart from a passing mention. The following is typical:

The climate of the town is equable and particularly congenial to Anglo-Indians, who come to the town and live in retirement in large numbers.¹²

However, most guide books give plenty of detail about the things that visitors might need to know about the town, and much of this material is useful to historians. The books tell us about travel, the accommodation available, entertainment, churches and chapels, schools, medical facilities including the spas, shopping and excursions to places of interest in the surrounding countryside. Many of these aspects of the town would have been not only attractive to visitors, but would also be appealing to potential residents.

A number of the guide books are more akin to antiquarian works with a tendency to survey the history of Cheltenham, often extending to cover the rest of Gloucestershire. However, even this type of text can include useful information. For instance, *Griffith's New Historical Description of Cheltenham* has a list of the Town Commissioners.¹³

Some of the best guide books were illustrated by engravings, lithographs or woodcuts. The most detailed picture of Cheltenham in the middle of the nineteenth century is provided by George Rowe's *Illustrated Cheltenham Guide* of 1845. This has been reprinted twice in recent years, which is a testament to its unique quality. In a series of

¹² *Gloucestershire: its Chief Towns, Resources and Characteristics* (Burrows County Guides, c. 1912)

¹³ *Griffith's New Historical Description of Cheltenham and the Vicinity*. (Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green, London, 1826)

four walks, Rowe takes the visitor on a tour of the town, and it is still possible to follow his routes, and to identify many of the buildings he describes.

Gentleman's Magazine

The *Gentleman's Magazine* was a monthly periodical founded in 1731 by Edward Cave under the pseudonym "Sylvanus Urban" (indicating his intention of appealing to both town and country audiences). It attracted a large readership in the 18th century and survived until 1914. It was the first publication to use the name "magazine" in the sense of a compilation of news and essays, and included parliamentary reports and book reviews. As far as this study is concerned, its main value is the fact that each issue includes notices about the deaths of gentlemen. Presumably they only appeared in the Magazine if they received notification from the deceased's relatives, so they cannot be said to be comprehensive and must only record a proportion of total deaths in the gentry. Nevertheless, entries usually include some details, such as the rank of officers and the place of death. Separate from these notices the Magazine regularly published obituaries of more prominent figures. These would include members of the clergy, politicians and army officers.

East India Company Lists

The India Office Library, founded in 1801 as the Library of the East India Company, assumed care of the printed books already in the Company's possession and continued to strengthen the existing collection as a reference library for the Company's employees and for orientalist scholars. The Library, along with the Company's other

material possessions, was transferred to the Crown in 1858 under the administration of the newly-created India Office.

The India Office Records are a unique source of information on the history of British trade and government in South Asia and neighbouring areas. The bulk of the archival material (bound volumes, files and boxes of papers) occupies 14 kilometres of shelving and consists of original documentation, including original letters received, drafts or copies of letters sent, registered files of correspondence, minutes of proceedings of committees and other corporate bodies, lists of personnel and nominal returns, title deeds and other legal documents, books of accounts, reports, memoranda, and ship's journals. They include Ecclesiastical returns, which comprise copy registers of baptisms, marriages and burials of European Christians resident in South Asia.

In 1831 the East India Company in London decided to compile service records to date for all officers of the Bengal, Madras and Bombay armies then on the active list, and to make annual additions thereafter until such time as an officer left the active list - all new entrants to the officer corps after 1831 were automatically included in these compilations. The Service Army Lists also includes a small number of elderly general officers who in 1831 were technically still on the active list though in reality long since retired.¹⁴

¹⁴ Bengal: IOR/L/MIL/10/20 - IOR/L/MIL/10/67
Madras: IOR/L/MIL/11/38 - IOR/L/MIL/11/66
Bombay: IOR/L/MIL/12/67 - IOR/L/MIL/12/82

There is also a collection of material associated with the nomination of cadets to the East India Company's military seminary at Addiscombe. Officer cadets for the East India Company's Armies were generally appointed upon the nomination of a member of the Court of Directors. Cadets were 'recommended' to their patron by a mutual friend or acquaintance and after nomination were obliged to forward to East India House a formal application, a certificate of age and relevant testimonials. In 1809 the East India Company's Military Seminary was established at Addiscombe near Croydon to provide general and technical education for EIC officer cadets - attendance was compulsory for artillery and engineer cadets, optional for cavalry and infantry cadets. If an officer attended Addiscombe a brief record of his attendance will appear in his cadet papers. In 1859 following the demise of the East India Company the Seminary became the Royal India Military College, with entrance through competitive examination. It continued to supply cadets for the Indian Army until 1861 when it was closed down. Henceforth cadets for the Indian Army entered via the military academies at Sandhurst and Woolwich.

The Cadet Papers consist of application forms and petitions, birth or baptism certificates produced to satisfy age regulations, testimonials, and related correspondence and memoranda, forwarded to East India House when a cadet's appointment was under consideration. The Cadet Registers comprise mainly annual lists of cadets giving brief details. Information usually to be found includes Presidency, date of

appointment, name of nominating Director, and ship on which embarked.¹⁵

Among the published material are various listings of officers who served in the three presidencies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras. For example one of these lists is called: *Alphabetical List of the Officers of the Indian Army with the dates of their respective promotion, retirement, resignation or death, whether in India or in Europe from the year 1760 to the year 1834 inclusive, corrected to September 30, 1837.*¹⁶ This rather long-winded title gives an indication of what is included. It is an invaluable work of reference for information on officers serving in the Indian army up to 1837. Although it does not always give the place of death, it does at least usually state whether the individual died in India or in Britain. Those said to have died in Cheltenham can be taken with some degree of certainty to be members of the Anglo-Indian community in Cheltenham, although there is the possibility they died on a visit to Cheltenham. This is where cross-referencing with other sources is essential.

More detailed accounts of the careers of selected officers is contained in *The East India Military Calendar containing the services of General and Field officers of the Indian Army.*¹⁷ The descriptions of the campaigns in which these officers served give a good idea of the varied experiences and hardships endured through long periods on active service. In some cases references are made to what happened to these men when they retired, but usually they are brief and to the

¹⁵ British Library OIOC: L/MIL/9/107 - IOR/L/MIL/9/269

¹⁶ Dodwell and Miles (London, 1838)

¹⁷ (London, 1826) 3 vols.

point. This example relating to Lieutenant-Colonel Walter Caulfield Lennon of the Madras Corps of Engineers is typical:

His injured health obliged him to retire from the service altogether on the 14 November 1810, and settle in Cheltenham, where he now generally resides.¹⁸

However, most of the accounts make no mention of the lives of these officers once they retired. This is, of course, a problem with a lot of the source material, which relates to their service in India, but only refers, if at all, briefly to their retirement.

Some of the published lists are concerned with one particular part of the Indian army, such as: *A List of the Officers who have served in the Madras Artillery from its formation in 1748 down to 1861, in which year it was amalgamated with the Royal Artillery*.¹⁹ The benefit of this list is that it covers a much longer period than some of the earlier "calendars". It also reflects the fact that after the Indian Mutiny, the artillery was amalgamated with the British Army. General lists of officers can be found in the Bengal, Madras and Bombay Service Army Lists, 1753-1859²⁰ and the India Army List, 1859-1947. Many of these have now been published on the internet as part of the *Access to Archives* website.²¹

¹⁸ *The East India Military Calendar containing the Services of General and Field Officers of the Indian Army* (London, 1826) p.229

¹⁹ Compiled by Maj. John Henry Leslie (1901).

²⁰ British Library OIOC: L/MIL/10-12/ 20-82.

²¹ www.a2a.pro.gov.uk

Unpublished Manuscript Documents

Apart from the sources already mentioned, there is a mass of material in the Oriental and India Office collections containing a great variety of archival sources concerning Indian army officers and Indian civil service officials.

There are several classes of documents dealing with the retirement of officers. The *Register of Bengal, Madras and Bombay officer's retirements, Jan 1836 - Jan 1857*.²² Compiled at East India House, the Register gives date, rank, periods of service, retirement pay and pension, regulation under which retired, and whether in India or the UK. *Bengal Army officer's retirement certificates*, returned by the Government of India Military Department, give retired list rank, pensions and periods of service.²³

In the India Office Accountant-General's records are documents dealing with the leave and furlough pay and pensions of members of the Indian civil service and military services. Among these are lists of officers receiving a colonel's allowance, originally called "Off Reckonings".²⁴ This was the successor of one of the many perquisites attached to the commanding officer of military establishments of all European armies. When the East India Company's armies were first raised, the practice of the British Army under which the commanding

²² British Library OIOC: L/MIL/10/108.

²³ British Library OIOC: L/MIL/10/109-112 (Oct 1857 - Dec 1896)

²⁴ British Library OIOC: L/AG/21/12/9.

officer contracted for supplies to his regiment, although by that time considerably reduced, was continued. When the government in India took the supply of clothing of troops into its own hands, the profits on the contracts of each year were assessed, and divided equally among the dispossessed colonels. From 1854 it was found more convenient to convert the variable annual sum into a fixed allowance. At the same time, the title was changed to "Colonel's Allowance".

Examples of other records include a *List of unemployed Bengal, Madras and Bombay officers of lieutenant-colonel rank or above who opted to reside out of India until required, with covering correspondence, 1872.*²⁵

A large number of private papers are held at the Centre of South Asian Studies in Cambridge. Many date from the nineteenth century and some relate to families connected with Cheltenham, such as the Coghill and Showers Papers.

The Database

Because of the great variety of available sources, it was convenient to use some of the material to construct a database of Anglo-Indians associated with Cheltenham. This made it possible to gather and handle a lot of factual information from which generalisations have been made. Details about individuals have provided the evidence for the analysis of Anglo-Indian society. At the most basic level the database consists of a list of the names of men in Cheltenham that had some connection with India. The names were gathered from the

²⁵ British Library OIOC, L/MIL/10/116

sources mentioned above, especially census returns and town directories. These also provided information about the address and useful details concerning Anglo-Indian households. It was possible to locate the areas of the town favoured by them and collect figures about the number of servants as well as children and other relations. Although the census returns provided information on the age of people, a more useful source for their birth and death was provided by church and cemetery memorials, which are a particularly rich source about those who were members of an elite group and so more likely to have some permanent commemoration.

When dealing with the careers of the Anglo-Indians of Cheltenham it was decided to divide the database into sections covering the Indian army officers, the Indian civil service, the naval officers and the British army officers. This last section was included since many of the British army officers had close relations with the Anglo-Indians, had been born in India or had spent a large part of their career in India. When it came to researching their service records, the archives at the British Library proved invaluable. Although there were some omissions, in general it was possible to trace the careers of the Indian army officers from becoming a cadet at the East India Company military seminary at Addiscombe until their retirement from the service. As a result the database includes information about the regiment each officer served with as well as the dates of joining the army and retirement. The Oriental and India Office Collections (OIOC) also provided information about contributors to pension and widows' funds and also, in some cases, probate valuations. The database also records ways in which retired Anglo-Indians contributed to activities in Cheltenham.

Membership of voluntary societies, such as the Cheltenham Literary and Philosophical Institution, and involvement with charitable organisations have been included. It also mentions any public appointments, such as magistrates and town commissioners. The Cheltenham College Register and lists of shareholders provided information about any connections with the College from membership of the board of directors to attendance as a pupil. The Register, in addition, supplied details of the sons of Anglo-Indians, many of whom later served in India. A wide range of miscellaneous material was able to fill in some of the gaps that remained after the main sources had been consulted. These included casualty lists, such as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's *Debt of Honour Register*, the register of Victoria Cross recipients, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and Public Record Office probate records

The database was also used to ascertain exactly how many Anglo-Indians there were living in Cheltenham at any time within the period in question. No definitive calculation has ever been made of the numbers involved, and the available sources are not without difficulty. The most reliable and comprehensive source are the Census Returns. Other useful sources include the various published directories which give the names of the 'resident gentry'. However, it is not always clear from individual entries whether they qualify as Anglo-Indians. Many of the army officers are only identified by their rank and so could be either Indian or British army officers. Some retired officers, particularly below the rank of lieutenant-colonel, instead of a rank are usually given the title of Mr. or Esq. Civilian officials, who would not have a rank in any case, are even more difficult to identify.

Nevertheless, Cheltenham Anglo-Indians can be identified by cross-referencing a wide range of different sources for the period 1833-1903. The database cannot claim to be an absolutely complete list of all Anglo-Indians connected with Cheltenham since there are always people who for one reason or another do not appear in any of the available sources. Nevertheless, it does contain the names of a substantial proportion of the total and affords a comprehensive cross-section of anybody even fairly remotely connected with India who lived or visited Cheltenham in the period under consideration.

Chapter 4

THE ANGLO-INDIAN PARADISE

Cheltenham, the paradise on a small scale of many a retired Anglo-Indian who has outlived all his relatives, and who thinks wistfully of the curry-and-rice, brandy-pawnee, and active life of former years.¹

In the second half of the nineteenth century, when this was written, Cheltenham was well-known as a favourite resort for retired Anglo-Indians. In the early years of the century retired Anglo-Indians would normally stay for a relatively short time while they were taking advantage of the facilities of the spa. There would also be officers on leave who would stay for some time before returning to active duty. Only later did it become common for Anglo-Indians to settle in Cheltenham on a permanent basis. The *Cheltenham Looker - On* recorded the comings and goings of the fashionable residents and visitors. For instance, it informed readers on September 22, 1849 that Major-General Battine of the Bengal Artillery returned to India with his family via the overland route. Sometimes, the Anglo-Indians were forced to retire early due to ill health brought on by service in a tropical climate. There was a wide range of people living in Cheltenham who could be said to be Anglo-Indian or have definite connections with India. The most numerous category of people amongst the Anglo-Indians were those who had worked in India either in a military or civilian capacity. Most of these people, until 1858, were employed by the East India Company either as army and naval officers or in the civil service.

¹ Lawson, C.A. *At Home on Furlough* (Madras: The 'Times' Press, 1868) p.165

The following list of the different categories of people with Indian connections is compiled from the 1861 Census Returns, but is typical for most of the nineteenth century :

- retired Indian army officers; e.g. Lieutenant-Colonel John Chisholm, Madras Artillery, aged 67, 31, *Clarence Square*.
- Indian army officers home on leave or visiting relatives; e.g. Captain John Hardy, Bombay Artillery, visiting his brother at 20, *Lansdown Crescent*.
- retired Indian civil servants; e.g. William Inglis, Madras Civil Service, aged 52, 1, *Lansdown Villas*.
- Indian civil servants home on leave or visiting relatives; e.g. Kennett Thompson, Madras Civil Service, visiting his uncle at 5, *Lansdown Terrace*.
- widows and dependants of Indian army or civilian officers; e.g. Jane Gill, widow of a surgeon in the Indian army, aged 49, born in India, 2, *Queen's Parade*.
- East India stockholders; e.g. Anne Webb, aged 65, *Chadnor Villa*.
- owners of land in India; e.g. John Freeman, 10, *Glenlee Lodge*.
- East Indian merchants; e.g. Henry Nelson, 7, *Lansdown Parade*.
- scholars born in India attending private schools; e.g. 9 boarders at *York House* aged 6-13.

- British Army officers who had served in India, either retired or on leave; e.g. Lieutenant-Colonel James Law, Royal Artillery, aged 72, 2, *Bays Hill Terrace*.
- Naval officers, retired or on leave; e.g. Vice-Admiral Francis Lock, aged 72, 2, *Lansdown Crescent*.
- other people born in India; e.g. Charlotte Urquhart, aged 27, 5, *Queen's Parade*.

All of these examples had clear connections with India apart from British Army officers and Naval officers. Although they lived in the same parts of Cheltenham and shared similar life styles, they were not necessarily Anglo-Indians. Nevertheless, by 1850 India had become the British army's second home, and most British soldiers could expect to serve there.² Despite the fact that officers of the British Army were recruited separately from officers of the East India Company's army and considered themselves superior to them, there were many ways in which there was a close association between the two groups. For instance, they shared a common ethos and often fought alongside each other. A comparison between the British and Indian army officers based on the Cheltenham database also reveals some similarity between the two groups. For instance, in both services the average length of service was 26 years for officers below general officer rank. Generals cannot be compared in the same way because officially they did not retire being kept on the supernumerary list and in theory could have been called up for active service, despite the fact that many of them were too old to return to duty. Officers on half pay

² Barnett, C. *Britain and her Army* (London: Cassell & Co., 2000) p.278

continued to receive promotion, and it was possible for an officer to be promoted to the rank of major-general with as little as seven or eight years' service on full pay.

26 per cent of the Indian army officers on the database were generals whereas only 19 per cent of the British army officers held that rank. The Indian officers appear to have been the older with 50 per cent over the age of 50 as opposed to the British army officers at 30 per cent. The Indian army officers served in one of the three presidencies (see Table 4.1). Bengal, as the largest, accounted for 47 per cent of the officers. Madras was the second largest contingent at 30 per cent, although for some reason there were as many artillery officers from Madras as Bengal, suggesting that Cheltenham attracted a disproportionate number of retired officers from the Madras artillery. The division between the different arms was similar in the Indian and British service, with the infantry having the largest proportion in both (see table 4.2). There was a slightly greater proportion of artillery and engineer officers in the British army which may reflect the lower status of these services that made them more accessible to the pseudo-gentry.

Naval officers did not necessarily have connections with India. There were some instances on the database, however, such as Captain Walter Hamilton of 5, *Park Place*, who was in the Bombay Marine Service. Commander Thomas Tickell, the third son of Lieutenant General Robert Tickell of the Royal Engineers, was born in India. Several other naval officers had close relatives in the Indian or British armies such as Rear Admiral Thomas Whinyates of 10, *North Place*, who had brothers in the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers, and Admiral Josiah Coghill of *Lansdown Place*, who had a son in the Bengal Fusiliers.

Table 4.1

Indian Army Officers from the three Presidencies

	<u>Infantry</u>		<u>Cavalry</u>		<u>Artillery</u>		<u>Engineers</u>		<u>Not Known</u>		<u>Total</u>
Bengal	183	66%	27	10%	28	10%	15	5%	26	9%	279
Bombay	70	65%	6	6%	18	17%	6	6%	8	7%	108
Madras	106	62%	16	9%	27	16%	9	5%	14	8%	172
not known	-		-		-		-		31		31
total	359	61%	49	8%	73	12%	30	5%	79	13%	590

Table 4.2

British Army Officers

<u>Infantry</u>	<u>Cavalry</u>	<u>Artillery</u>	<u>Engineers</u>	<u>Marines</u>	<u>Not Known</u>	<u>Total</u>					
184	56%	40	12%	58	18%	26	8%	9	3%	14	331

The civilian employees of the East India Company were fewer in number than the military officers. (See Table 4.3) The database lists 122 Indian civil service and medical officials. The majority (78 per cent) of them were in the civil service, although over half the Madras officials were doctors. It was not unusual for these company 'servants' to retire at a relatively early age, including a few who took up a new career in Britain. This was also particularly true of the medical officials.

	Civil		Medical		Total
Bengal	38	40%	1	4%	39
Bombay	6	6%	1	4%	7
Madras	22	23%	4	15%	26
Ceylon	2	2%	-	-	2
not known	28		20		48
total	96	79%	26	21%	122

The Size of the Anglo-Indian Community

The problems involved in calculating the actual size of the Anglo-Indian population living in Cheltenham have been discussed in Chapter 3. The database lists 1181 military officers and civil servants. Of this total, 590 (50%) were Indian army officers and 331 (28%) were British army officers. This suggests that there were almost two Indian army officers for every one British army officer. Much smaller totals of Naval officers - 130 (11%), and civil and medical officers - 130 (11%) have been positively identified. These figures suggest that the number of Anglo-Indians in Cheltenham was relatively small compared with the rest of the population. According to the 1851 Census, when the population was around 35,000, East India Company and British Army officers comprised one-and-a-half per cent of the adult male

population. two per cent of men were annuitants and 'independent gentlemen' , and these would have included some Anglo-Indians. Women far outnumbered men, however, making up 57 per cent of the total population. No less than five per cent of them were described as either annuitants or independent gentlewomen. Some of these women would have been the widows of army officers or otherwise connected to the Anglo-Indian community.

Looking at particular areas of Cheltenham, the 1851 Census for Pittville, for instance, recorded the occupation or status of the head of 157 households out of a total of 198. Eighty, including 56 women, were described as fundholders or annuitants, or as the owners of land or houses. 18 men were described as retired or as pensioners, including 12 former army, naval or East India Company officers, while another 15 were serving members of the armed forces.

A further demonstration of the proportion of Anglo-Indians is suggested by an analysis of the memorials in some of the churches in Cheltenham. Christ Church, on the edge of the Lansdown Estate, has a total of 83 monuments commemorating members of the middle-class congregation. Of these, no less than 29 refer to the East India Company or British involvement in India.³ Although the Anglo-Indians were a relatively small proportion of the overall population, they were concentrated in certain exclusive areas of Cheltenham, where there was a preponderance of middle-class households. Some streets and quarters formed enclaves where the Anglo-Indians were surrounded by their own kind. For instance, amongst the 27 inhabitants of *Bayshill Terrace* listed in the *Cheltenham Free Press Directory* in 1859 were 8

³ Rudman, S. *Victorian Legacy* (Privately published, 1998)

officers, including a retired captain in the Royal Navy and a retired lieutenant-colonel in the Royal Artillery. Similarly, in *Lansdown Terrace* there were 22 people listed, including 5 East India Company and British army officers and 2 East India Company civil servants. In *Park Place* there were 28 heads of households listed including 3 members of the clergy, 5 independent gentlemen, 5 unmarried women, 11 married women or widows, and 4 army officers. It is clear that army officers formed a significant proportion of the middle class in Cheltenham, but it is also the case that women greatly outnumbered men. Some of these women, especially the spinsters, were fundholders or annuitants, and others were widows or married to army officers. One of them was even referred to as Mrs. Colonel Stevenson. She lived at 28, *Park Place* and was married to Colonel Stevenson of the Bombay Horse Artillery.

Whatever the size of the Anglo-Indian section of Cheltenham society, they do seem to have made an impact on the public perception of the town. In the early years of the nineteenth century, opinion was generally fairly hostile with Cheltenham referred to as 'that hot-bed of atra-bilious valetudinarians from every province of Hindostan.'⁴ Visitors to the town were sometimes struck by the aimless air of some quarters:

Cheltenham has been called the "Castle of Indolence", and I certainly never saw such resolute idlers as those grouped round two of the principal hotels. They had actually brought out chairs, and sat for hours on the porticoes and footpath, some with newspapers and some without, but evidently determined to see and be seen. Most of the gentlemen here, have a cautious uncertain tread, symptomatic of gout; and a large proportion of the ladies are wheeled about in flies, pushed along the footpath like wheelbarrows. Except in Dublin, I certainly never entered a

⁴ Proctor, G. *The Lucubrations of Henry Ravelin, Esq* (London: G. & W.B. Whittaker, 1824) p.129

place where the inhabitants exhibit so universally a lounging, indolent, nothing-to-do aspect as in Cheltenham.⁵

One of the bitterest critics of Cheltenham was William Cobbett. During his Rural Rides in 1821 he visited the town where he found an assemblage of his hated 'tax-eaters':

Cheltenham is a nasty, ill-looking place, half clown and half cockney. The town is one street about a mile long; but then, at some distance from this street, there are rows of white tenements, with green balconies, like those inhabited by the tax-eaters round London. Indeed, this place appears to be the residence of and assemblage of tax-eaters...Cheltenham is at the foot of a part of that chain of hills, which form the sides of that *dish* which I described as resembling the vale of Gloucester. Soon after quitting this resort of the lame and the lazy, the gormandizing and guzzling, the bilious and the nervous, we proceeded on, between stone walls, over a country little better than that from Cirencester to Burlip-hill.-A very poor, dull, and uninteresting country all the way to Oxford.⁶

Another literary visitor was Augustus Granville (1783-1872), who also detected a rather frivolous life-style amongst the inhabitants, especially after he overheard this conversation in the public room of a Cheltenham hotel:

We have the reputation of possessing more spinsters and old maids, more widows and half-pay yellows from the Indus and the Ganges, together with lots of methodists and tee-totallers, than are necessary to render the place as dull as ditch-water; and yet you will hardly find another watering-place in England that exhibits more of the worst symptoms of a fashionable Spas than Cheltenham. We have here male as well as female coquettes - modish friblers - carriage-calling, shawl-adjusting, and poodle-petting creatures - whose whole life is spent in devising one day how they shall spend the next with as much enjoyment and at as little expense as possible. You will know them by their gait, looks, dress and address, whenever you choose to take a

⁵ Sinclair, C. *Hill & Valley, Hours in England and Wales.*(William Whyte, Edinburgh, 1838) p.359

⁶ Cobbett, W. *Rural Rides* (Letchworth: Temple Press, 1932) p. 22

turn or two on the promenade, or peep onto the Montpellier or Imperial at the watering-hour in the morning, or two hours before the close of day. As for the higher classes of people, you will find them to keep as much aloof from the rest as any of the proudest families in the higher classes of society in the metropolis, whose manners they ape, and whose habits they have adopted.⁷

When Granville published his book on *The Spas of England* the character of the town's inhabitants was beginning to change. This happened due to a variety of influences such as the spread of evangelicalism, the growth of education and the end of the spa trade. By the early years of the twentieth century the tone of the town had been transformed, and some local writers point to the example of the Anglo-Indians:

The decay of the Spa by no means put an end to the town, however, which was destined by sheer virtue of its natural attractions to continue to grow and become a favourite place of settlement, combining in such marked degree the best urban features with the most pleasing rural appearances and delights. It became the Walhalla of the retired Anglo-Indian and the settling place of many an aristocratic and eminently exclusive army and navy officer, who, taking his pension whilst still in early middle life, came here to hunt and educate his growing family. He spent much of his time at the club, to which he was wont to resort at exactly the same hour every day to do just the same things. There he met his fellows and joined in games of billiards, chess, or cards according to his custom, read his one particular newspaper, and no other, and delivered his opinion upon passing events; or reverted to the experiences of his past life, with his intimate associates, and was always most punctilious upon points of etiquette... The sons and daughters of these proud old settlers, many of the former of whom entered the army or other national service as soon as they were old enough, made a very smart and handsome society in Cheltenham.⁸

⁷ Granville, A.B. *The Spas of England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1841) pp.316-7

⁸ Garrett, J.H. *From a Cotswold Height* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1988; first published 1919) pp.210-11

The Anglo-Indian Paradise

Various reasons were suggested at the time why Cheltenham was so popular with Anglo-Indians:

Owing to its sheltered situation, its pleasant environs, its soft and agreeable climate, the town became the favourite residence of so many retired veterans from India that it acquired the sobriquet of "Asia Minor".⁹

The climate in particular was thought to be favourable:

The salubrity of its climate renders the town especially suitable for the residence of invalids during the winter. The Cotswold range of hills nearly surround the vale, which is 15 miles long and 8 in breadth, sheltered from the north-east and south-east winds. It has an elevation of 195 feet above the sea level. Well drained, and standing on a dry and sandy soil, Cheltenham enjoys a purity of air unsurpassed by any inland town. In summer, the prevailing winds blow from the west and south-west, giving an agreeable freshness to the air, rendering it about two degrees cooler than London.¹⁰

Some visitors to the town also remarked on the heat of the summer, which must have found favour with those used to tropical climates:

This is indeed a brilliant city; in many places so much resembling Daniel's Views of Madras, that, the day being hot, I began to fancy myself there, and very nearly ordered a currie for dinner. The wide open verandahs and porches want nothing but a pagoda tree to be occasionally shaken, and a nabob might forget he had returned home.¹¹

⁹Adams, W.E. *Memoirs of a Social Atom* (London: Huteson, 1903) p.3. The name "Asia Minor" was also given to other Anglo-Indian areas of Britain (see below, p.75).

¹⁰Westley, F. C. *The New Guide to Cheltenham* (Cheltenham: Westley and Son, c.1867). The highest air temperature officially recorded in Britain: 37.1°C (98.8°F) was at Cheltenham on 3 August, 1990.

¹¹Sinclair, C. *Hill & Valley, Hours in England and Wales* (Edinburgh: William Whyte, 1838) Chapt. XXI, p.359

But it was Cheltenham's fame as a spa which initially brought large numbers of Anglo-Indians to the town. This was certainly the case by 1815:

Among the many public places which have lately risen into consequence and popularity Cheltenham holds a most distinguished rank. It has now arrived at that degree of pre-eminence, that its name is become as familiar in the British East and West Indies as in London. This celebrity has arisen partly from the salubrity of its climate, but chiefly from the reputation of its springs.¹²

When the company officials came back to Britain, either on leave or to stay for good, they were often in need of medical attention. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century returned Anglo-Indians would usually visit Cheltenham for the season and take the waters. It was at this stage that Cheltenham's link with the Empire began:

The benefit received by many just returned from the East and West Indies in a debilitated state, and their recommendation of this water on the spot to their friends, is the best proof of this assertion...As long as Great Britain possesses her colonies in the East and the West, so long must Cheltenham stand a living monument of the virtues of her waters.¹³

Many visitors found the waters beneficial to digestive systems disordered by oriental food and climate. McCabe, a doctor practising in Cheltenham in the 1820s, included several Anglo-Indian patients in his case notes:

In May, 1820, I was consulted by Lieut-Col K_____, of the Hon. East India Company's Service, who had but a few weeks before arrived from India, after a residence there of upwards of thirty years, during which time he had suffered several attacks of fever, of cholera morbus, and of inflammations of the liver. He was

¹² *The New and Improved Cheltenham Guide* (1815)

¹³ Griffith, J.K. *A General Cheltenham Guide* (c.1812) p.131

greatly emaciated and debilitated, and had latterly suffered much from dysenteric symptoms.¹⁴

In most cases he was able to record that after taking the waters his patients were restored to good health. Several distinguished people who had served in India came to take the waters, including Arthur Wellesley and Warren Hastings. And so the spa became a leading watering-place, acquiring the reputation for helping the sort of complaints experienced by returning Anglo-Indians:

Cheltenham has for some years past been progressing towards a station of high celebrity. The rank it now holds amongst its rivals is such as the most enthusiastic could not have dared to predict, nor its greatest admirers, nor those most sensible of the extent and variety of its attractions, and claims to the public favour, could have ventured to anticipate. Long as it has been the resort of the valetudinarian, long as the efficacy of its waters and the salubrity of its air have been experienced by the returning invalid from the east and western Indies.¹⁵

By the middle of the century Cheltenham was no longer important as a spa. A few enthusiasts like Edwin Lee were still proclaiming the benefits of the Cheltenham water, but by that time the height of its popularity as a spa had passed:

Cheltenham has long and justly been celebrated for its advantages in the more chronic forms of liver disease, whether entailed by a protracted sojourn in unhealthy climates, or arising from other causes.¹⁶

Efforts were made to promote the general benefits of the town, and its healthy reputation was enhanced by its immunity from the cholera, as reported in the *Looker-On*:

¹⁴ McCabe, J. *Directions for drinking the Cheltenham Waters Case IV* (Cheltenham: Longman & Co., 1829) pp.53-4

¹⁵ Griffith's *New Historical Description of Cheltenham and Its Vicinity* (1826)

¹⁶ Lee, E. *Cheltenham and its resources* (London : Whitaker & Co., 1851) p.94

The appearance of Cheltenham has greatly improved within the last ten days, the influx of company having been very considerable, and the number of residents who, within the period, have also returned from their summer excursions being also greater than had taken place for some weeks previous. The continued immunity of the Town from the prevailing epidemic has no doubt operated favourably, in causing many families to determine upon an earlier return home, than under other circumstances might have occurred; and the same cause has also favoured the arrival of strangers.¹⁷

Some regretted the passing of the initial reason for the town's popularity:

On several occasions of my visiting Cheltenham, I have perceived with regret that its waters have not of late enjoyed so high a degree of vogue as formerly.¹⁸

However, this did not mean that Cheltenham was losing its appeal for the Anglo-Indians:

Cheltenham has not been transformed into a manufacturing town, as some other watering-places, upon a change of fortune; nor into a town characterised by any special commerce. But it remains very much the same quiet, genteel place as ever, while the number of resident gentry is greater than ever.... Around the favoured portions of the town, during the last half century, leafy avenues have been gradually extending in every direction, while the town itself, peculiarly a *rus in urbe*, has been adorned with many handsome structures, especially in its places of worship and educational establishments.¹⁹

The idea of bringing the countryside into an urban setting to produce an attractive environment was motivated by the gentrification of certain sections of the middle class who sought to emulate the life-style of the country gentry, despite the fact that their wealth did not

¹⁷ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (September 22, 1849)

¹⁸ Lee, E. *Cheltenham* p.viii

¹⁹ Contem Ignotus *The Golden Decade of a Favoured Town, 1843-1853*. (London: Elliot Stock, 1884)

depend on the ownership of land. The Anglo-Indians subscribed to this view of the need to surround their houses with reminders of the countryside. So Anglo-Indians also came to Cheltenham because of the ambience that had been developing in the town since its days as a spa:

The walks and drives of the town and suburbs are especially pleasing. The indications of wealth and cultivated taste are shown in numerous handsome residences, their well-arranged gardens, and the great profusion of trees and shrubs bordering the roads and promenades.²⁰

For those wanting to live in Cheltenham, the situation had been transformed since the time when accommodation was of poor quality and difficult to find. A building boom had increased Cheltenham's housing stock from 710 in 1801 to 7,365 in 1851. The unprecedented growth of Cheltenham was commented on by contemporary writers:

One would imagine that the town will be overbuilt at last, and that more brickwork has been going on already than it will be possible to find occupants for. Yet such is not the case; nay, the contrary is so; for no sooner is a building reported to be ready, than inmates are found equally ready to enter it. The effect of such a multiplication of new buildings of every kind has been that of lowering the rent of the old houses - so much so indeed, that for the same annual sum which only procures a decent-looking house in London, you might lodge yourself in a palace at Cheltenham.²¹

Many of these houses were large properties originally intended for wealthy visitors. As the number of people just staying for the summer season declined, many houses became available for those wanting to live permanently in Cheltenham:

²⁰ Westley, F. C. *The New Guide*

²¹ Granville, A.B. *The Spas of England* (Bath: Adams & Dart, 1971 - first published 1841) p.311

With respect to its general advantages and accommodations, whether for a permanent residence, or a temporary sojourn, Cheltenham is not inferior to any, and on some accounts superior to most, watering places of the first class. House-rent is moderate, being much lower than it was a few years ago, and even in the season, furnished houses and apartments may be obtained at a reasonable rental, varying according to situation. ²²

So with the decline of the spa trade, Cheltenham could offer 'Nabob style' houses with big gardens in a country house *rus in urbe* atmosphere at reasonable prices and with the added advantage of a plethora of redundant domestics at low wages.²³

In striving to emulate the aristocracy, the pseudo-gentry attempted to copy certain features of the life-style of the elite. Since few could command the same levels of income as those with landed property, there was always an element of compromise in what could be acquired. But this did not prevent the pseudo-gentry from having definite ideas about what was desirable, even when, at least in England, what was attainable fell well short of their aspirations. This advertisement for a property in *Lansdown Terrace* in 1878 gives an idea of what was available to the pseudo-gentry at the higher end of the scale:

For sale by public auction - all that stone-fronted residence, of imposing elevation, situate on the Lansdown estate, known as No.12, Lansdown Terrace. The house is approached by a carriage drive, and contains on ground floor - entrance hall, inner hall and passage dining room, study, china closet, butler's pantry, wing bedroom, and WC; on half-space - conservatory; on first floor (approached by stone staircase) - front drawing room, communicating by folding doors with back drawing room; on second floor - one bedroom, 18ft 9in by 14ft 10in, communicating with dressing room, 18ft 6in by 8ft, one bedroom, 13ft 8in by 13ft

²² Lee *Cheltenham* p.35

²³ Hollingsworth *Cheltenham* (London: Town & Country Books, 1983) p.15

8in; on second half space - WC, water laid on and draw tap; on third floor - housemaid's closet, one bedroom, 18ft 6in by 14ft, one ditto, 18ft by 9ft, one ditto, 14ft 3in by 14ft; on basement floor - housekeeper's room, pantry, capital wine and beer cellars, good kitchen, larder, scullery, coal cellar, etc; at rear of house - paved court, knife house, servants' WC, small garden opening on to good road.

The residence which is supplied with water and gas services, is within a few minutes walk of three churches, of the principal educational establishments, the clubs, Montpellier Gardens, Promenade, etc.

For further particulars apply to Messrs Hollingsworth & Co, solicitors, 4, East India Avenue, Leadenhall Street, London EC.²⁴

Such houses were country mansions in miniature. The illusion was created by the provision of an 'imposing elevation'. This was especially the case with some of the grander terraces which could rely on a whole row of dwellings for even greater effect. Some of the larger detached villas were on a grand scale, such as *Dorset Villa* in Pittville and *Suffolk Lawn* in Montpellier. Many such properties in the classical style reminded visiting Anglo-Indians of Calcutta, the 'city of palaces'.²⁵ Further down in the hierarchy the villa-like appearance was often maintained by building semi-detached pairs behind a unifying facade. This was the "suburban villa", the dominant middle-class housing form in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.²⁶

Apart from the exterior appearance of the house, its location was very important. Its proximity to churches, schools and clubs was one of the advantages looked for by the pseudo-gentry, which marked them out

²⁴ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (November 28, 1874)

²⁵ Losty, J.P. *Calcutta: city of palaces: a survey of the city in the days of the East India Company, 1690-1858* (London: British Library, 1990)

²⁶ Slater, T.R. "Family, society and the ornamental villa on the fringes of English country towns" *Journal of Historical Geography* 4, 2 (1978) pp.131

as town dwellers. The *rus in urbe* environment was kept with tree-lined avenues, and good-sized garden plots, especially for the villas set in their own grounds. Some of the more select properties were veritable scaled-down country estates, such as *Fullwood Park*:

The grounds include pleasure and kitchen garden with vineries, peach house, greenhouse, hot house, mushroom house, ice well, extensive undulating lawns, carefully prepared croquet ground, ornamental lake, with pretty timbered island, rockery, with fish pool, small paddock, farmery, and other outbuildings, the whole forming one of the most attractive and choicest residential properties in this notoriously healthy and fashionable town.²⁷

Apart from the climate, the waters and the residential accommodation, there were many social activities which appealed to the town gentry and Anglo-Indians in particular. Many of these originated from the time when Cheltenham was a fashionable spa during the town's 'Regency' period:

The amusements at the command of visitors are numerous. The winter balls and card assemblies at the public room are under the direction of a committee of the principal residents, superintended by a most able and courteous Master of Ceremonies, Colonel Kirwan, who is the recognised authority in all matters of fashionable society. For gentlemen there are various clubs...Concerts of high character, public readings, and occasional theatrical performances vie with the prevailing generous hospitality to give a social warmth to fashionable circles. The excellent hunting of the county has long attracted to Cheltenham influential gentlemen who take interest in this healthy sport.²⁸

The Anglo-Indian Quarters of Cheltenham

There were certain distinct areas of Cheltenham which were developed for the wealthy middle-class residents(See Table 4.4).

²⁷ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (October 25, 1879).

²⁸ Westley, F. C. *The New Guide*

Table 4.4 Military and Civilian Officials in 5 areas of Cheltenham

	Indian Army		British Army		Naval		Indian Civil Service & Medical	
Lansdown	79	36%	32	31%	20	43%	9	33%
Pittville	51	23%	23	23%	8	17%	5	19%
Montpelier	49	22%	18	18%	11	24%	7	26%
Bayshill	27	12%	16	16%	4	9%	4	15%
The Park	13	6%	13	13%	3	7%	2	7%
total	219	100%	102	100%	46	100%	27	100%

The database reveals that the most favoured area in Cheltenham for the Anglo-Indians was Lansdown, which had a variety of accommodation from apartments in imposing terraces to substantial detached villas. The figures in Table 4.4 correspond to those on the database whose address is known as living in one of the five main middle-class areas of the town. The circumstances were not static since many of the officers on furlough were coming and going, and even more settled residents were in the habit of frequently moving house. In addition, there were other pockets or streets of quality housing, as well as several hotels and boarding houses. Many of the early examples of speculative building in the town were in response to the demand for short-term tenancy. Although there were a number of hotels available, many of these visitors preferred to rent a furnished house for the season. The early building developments, such as the *Royal Crescent*, 1805-25, continued to be patronised by both short-stay and permanent residents. Many of the newer sites were promoted by entrepreneurs and builders with ambitious plans, which in most cases far exceeded the actual demand for property. Joseph Pitt, who developed the *Royal Crescent*, went on to a larger speculative venture in the north of the

town called Pittville. It was the largest and most ambitious of Cheltenham's new building estates of the early 19th century. Pitt acquired much of its future site at the time of the enclosure of the Open Fields in 1806, and added further land by purchase during the following years. By the early 1820s, when the demand for land and houses in Cheltenham was at its height, Pitt felt that the time was right to launch his new 100 acre estate, which he hoped would form a new town, with its own pump room, walks, rides and gardens, and building lots for up to 600 houses. Despite high hopes, Pittville was never the new town that Pitt had hoped. The building boom of 1822-25 was already past its peak in the spring of 1824 when the new estate was launched, and was to give way to crisis and slump after December 1825. Of the 600 houses that Pitt had hoped would have been built by 1830, no more than 20 had been completed by that year. Despite a revival of building after 1830, barely a third of the intended number were in place by 1860.²⁹

Nevertheless Pittville became a very desirable area for potential residents, and contemporary newspapers observed that it was an exclusive residential area. On 5 April 1830, the *Cheltenham Journal* stated that 'several large houses ... are now occupied by families of distinction', while on 26 March 1835, the *Cheltenham Chronicle* remarked that 'already the numerous elegant villas and terraces which have been completed are inhabited by families of high rank'.³⁰ The socially exclusive combination of town and country came in for particular comment, the *Cheltenham Chronicle* remarking on 26 April

²⁹ Sampson, A. & Blake, S. *A Cheltenham Companion* (Cheltenham: Portico Press, 1993) p.91

³⁰ Blake, S. *Pittville, 1824-1860* (Cheltenham: Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums, 1988) p.24

1827 that the villas under construction were 'realising every idea which can be found in the *rus in urbe*'.

Other areas of the town also took on the character of leafy suburbs as the building activity continued during the first half of the nineteenth century. One of the biggest was the Lansdown Estate, which was developed on part of the extensive lands that were purchased from the Revd John Delabere of Southam by Henry Thompson in 1801. After Henry Thompson's death in 1824, his son, Pearson Thompson, employed the London architect, J.B.Papworth to design a fashionable residential estate to adjoin the new road to Gloucester, soon to be known as *Lansdown Road*. Papworth designed a veritable 'Garden Suburb', with terraces, a crescent and a large square. Work on the houses in *Lansdown Place*, fronting *Lansdown Road*, began in 1825, and by 1830 the first 14 houses in *Lansdown Place* had been completed. Thompson soon found himself in financial difficulties, and in 1830, he sold out his interest in the estate to R.W. & C. Jearrad, two architects who proceeded to rework Papworth's designs, and to design and develop the immense convex *Lansdown Crescent*, *Lansdown Terrace* and *Lansdown Parade*, all of which date from 1831-48. So many Anglo-Indians came to live in *Lansdown Terrace* that some writers have suggested that it was built specifically for the East India Company.³¹ However, there is no evidence to confirm this, and it seems very unlikely since most contracts were on an individual basis.³² The Jearrads also designed for the estate a number of detached and semi-detached

³¹ Ryland, P. *Cheltenham Walks and Rides* (Cheltenham: Libraries and Arts Committee, Borough of Cheltenham, 1971) p.11

³² For example: GRO D3588 (1835)

villas in the Greek, Gothic and Italianate styles.³³ Lansdown soon became a fashionable part of Cheltenham:

Lansdown, generally considered the most fashionable district of Cheltenham, as in truth it well may be, the houses here being mostly of a superior description, and all suitable for the residence of families of fortune.³⁴

The residents of these areas were keen to maintain their exclusive character and clauses in the contracts, such as this one for Malvern Lodge, Lansdown Terrace, stipulated strict conditions about further developments nearby:

And that every messuage hereafter to be built on the land forming the north eastern side of the same terrace shall be neat and handsome and of the value of one thousand five hundred pounds at the least exclusive of the sites thereof respectively

And that no trade or business shall be carried on upon the same land nor shall the same or any part thereof be used as a place of public amusement or as an hotel boarding house inn or school mews or livery stables³⁵

One of the first areas of Cheltenham to have a significant Anglo-Indian population was *Suffolk Square*. Once belonging to the Delabere family of Southam, the future site of *Suffolk Square* was purchased in 1808 by the Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire, who built himself a bow-fronted town house known as *Galipot Lodge*. Then, in 1820, the earl resold a large part of his land to James Fisher, proprietor of the *Clarence Hotel*. Fisher proceeded to lay out a new residential square, employing a relatively unknown local architect, Edward Jenkins, to design its terraces. Work was underway by the end of 1823, although, in common with many other building estates of the 1820s, work was disrupted in the aftermath

³³ Sampson, A. & Blake, S. *A Cheltenham Companion* p.67

³⁴ *The Pictorial Guide to Cheltenham* (c.1878) p.15

³⁵ GRO D3588 (1835)

of the financial and banking crisis of December 1825 onwards. Building in the Square continued for many years, and some of its houses date from as late as 1848, when the terrace on its north side was finally completed. ³⁶At the time, this area was highly regarded:

Southward of the Montpellier are Suffolk Square and Lawn, two of the best parts of Cheltenham, the houses being large, and many of them having ornamental gardens or pleasure grounds attached. The Square, which may be entered through an opening in Montpellier Terrace opposite the upper corner of the gardens, contains some of the best houses in Cheltenham, occupied exclusively by families whose ample fortunes are vouched for by the appearance of the mansions in which they reside. ³⁷

Among the early inhabitants of *Suffolk Square* were Robert Sherwood and William Ingledew, who as company doctors had acquired wealth in the service of the East India Company. ³⁸

Other areas developed for the town gentry include the Bayshill Estate constructed by a joint-stock company, called the Bayshill Estate Company, formed by a group of local gentlemen. Although the Estate Company was dogged by ill-fortune in the ensuing years, including the slow take-up of much of the land and the financial difficulties of several of its Directors, the new estate gradually took shape, most of the houses dating from 1837 to 1850. These included the three great terraces in *St. George's Road*: *Royal Well Terrace* (1837-40), *Bayshill Terrace* (1838-40) and *York Terrace* (1846-50). Some of the building schemes were never completed. For example, *Queen's Parade* in *Parabola Road* was begun in 1839, but its building came to an abrupt halt in 1846 with the bankruptcy of its builder, William Swain. The fact

³⁶ Sampson, A. & Blake, S. *A Cheltenham Companion* p.124

³⁷ *The Pictorial Guide to Cheltenham* (c.1878) p.17

³⁸ Hart, G. *A History of Cheltenham* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1965,1991 edition) p.187

that the terrace had not been completed earlier is a good indication of how much the land market was over-supplied during the mid 19th century.³⁹

Summary

Despite the changes in Cheltenham during the nineteenth century, the town retained its popularity with the Anglo-Indians. As early as the 1820s it was claimed that "these Indians make a perfect Calcutta of Cheltenham".⁴⁰ In the 1870s few would have disagreed with the view that:

If indeed there be an Anglo-India in England, it is here that it may be found. Move where you may, the picturesque town and its lovely neighbourhood abound with past, present, and future Anglo-Indians.⁴¹

In the 1880s, medical authorities were still recommending Cheltenham 'for relieving the diseases engendered by residence in tropical climates', declaring that:

Cheltenham offers perhaps as agreeable and suitable a permanent residence for those long in the tropics, as any place in the midland counties.⁴²

Nevertheless, this is not to say that Cheltenham was unique. There were other places in England that found favour with retired Anglo-Indians. One such location was the resorts of South Devon:

³⁹ Sampson, A. & Blake, S. *A Cheltenham Companion* p.12

⁴⁰ Proctor, G. *The Lucubrations of Henry Ravelin, Esq.* (London: G. & W.B. Whittaker, 1824) p.136

⁴¹ Lawson, CA *At Home on Furlough* (Madras: The 'Madras Mail' Press, 1875) p.203

⁴² Moore, W.J. *Health Resorts for Tropical Invalids, at home, and abroad* (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1881) p.161

South Devon is peculiarly the abode of retired Anglo-Indian officials. it is the sunniest, the most temperate, and one of the most picturesque parts of England, and it abounds with small watering-places well suited to the light purses of such as finding their occupation gone, are forced to pass the evening of a well-spent life in a thrifty, inactive fashion. Here, respectable old Indians with, and equally respectable old Indians without livers contrive to exist in a comfortable, if not precisely luxurious style.⁴³

Other areas along the south coast were also recommended:

When it is considered necessary to resort to the sea-side for change to repair constitutions enfeebled by tropical heat or malaria, no climate is better than that of Thanet. It has been proved by statistics to be about the healthiest part of England, and numerous returned tropicals have borne testimony to the benefits accruing from a sojourn there; indeed, for pure air, beautiful scenery, good sea-bathing, and a pleasant neighbourhood, it is worthy of the highest commendation; and where there is no confirmed organic disease, for the treatment of which mineral waters may be advisable, but simply a debilitated system requiring to be toned up, it would be difficult to find a more desirable locality to visit than the Isle of Thanet, which contains the three towns of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs, each possessing a picturesque vicinity.⁴⁴

A particular favourite was the fashionable resort of Brighton:

This town continues to offer almost unrivalled attractions to the Anglo-Indian, be he in a robust, or be he in an unstrung state of health. It is both lively, as to its outer, and sociable as to its inner life; it boasts a bracing climate; it is comparatively close to the metropolis; and it has taken honours in the noble art of self-amusement. It is a Belgravia, Tyburnia, Hyde-Parkia, Kensingtonia, grafted on a cutting of Cheltenham, with just a flavour of Torquay and St Leonard's.⁴⁵

⁴³ Lawson, C.A *At Home* p.221

⁴⁴ Hunter, G.Y.*Health in India. Medical Hints as to who should go there : how to retain health whilst there and on returning home.* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co, 1873) pp.85-6

⁴⁵ Lawson, C.A *At Home* p.365

The only place which probably rivalled Cheltenham in the numbers of Anglo-Indians was London. There were certain areas in the capital where they tended to congregate, as explained by Waring:

The wealthier generally affect Tyburnia, as it is called, whilst those of more restricted means go a little further west, and are content with Bayswater and its vicinity. Statistics are wanting to prove it; but I feel assured that there are more old Indians within three miles of Hyde Park Corner in a north-westerly direction, than would be found in the whole of the rest of London put together; the district is indeed often nicknamed Asia Minor!⁴⁶

Stories regularly reprinted from Indian newspapers in the weekly *Paddington, Kensington, and Bayswater Chronicle* attested to a substantial community interest in political and military events occurring in the empire.⁴⁷ The same thing happened in the Cheltenham newspapers which regularly included despatches and reports from India. The writer who called Cheltenham the "Anglo-Indian's Paradise" was in no doubt about its continuing popularity in the early years of the twentieth century:

To Cheltenham, "The Garden Town of England", long famous as a watering place, but today more renowned for its residential amenities and its schools, all - or, at any rate, very many - good Anglo-Indians go before they die. ⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Waring, E.J. *The Tropical resident at Home: letters addressed to Europeans returning from India and the colonies on subjects connected with their health and general welfare* (London: J Churchill, 1866) p.59

⁴⁷ Buettner, E. 'From Somebodies to Nobodies: Britons Returning Home from India' in Daunton, M.J. & Rieger, B. (eds.) *Meanings of modernity: Britain in the age of imperialism and world wars* (Oxford: Berg, 2001) p.231

⁴⁸ Branch, H. *Cotswold and Vale* (Cheltenham: Norman, Sawyer & Co., 1904) p.172

Chapter 5

FRIENDS and FAMILY

The family was the central institution of the Victorian middle class. The cult of the home and the sanctity of the family were at the heart of all aspects of middle-class life. The home was a potent symbol for Victorians, evoking ideas of peace, harmony, stability, love and contentment.¹ The family had also become a central feature of religious life.² It was enshrined in the evangelical movement which held sway in middle-class society in the early Victorian period. In fact Evangelical Christianity has been described as essentially a domestic religion.³ The family ideal was also allied to an obsession with respectability. This moral tone distinguished the middle class from the aristocracy, despite the tendency of the pseudo-gentry to model themselves on the upper class.

The family could be a highly formalised institution, with guests, carefully selected, only allowed entry at specific times, including the formal occasion of the 'At Home'. The complicated business of calling and leaving cards was constructed to keep distance between social levels and acknowledge the identity of a family. Formal calls were made to mark rituals of the life cycle, such as after marriage or childbirth. One of the prime purposes of such formality was to oversee suitable marriages within the group. Marriage and family alliances were the cornerstone

¹ Field, J. 'Portsmouth's middle class, 1800-75', in Morris, R.J. *Class, power and social structure in British nineteenth-century towns* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986) p.95

² Davidoff, L. et al. *The Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy, 1830-1960* (London: Longmans, 1999) p.109

³ Tosh, J. *A Man's Place* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1999) p.5

of the system.⁴ Entry to the 'bosom' of the family was only possible through a ritualised courtship, with marriage being the most socially approved goal for women.

The commonly held view of the Victorian middle-class family is that of the marital couple and their children living independently of other kin but in close proximity to them, with men being the principal breadwinners and their wives and children economically dependent upon them. The wives and mothers took almost sole responsibility for domestic chores and childrearing. This was the period when the nuclear family was the preferred choice for couples and when, thereby, society and families operated within a mutually supportive framework. This idealised view of the family was held up by the middle class as a model to be emulated.

But in reality this ideal situation was greatly modified by circumstances affecting the lives of many people at this time. In reality, the core nuclear group was surrounded by other figures whose friendship, employment, duty or loyalty were integral to its maintenance. So there was a much wider range of familial and quasi-familial relationships than those of the nuclear unit of husband, wife and dependent children. In many middle-class households there were people whose connections with each other were not familial in the ways we would define them. The obvious example was servants, but it could also include lodgers, visitors, and pupils. The ideal picture was further distorted by the large number of single women, especially in towns like Cheltenham. In 1861, there were 17654 females over the age of 20, compared with only 11164 males. Inevitably there were a great number of single women,

⁴ Davidoff, L. et al. *The Family Story* p.115

which was partly accounted for by the great number of female domestic servants. It also meant that a large proportion of households were made up exclusively of women. The place of women is further discussed in Chapter 10.

The Whinyates Family

The middle classes were characterized by strong bonds between siblings; brothers and sisters who grew up together and stayed close all their lives.⁵ These kinship bonds were extended by marriage.

A prime example of this is the Whinyates family, who settled in Cheltenham in the early 1800s. The family had a tradition of service in India dating back to 1780, when Thomas Whinyates, a clergyman's son, left England to seek his fortune with the East India Company.⁶ He took with him his wife Catherine, daughter of Admiral Sir Thomas Frankland, whom he had married at Bath three years earlier. When Thomas and Catherine died at Allahabad in 1806, the surviving eleven children made Cheltenham their home. The two eldest children, Thomas and Kate, had been born before their parents went to India and they were thought to be too young to endure the long journey. As a result they had to leave them in the care of relatives. This was typical of the sacrifice made by families who opted for service in India, and shows how circumstances made it hard to follow the pattern of the ideal family. Another difficulty was the problem of having to send the children born in India back to England to be educated. This generally happened when the children were eight years old. It meant

⁵ Davidoff, L. et al. *The Family Story* p.126

⁶ Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums *Indian Summer* (1985)

that Anglo-Indian families had to get used to long periods of separation.

Although the children of Thomas and Catherine Whinyates called Cheltenham their home, because so many of the male members of the family followed careers in the armed services, it was quite normal for them to be absent for long periods. This was particularly true in the case of those who served in India, such as Francis Whinyates of the Madras Artillery. When he returned to England in 1842 on furlough, ten members of the family, all brothers or sisters, held a reunion in Cheltenham. They celebrated the event by commissioning a local artist to paint the family portrait. Rachel Whinyates described the picture in her journal:

The family picture gets on well; the whole ten are now in; they are placed around a table (on which are to be various ornaments and works) so that all the faces are seen ; all sitting according to age. **Tim** has a globe before him on which his hands rest and **Kate** is reading a book to him. **Edward** rests his hands on a map of the Peninsular War. **Amy** has in her hand a scroll on which are visible the letters 'NS' to denote her interest and daily work in promoting the welfare of the National Schools. **Rachel** (myself) holds in her hands an accordion to signify the harmony and accord of the assembled party; she appears as if pausing and about to strike a note, whilst her next sister **Isabella** is pointing out in a Music book a passage which she wishes played. The two brothers who are seated next are **Frederick** and **Frank**, both Majors, (having obtained that rank by Brevet on the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1838). Frederick (in red) is supposed to be relating some of the principal events which have occurred during their long separation of 28 years to which Frank appears to be listening with pleased attention. **Octavia** is leaning forward and has a flower in her hand, whilst **Letitia** is arranging flowers.⁷

⁷ 'Journal of Rachel Whinyates' (January 21st 1842) in Whinyates, Major-General Frederick , *Whinyates Family Records* Vol II (1894)

Rachel clearly found this portrait a very satisfying project, and her attitude is revealed by the pose she assumes and her position in the centre of the family group. Although she was not the eldest daughter she seems to have seen herself as responsible for maintaining the family links. Her journal is full of visits to relatives and friends and of entertaining these people at her home in *North Place*, Cheltenham. Her efforts to keep the family links intact were to some extent frustrated by the problem of her brothers serving abroad. Officers serving with the East India Company had to resign themselves to long years of exile. Under the Company, officers were entitled to furlough, or long leave out of India, after ten years' service. Until 1854 the leave period was for three years, counted from the time an officer left his unit until the time he rejoined it. At the end of 1843 Francis Whinyates had to return to India, and it is clear from her Journal what Rachel's feelings were on this occasion:

December 28th 1843

Our very dear Frank and his excellent wife went today to London to embark at Southampton for Madras. It is a bitter day for us and to him. How quickly the three years have flown! May the next three, or five, be equally short, and we be mercifully spared to meet again.

In fact it was to be ten years before they were to meet again:

May 17th 1854

Frank and Elizabeth arrived after 5 o'clock. A joyful meeting after 10 years absence.

Despite such enforced separations, when the members of the family returned on furlough or finally to retire they kept in close touch and the

Whinyates were to continue their association with Cheltenham.

Frederick Whinyates, writing in 1894, summed up the situation:

Here it may be not amiss to take a glance at the family as situated at this period (1859-60). With the exception of Frank, settled at Bath, all the other branches of the family had gravitated to, and were living at Cheltenham. General Edward was installed in his new purchase of Dorset Villa, Pittville; Major-General Frederick William was living at number 4, Blenheim Parade; and of his children Fred was quartered in England, Edward was just completing his time at Oxford, Frank in Bengal, Albert at Madras, Amy at home with her parents, and Charles, aged 12, at school at Oswestry. Mrs Younghusband, who had come from Scotland in 1853, after her daughter's death, was permanently settled in apartments in no. 9, North Place, next door to the now diminished party at No. 10. Octavia oscillated between Whitfield and No. 10.⁸

Families were able to use relationships to further their interests. Bourne has showed how patronage remained an important way in which middle-class men could further their careers.⁹ In particular, he has demonstrated how the East India Company was a major source of non-aristocratic patronage. In the case of the Whinyates family, Major General Frederick Whinyates was keen to help his son, Edward, to get a good start in his career:

Cheltenham, July 27th 1850

We are at No. 7 North Place where also are the Christmas's. Edward and I are both trying to get a nomination to Addiscombe for Edward but hitherto without success. I hope he will, if he goes to Addiscombe, get into the Engineers or Artillery, otherwise it would be better for him to get a direct cadetship in the Cavalry. He is not at all cut out for a soldier, but as he will not go into the Church there is no help for it.¹⁰

⁸ Whinyates, Major-General Frederick *Whinyates Family Records* Vol II (1894) pp. 464-5

⁹ Bourne, J.M. *Patronage and Society in Nineteenth-Century England*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1986)

¹⁰ Maj Gen Frederick William Whinyates to his brother Frank, in *Whinyates Family Records* (1894)

Several important points are revealed in this short note. First it illustrates the need to get a nomination in order to be considered for the East India Company's college at Addiscombe. As senior officers in the Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery they were expected to use their influence if possible. They were not certain to succeed, since they were prepared to suggest the cavalry, which was not considered to need any specialised training. Almost certainly they were only able to contemplate the East India Company's service for Edward. The Whinyates position in the pseudo-gentry is confirmed by the fact that most male members of the family served in the lower status branches of the army or in the East India Company military service. The artillery and engineers were not socially so distinguished as the rest of the army. Their officers were not expected to live quite so expensively and that was a positive advantage to middle-class families with several sons to provide for. The only other career which the family seemed prepared to consider was the Church, which Edward appeared to be set against, although in the end this was the option which he followed.

The church and the army were regarded as eminently suitable areas for gentlemanly employment for the sons of the Anglo-Indian pseudo-gentry. There are also many examples of members of the clergy in Cheltenham whose sons went into the army. The Rev Samuel James Gambier of Ashley Lodge, Cheltenham is typical.¹¹ He was closely related to the Gambier Parry family of *Highnam Court* in Gloucestershire. Two of his brothers were admirals and one brother was Chief Justice of Madras. All his six sons joined the armed services. One of them, Lieutenant Charles Gambier, of the 38th Bengal Native

¹¹ GRO: *Highnam Memoranda* Vol. 5, D2586

Infantry, was killed at the siege of Delhi during the Indian Mutiny. One of his daughters, Frances, was murdered at Cawnpore during the same conflict. Charles' brother, Edward Parry Gambier, was serving in India with the Bombay Engineers at this time. The Gambier Parry family are an example of the links between the pseudo-gentry and the landed gentry. With his eldest brother inheriting the family estate at Highnam, the Rev S.J. Gambier had to find gainful employment elsewhere whilst retaining his links with the main branch of the family - he was known as 'Uncle Jim'.¹² Rev. Gambier was also able to take advantage of the patronage afforded by family relations to provide his sons with jobs in the service of the East India Company.

With younger sons employed in the church or the army, which were the only respectable alternatives for the gentry, different members of the same family could be part of the traditional landed interest or associated with the pseudo-gentry in the towns. Not benefiting from the rents of tenant farmers meant that the relatives of the landed gentry living in the towns often had to live on a fairly modest income. This was usually sufficient to live in the style of the pseudo-gentry and enough to send sons to cadetships with the East India Company. They were able to rely on the family's influential connections to secure nominations and give their sons a career appropriate to their presumed station in life.

Having the right family connections was always important, especially when this gave access to patronage. Anglo-Indians relied to a great extent on the complex network of family and friends, which partly explains the closely knit nature of Anglo-Indian society. Much of the

¹² GRO - Gambier Parry Family Papers *Highnam Memoranda* Vol 5 (D2586)

patronage dispensed by the directors of the East India Company was dependent upon friendship and family links. This did not always produce the desired result, as the testimony of a number of retired officers living in Cheltenham demonstrated. For example Lieutenant-General Greenstreet, according to evidence presented to a House of Commons Select Committee:

has been for a number of years a proprietor of East India stock; he had a large family, eight of them sons; he never for his elder sons asked for any appointment, having other means of establishing them in life. For one son, I believe his youngest, he made such an application, the young man wishing to enter the army, and he was refused. Some of the directors that he applied to were of his own acquaintance, and to other Directors he applied upon the grounds of his long and good service. He repeated his application upon several occasions, and on the last occasion, when he received the last refusal, the same post which brought him that refusal brought him, from the Honourable Court of Directors his medal with, I believe, eight clasps, for military service performed in India He says that "he has fresh in his recollection the humiliating process he underwent in being bandied about from door to door, whilst urging his claim; and the abrupt and disgusting treatment he experienced from those whose business it is to receive with complacency, and to comply in all possible cases with the applications of their officers."¹³

Likewise, in the same Report the case of Lieutenant-Colonel Geddes of the Bengal Artillery was cited, who:

has seen thirty years' effective service, and has been four years in retirement; he is a Companion of the Bath, and he has three medals with three additional clasps. He cannot obtain a cadetship for his nephew, the eldest son of his brother, who has served the Company also for thirty years.¹⁴

¹³ House of Commons *Report from the Select Committee on Indian territories* (1852) OIOC IOR/V/4/SESSION 1852; Evidence of Captain Robert Guthrie Macgregor

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Anglo-Indians were often keen to emphasize their kinship with relations in the landed gentry to reinforce their own claims to gentility. At the same time they were anxious to play down any family connections with trade. Although the East India Company was originally a trading company, this aspect of their business had dwindled to virtually nothing as far as India was concerned by the middle of the nineteenth century. But it took a long time for Anglo-Indians to live down the reputation of the nabobs who with their parvenu pretensions were tainted by trade, and rather dubious trade at that.¹⁵ As a result Anglo-Indians were always very anxious to avoid any imputation of association with commercial affairs. In India anybody involved in trade was referred to as a 'box-wallah' which was a term of denigration.¹⁶ However, the database of Cheltenham Anglo-Indians gives some idea of the various backgrounds of the pseudo-gentry. Some Anglo-Indian families in Cheltenham included the sons of merchants. Lieutenant Colonel James Gandy Gaitskell, head of the Gaitskell family of *Waldon House*, was the son of a London wine merchant. Captain Spencer Wellington Buller of the 66th Bengal Native Infantry, living in *Lansdown Terrace*, was the fifth son of Cornelius Buller, a merchant and governor of the Bank of England. An example in the nabob tradition was James Webster of *Hatherley Court*, who left his native Scotland to serve in the Madras Army. He then had a successful commercial career, becoming a partner of Messrs Binny and Co. of Madras. He returned to England in 1836 a rich man, buying *Hatherley Court* in 1841. He became a director

¹⁵ Wild, A. *The East India Company* (London: Harper Collins, 1999) p.73

¹⁶ Allen, C. *Plain Tales from the Raj* (London: Futura, 1976) p.103. The *box-wallah* was originally an Indian commercial traveller, but by the end of the nineteenth century the term had been extended to include all European businessmen in India.

of Cheltenham College and a town commissioner, as well as Deputy Lieutenant of Gloucestershire. Several of his sons served in the Indian Civil Service. He died in 1858 after a long illness leaving an estate of £45,000.¹⁷

Families with a Tradition of Serving in India

By the time the East India Company's rule came to an end in 1858, many families had sent several generations of sons to serve in India. A strong tradition of employment in India was maintained by many families. Many officers had uncles, cousins, or grandfathers who served the Company in India. Sometimes whole families served together. Among the 252 officers whose fathers had been in the Bengal Army (1820-34), there were 18 sets of brothers.¹⁸ Some were the sons of army officers who had spent their lives in the services; some were sons of the Indian Civil Service; some were sons of the vicarage. In many cases this tradition of service in India continued into the following century; some families could claim an association with India spanning across 150 years, only ending with Indian independence in 1947. It was the accepted convention in these families that the sons would automatically consider serving in India as a career, whether in the army or the Indian Civil Service:

My father was in the Indian Civil Service, and his father was out there in the army, and my father's maternal grandfather was a general in the Madras Army. My mother was the daughter of a colonel in the Madras Army. And so it went on. We had a family tradition, and from the time I started there was never any idea that I should do anything else. I mean it was really my home, almost. I was born in India, I was born down in Ooty. And all my brothers and sisters, all my uncles and aunts were there and so it

¹⁷ Rudman, S. *Victorian Legacy* (1998)

¹⁸ Strachan *Wellington's Legacy* p.127

was just the natural thing to do. And of course I very soon began to believe that there was no better career open to a young Englishman. The sheer scope of the work was absolutely fantastic. There were only 1300 in the ICS altogether at any time, and so you had to do a man's job from the start. There were many families who just went out, one after another. There were a lot with older connections than mine.¹⁹

Another example is the family of Lieutenant Colonel George Poyntz Ricketts of the Bengal Light Cavalry, who lived in Cheltenham until he moved to Bath, where he died in 1885. His family was descended from Jacob Ricketts and Hannah Poyntz of Jamaica. Born at Patna in 1808, he was the second generation to serve in India, his father serving in the Bengal Civil Service. His eldest sister, Frances Isabell Poyntz Ricketts, was the mother of Sir Frederick Sleight Roberts, V.C. of the Bengal Artillery who commanded the Kabul Field Force in 1879-80, which made him famous throughout the Empire.²⁰ Many Scottish families had a tradition of serving in India. Charles Otway Mayne of the 15th Bengal Native Infantry, who lived at 3, *Douro Villas*, Lansdown, was a member of a Scottish family who had served in India since the eighteenth century. For two centuries Mayne son followed father in the service of the Empire. Few of them returned home.²¹ After the Indian Mutiny of 1857, of six brothers, only two came home.

Family Links

Although such families were part of the middle class, their experience of family life was very different in many respects to the norm found in families who largely remained in the home country. Once a tradition of

¹⁹ Innes, F.: www.lib.lsu.edu/special/exhibits/india/intvw1.htm (Louisiana State University, 1996)

²⁰ Poyntz, I. *The Poyntz Family in India* (www.hal-pc.org/~poyntz/india.html)

²¹ Gore, D. 'The Fighting Maynes' *The Indiaman* 16, p.19

going to India was established in the Anglo-Indian families, the idea of years of separation from home was accepted as part of the sacrifice and duty that came with the job. Sometimes this could leave members of the family becoming strangers to each other. This could even happen between parents and their children:

There is not much to be said about our stay in England. It was a quiet, restful time on the whole, but uneventful and uninteresting. Our relations were cold and disposed to be quarrelsome. Our ways and theirs did not agree very well, and I found it too expensive to last. So in January 1869 we determined to go back to India. We left our three boys with a retired physician, a Dr Watson, at Princes Risborough in Buckinghamshire. It was a sad wrench from them. Rupert, the youngest was only four years old. I have never seen him since. He is now thirty-four, and I should not know him if I passed him in the street!²²

This was not an unusual consequence of the separation when parents left their children in England, for it was to be repeated many times during the British occupation of India.

Inevitably, a lot of the principal events in people's lives took place in India, including birth, marriage and death. In the case of marriage, this cemented the links between families with similar backgrounds, such as serving in the same regiment or same region. Although taking place in the home country, this marriage was linked to a shared experience of service in the Bombay presidency:

Aug 6 1857

Married: at the parish church, Clifton, Edward Burnes Holland Esq., Lt. Bombay Engineers to Eliza Jane, second daughter of the late Lt. Gen Richard Whish, Bombay Army.²³

²² Beames, J. *Memoirs of a Bengal Civilian* (London: Eland, 1990) p.189

²³ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (August 6, 1857)

In cases where there were members of the clergy in the family, the marriage ceremony could be very much a family affair:

November 21 1857

Married: George F. Hewson, Esq. MD., of Warwick House, Cheltenham, youngest son of Admiral George Hewson to Martha, younger daughter of the late Rev S. Jocelyn Otway of Portland Place, niece of Admiral Sir Robert W. Otway and Maj. Gen. Sir Loftus W. Otway, by Rev C. Otway, brother of the bride, assisted by Rev Frank Hewson.²⁴

This marriage is typical of the pseudo-gentry, in that it brought together members of families with a similar social standing, with relatives in the clergy and the armed services. Some of these marriages were major social events and reported as such in the local press:

One of the gaiest marriages that has occurred in Cheltenham for some time past, took place on Wednesday morning at St Luke's church, where Miss Anne Lindsay, daughter of R. Lindsay Esq., of Lansdown Terrace, was united to Capt. Hickman T. Molesworth, of the Madras Artillery....Among the party assembled at this reunion were Lord Molesworth, Col. Christie, aide-de-camp to the Queen, Col. Anstruther, Col. Becher, Bengal Cavalry, Maj. Mortimer, Maj. Helpen, Capt. S. Young, Capt. Stoughton, Capt. Drury, Capt. Rumsey, Rev. W. Lindsay (cousin), M. Bolton, 5th Dragoon Guards.²⁵

This marriage was described as a reunion and they were seen as an opportunity for friends and family to get together. Annual occasions, such as Christmas, were another time when family reunions were held.

The Christmas week of 1856 was no exception:

The wealthy quarters of Lansdown and Pittville - Bays Hill and Suffolk Square - as well as other equally favourite districts of the town, have borne nightly and unerring testimony in the roll and

²⁴ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (November 21, 1857)

²⁵ *Ibid.* (April 8, 1857)

clatter of carriages, which, from the dinner hour of six to the dancing hour of midnight, and often long after, have resounded in every direction. With two or three exceptions, the Parties which have elicited these outward manifestations have been generally small, their guests consisting, for the most part, of members of the families in which they occurred - the exceptions referred to, though taking a more comprehensive range, being still, by the period of their occurrence and the terms of their invitations, brought within the category of family reunions.²⁶

A Select Circle of Friends

Apart from these annual celebrations there were regular parties in the town when people would entertain their friends. In many cases the people involved would have known each other before coming to Cheltenham, especially if they had been employed in the same branch of the army or the Company's service. Many of the town's older officers had seen service in the Napoleonic Wars and there was ample opportunity to indulge the old soldiers' love of reminiscing.

Admiral Sir Josiah Coghill was typical:

He was always entertaining old naval and military warriors of Nelson's and Wellington's day, whose whole conversation seemed to me to refer to 'Old Bony'. Daily these old warriors used to haunt the Club which was in the then Assembly Rooms, and there they fought their old battles over again, and new ones over long whist and billiards.²⁷

In 1846 Lord Ellenborough, a former Governor-General, erected in the garden at Southam House, near Cheltenham, a monument to commemorate the names and services of those to whom he considered himself to be more especially indebted for the success of

²⁶ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (January 31, 1857)

²⁷ Humphris, E. & Willoughby, E.C. *At Cheltenham Spa* (London: Knopp, 1928) p.258

his administration in India, thus providing himself with a permanent reminder of his former colleagues.

To many of its retired military and civilian officials life in Cheltenham was merely an extension of the former social round to which they had been accustomed before retiring. The principal guests at these functions were often pillars of society in Cheltenham, as well as having had distinguished careers elsewhere. In 1848, the greatest Indian general of his day, Sir Charles Napier, arrived in Cheltenham and took up residence in *Imperial Square*. Many of his friends in Cheltenham had served with him, some going as far back as the Peninsula War, when Napier was a junior officer:

Amongst the officers who had served under him, and who were then in Cheltenham, were Colonel Willis, his Adjutant-General, Major Mc'Murdo, his son-in-law and Quartermaster-General, who was with him throughout his Indian campaigning; Colonel Lloyd, commanding his artillery; Major Leslie, commanding the horse artillery...Major Poole, of the gallant 22nd Regiment...Captain Tait, commanding the regular horse; Colonel Harrison, who commanded the light company of the 50th Regiment at the battle of Corunna; Captain Richardson, who served with Sir Charles in the Peninsular and America; Colonel Clark-Kennedy, who so gallantly captured the French standard at Waterloo; and several other officers. On 5th October a public dinner to Sir Charles Napier was held at the Queen's Hotel, at which Lords Ellenborough, Northwick and Dunalley, and between eighty and ninety Indian officers were present.²⁸

For private parties, most of the domestic arrangements were managed by the women, who appeared to have regarded this as their preserve. These instances are typical of the receptions that merited mentions in the press:

²⁸ Humphris, E. & Willoughby, E.C. *At Cheltenham Spa* p.226

General and Mrs Podmore entertained a select circle of friends, including the earl of Ellenborough, and Hon. Craven Berkeley, at dinner on Thursday, at their residence, Osborne House, and in the evening Mrs Podmore opened her drawing room for a Ball, to which a large party of her friends were invited.²⁹

The reference to a 'select circle of friends' emphasised the exclusive nature of these parties and helped to create an aura of social superiority which was characteristic of the pseudo-gentry. This exclusiveness was partly due to the existence of a close-knit society sharing the same background of service to the Crown. These gatherings also provided the pseudo-gentry with the opportunity to be associated with the aristocracy and establish links between these groups. Lord Northwick was one of the leading titled residents of the town and he was never short of invitations to dine out:

General Sir Archibald and Lady Maclaine entertain Lord Northwick and a select circle of friends at Dinner today; and in the evening her ladyship has a small musical party.³⁰

The Indian Mutiny

The Anglo-Indian families in Cheltenham were inevitably affected by events in India.³¹ Deaths in foreign lands were regularly reported in the local newspapers:

Died - aged 20 of cholera, on his march to Trichinopoly, Ensign Henry Beresford Podmore, of the 4th Regt. Madras Native Infantry, the beloved son of General Richard Podmore, of the Madras Army.³²

²⁹ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (February 1, 1851)

³⁰ *Ibid.* (February 1, 1851)

³¹ Humphris, E. & Willoughby, F.C. *At Cheltenham Spa* p.274

³² *Cheltenham Looker-On* (February 17, 1855)

These minor tragedies were eclipsed by a major catastrophe which touched a large number of families in Cheltenham. The Indian Mutiny of 1857 caused acute suffering in the town. The *Examiner* wrote of 'the hundreds of our families who have friends and relatives in India - the hundreds more whose connections are on the way thither to avenge the outrages - who are all at this moment moved with deep feelings of sorrow and anxiety'.³³

When news of the outbreak of the Mutiny reached Cheltenham many of the relatives of those serving in India anxiously scanned the reports coming from India, which in the early months spoke of massacres of Europeans and numerous other atrocities:

The Mutiny in India of which the newspapers of the past ten days have furnished such painful, not to say alarming, particulars, has caused the most serious uneasiness to many families resident in Cheltenham, who have near and dear relatives stationed in the scenes of the revolt, and, we regret to add, the names of two or three of the officers reported killed or wounded at Meerut are familiar to the readers of the *Looker-On*. In addition to those which have been already published, we regret to find Ensign Arthur Lewes, of the 20th, a son of Col. Lewes, has been returned as severely wounded at Meerut. In the list of those who escaped from the massacre at Delhi, we are glad to see the name of Ensign Gambier, son of the Rev. S. Gambier, of Ashley Lodge. The next mail, the arrival of which is most anxiously looked for, is now hourly expected to be telegraphed.³⁴

Because of the chaotic situation and the length of time it took for news to reach England, many of the reports were confused and misleading. This added to the suffering of families, who found it difficult to get reliable news of the fate of members of their relatives:

³³ Hart, G. *A History Of Cheltenham* p.209

³⁴ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (July 11, 1857)

The News From India, received on Monday by the Overland Mail, has filled many of the resident families of Cheltenham with the most anxious apprehensions for the safety of their friends and relatives, for the most part holding official appointments or on military duty in the disturbed provinces, and several of whom, according to private accounts, had had very narrow escapes for their lives, and were at the dates of their last advices exposed to imminent peril; the sepoy, upon whose fidelity most reliance had been placed, having sided with the rebels. We are truly sorry to find that Ensign Gambier, son of the Rev. S. Gambier, of Ashley Lodge, whose name was originally included in the list of the "escaped from Delhi", now appears in the official returns last received as among the number of those still "missing" - as does also the name of Lieut. Revely, son of A. Revely, Esq., of Grosvenor Place. There is too much reason, therefore, to fear that both these young officers perished in the Delhi massacre. Capt. Hardy, who was wounded in the gallant attack of the 1st Bombay Lancers upon the mutineers at Nusseerabad, is the brother of the Misses Hardy, of Lansdown Crescent.³⁵

The end of the Mutiny did not bring joy to the inhabitants of Cheltenham. The defeat of the rebels was not brought about without great loss of life, and so the news from India was received with mixed emotions:

The Last Overland Mail, while proclaiming great and glorious news to the nation, has brought mournful and heart-breaking intelligence to many hearths in Cheltenham; the lists of killed and wounded in the assaults on Delhi, and in the relief of Lucknow, containing the names of many officers whose relations and most intimate friends are residents in the town. The two most distinguished in the roll of glory - Generals Nicholson and Neill - are of this number: the mother of the former and the aunt of the latter, being both amongst us. The name of Lieutenant Battine, son of Mrs Battine, of Pembroke Lodge, and who, we all so well remember a few years ago as among the most promising of the pupils of Cheltenham College, appears also in the list of the fallen on the march to Lucknow; his brother having, it is feared, been previously slain in the massacre of Cawnpore. Lieut. Gambier, too, son of Rev. S.J. Gambier, of Ashley Lodge, whose

³⁵ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (July 18, 1857)

interesting narrative of the escape from Delhi was first published in the *Looker-On* three months ago, is now, unfortunately returned among the killed, from wounds received in the assault on the city, where he had effected so perilous a flight on the first breaking out of the mutiny.³⁶

Summary

Despite the view that attachment to family is a Victorian value, the fact is that, as with other such values, its roots can be traced to much earlier periods.³⁷ Nor does the importance given to it by the Victorians, and the middle class in particular, mean that the institution of the family was any stronger in the nineteenth century. Amongst the Anglo-Indians, the emphasis on the importance of the family is in stark contrast to the experience of separation and exile which came with service in India. The perpetuation of the family was also threatened by the tendency to delay or even forego marriage by those opting for service abroad. It has been said that the empire was run by bachelors, motivated by devotion to duty undistracted by feminine ties.³⁸ Tosh has pointed out how this attitude became more prevalent after 1880 when the old association of masculinity with adventure resurfaced in the era of high imperialism. Domesticated masculinity came under mounting attack, as Englishmen were called upon to colonize the empire, and to defend it in difficult times.³⁹

It would be an exaggeration to say that the family was under siege, but family loyalties were put under considerable strain. The endeavour to hold onto family ties is partly explained by the fact that they could not be taken for granted. It was also recognised that most middle-class

³⁶ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (November 21, 1857)

³⁷ Walvin, J. *Victorian Values* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1987) p.137

³⁸ Tosh, J. *A Man's Place* p.175

³⁹ *Ibid.* p.7

aspirations would be hopeless without family or connections. The lack of permanence and the instability of life threatened the comfortable complacency that characterized the pseudo-gentry family. Apart from the very precariousness of life itself, heightened by the experience of disease and violence, there could be much shifting in an individual's situation over relatively short periods, let alone a lifetime. People moved house and household with a frequency which would seem strange and uncomfortable to twentieth-century sensibilities.⁴⁰ If this was true of the middle class in general, it was even more representative of the Anglo-Indians. Only when they finally returned to Britain on retirement could they hope for a more settled existence.

Women were usually seen as the guardians of the family links, and these were especially strong between brothers and sisters. The value placed on these bonds is evident in the following dedication in the memoirs of James Sleeman, renowned as the suppressor of 'thugee':

My Dear Sister,

Were any one to ask your countrymen in India what has been their greatest source of pleasure while there, perhaps nine in ten would say, the letters which they receive from their sisters at home. These, of all things, perhaps, tend most to link our affections with home by filling the landscapes, so dear to our recollections, with ever varying groups of the family circles, among whom our infancy and our boyhood have been passed; and among whom we still hope to spend the winter of our days. ⁴¹

⁴⁰ Davidoff et al. *The Family Story* p.114

⁴¹ Sleeman, W.H. *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1980; written in 1844)

Chapter 6

CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

It is widely known that Victorian Britain was a society remarkable for the extent and intensity of its religious life . The central social force in Britain during the nineteenth century was organised religion and between the mid-1830s and 1901 the Church of England alone built over 5,500 new churches.¹ The churches by and large were middle-class institutions.² The religious census of 1851 made it abundantly clear that attendance at church or chapel, which became a social necessity even when it was not a religious imperative, was a practice associated mainly with the middle class .³ Membership of church or chapel provided men and women with a community of like-minded people, albeit a community based on moral superiority. Religious belonging gave distinctive identity to particular communities and classes and foremost amongst these distinctive identities was the association between the middle class and a Christian way of life. It was the Evangelical revival starting in the late eighteenth century which made religion so central to middle-class culture, so that by the mid-nineteenth century adherence to Evangelical protestant forms had become an accepted part of respectability if not gentility.

There is no doubt that evangelicalism made greatest headway among the middle class. It seemed to hold a particularly strong attraction for

¹ Parsons, G. *Religion in Victorian Britain, 1 Traditions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) p.6

² Harrison, J.F.C. *The Early Victorians* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971) p.123

³ Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. *Family Fortunes: men and women of the English Middle Class, 1720-1850* (London: Hutchinson,1987) p.67

civil servants, officers in the armed services, bankers, merchants and members of the professions. The towns which were known as centres of evangelicalism in the early years of Victoria's reign - Cheltenham, Bath, Tunbridge Wells, Hastings and York - were significantly middle-class strongholds. Most of the leading figures of the evangelical revival had solid bourgeois origins.⁴ Evangelicalism probably reached the peak of its social and spiritual influence in Britain in the 1850s and 1860s. Its greatest impact within the Anglican Church came in the 1850s, when evangelicals accounted for over a third of the clergy, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, JB Sumner.⁵

Cheltenham was destined to become a hotbed of religious fervour when the Simeon Trust appointed Francis Close to the town. He was first curate to the new Holy Trinity Church in 1824, and then in 1826 he became the incumbent of St Mary's, the parish church, a position he held for thirty years. He was sponsored by the Simeonites because he exactly represented the evangelical views of the Trust. He desired to spread the gospel according to Low Church principles by the building of churches and the founding of schools; to succour the poor by well-organized charity societies; to extol sobriety and to uphold strict sabbatarian observance.⁶ By applying himself with considerable energy he managed to raise the religious temperature of Cheltenham:

The Low Church clergyman was always on the move; sometimes, perhaps, thinking more of the views than of the virtues of his hearers; the man of towns, and of a rather select society. A perfect type of the latter class was the Vicar of Cheltenham, busy earnest, zealous, plunged knee-deep in sermons, tracts, lectures,

⁴ Bradley, I. *The Call to Seriousness* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976) p.51

⁵ Jalland, P. *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p.20

⁶ Hart, G. *A History of Cheltenham* p.196

meetings, and whatever else could exercise what was called "an awakening effect" on the mass of surrounding spiritual sloth, ignorance and apathy.⁷

In most of his endeavours he was able to count on the support of the middle-class section of the population. It was among this group that he made most headway, no doubt partly because, in any case, they were the church-going part of society. He appeared to see no contradiction in preaching to the converted in a comfortable and rather luxurious church while the footmen waited for the owners of the fashionable carriages outside.⁸ Several of the churches in Cheltenham were financed by the renting and sale of pews to the congregation. Although there would be some free places for poor worshipers, they would be excluded from the best seats by their inability to pay. The scale of charges varied, but as an example Colonel Hutchinson of the Bengal Corps of Engineers payed four guineas for a year's rent of three sittings in 1849 at Holy Trinity in Pittville.⁹

Although Close was in fact supported by all social classes, the core group of his supporters consisted of over fifty evangelical clergy and laity, many of whom were military men. They were contemptuously referred to as the 'Lieutenant-General Close Brigade'.¹⁰ When Close left Cheltenham in 1856 the subscribers to a fund for him included

⁷ Contem Ignotus (Rev R. Glover) *The Golden Decade of a Favoured Town, 1843-53* (London: Elliot Stock, 1884) quoting the *Standard* p.67

⁸ Best, G. 'Evangelicalism and the Victorians' in Symondson, A. (ed.) *The Victorian Crisis of Faith* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1970) p.45

⁹ Papers of Lt-Col Thomas Sydney Powell (OIOC Mss Eur F172/10)

¹⁰ *Cheltenham Free Press*, 25 December 1847, quoted in Munden, A. *A Cheltenham Gamel: Dean Close of Cheltenham* (Cheltenham: Dean Close School, 1997) pp.46-7

fourteen military officers.¹¹

The influence of the evangelicalism extended beyond the sphere of religious practices. Those whose personal theology did not mesh with the beliefs of the evangelicals nonetheless still embraced the model social expectations of the evangelical family.¹² An important element of these was the place given to the education of children. The initial grounding was started at home, but evangelical parents knew that if they sent their sons to schools which were places of scepticism and vice, all their good work would be undone. They wanted teachers to consolidate their children's conditioning; and some were prepared to go to considerable lengths to ensure their sons in particular had a suitable education. Some parents moved to Cheltenham so they could send their sons to Cheltenham College, where Close, the "Evangelical Pope", guaranteed the school's purity.¹³

One example of the importance middle-class parents gave to education was the case of Frederick Robertson, who was for a short time curate at Christ Church in the Lansdown area of Cheltenham. Frederick William Robertson was the eldest of the seven children of Frederick and Sarah Robertson. His father was a captain in the Royal Artillery. He was a man who was reputed to be of "an estimable and highly religious character", and lived for many years at *Rodney House*

¹¹ *Address to Rev Francis Close from his friends and parishioners (on the occasion of his leaving the parish) with his reply and subscribers' names* [GRO P78/1 IN 4/20]

¹² Turner, F. 'The Victorian Crisis of Faith and the Faith that was Lost' in Helmstadter, R.J. & Lightman, B. (Eds.) *Victorian Faith in Crisis* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990) p.21

¹³ Dewey, C. *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: the Mind of the Indian Civil Service* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993) p.27

in Cambray, Cheltenham. He was a regular attendant at the parish church; and being a staunch Conservative (unlike his son) he took an active part in political affairs. He retired on half-pay in 1821, when he was only in his early thirties, so that he might devote himself to the education of his children. Two of his sons - Charles Duesbury and Harry - followed his own profession of arms. The third son Struan, who afterwards became the editor of his brother Frederick's sermons, was a captain in the Royal South Lincoln Dragoon Militia. Frederick himself had expected to "have been in the Dragoons or fertilising the soil of India", as he put it, but he subsequently changed his mind and went to Oxford with a view to enter the clergy.¹⁴ It appears that it was the influence of his father which persuaded him to consider a religious career and contemporary accounts make it clear that Frederick regarded it as his duty to follow his father's advice.¹⁵ True to his evangelical upbringing, his father's views were paramount and no doubt he was expected to show a degree of loyalty and sense of duty to the family, which his father had exhibited when he took early retirement to devote his time to the upbringing of his children.

Frederick's time as curate of Christ Church was not always happy since he complained of the contrast between the congregation there and his former one at Winchester and that the idle, empty, frivolous life of Cheltenham 'society' was almost intolerable to him. After a few months' experience of it, he wrote to a clerical friend:

My work is far less satisfactory than at Winchester, partly from the superficial nature of this place, in which I would not remain another day but for the sake of my coadjutor and leader; partly

¹⁴ Contem Ignotus *The Golden Decade* p.114

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.115

from the effect of the temptations and frittering away of time almost inseparable from a residence here.¹⁶

Robertson was not alone in criticising the state of religion in Cheltenham. In the novels of Anthony Trollope it has been suggested that Littlebath is Cheltenham - "the capital of sham religion - the Evangelicals - and sham gentility. If Bath was built in stone, Littlebath was built in stucco."¹⁷ Trollope hated what he regarded as the narrow or dogmatic ostentatious and fundamentalist attitude of the evangelicals.

The clergy, and especially the Anglican clergy, probably constituted the largest single profession, in terms of numbers, in Britain. The Anglican clergy increased substantially in size during the nineteenth century, from about 12,000 in the 1820s to nearly 21,000 in 1871 and to a peak of 25,363 in 1901.¹⁸ Despite the experience of such as Frederick Robertson, for young middle-class Anglican men of an intellectual cast of mind the existing of an expanding Anglican clergy came literally as a godsend, providing a virtually unique example of a profession of unquestionably high status, whose entrants received an income (albeit often a small one) from their first moment in the field, and yet was both at the cutting-edge of contemporary literary debate and left ample time for cultural, literary and historical pursuits, besides the clergyman's normal service to his faith.

There were several parallels between the clergy and the armed services. The religious and military were the oldest professions in which

¹⁶ Quoted in Contem Ignotus *The Golden Decade* p.123

¹⁷ Mullen, R. & Munson, J. *The Penguin companion to Trollope* (London : Penguin Books, 1996) p.72

¹⁸ Rubinstein, W.D. *Britain's Century, a political and Social History 1815-1905* (London: Arnold, 1998) p.299

society, not the individual, was the client. This implies a distinction between a 'service' and a 'profession'. The Victorian clergy compared much better with the civil and military services than with law, medicine or the new professions.¹⁹ Many members of the clergy had either sons in the army or were themselves the sons of army officers. For instance, all three of Francis Close's brothers were in the army and three of his sons went into the armed services. One was an admiral and two went to Addiscombe and joined the Bombay army. Of the sixteen clergymen who sent sons to Cheltenham College in July 1841, most of them (9) had sons who also joined the church, but two had sons who went into the Indian army and one had a son who joined the British army. There were similarities in the professional ethos of the church and the armed services. This was classically expressed in a Times leader of 5 September 1867. It argued that incumbents, being now much more hard-working than of yore, ought to be better rewarded; but it was "an idle speculation" to think of all livings being raised to a level sufficient to fully support their clergy:

The Church will always remain more or less like the Army. The value of a living is like the value of a commission. The standing, the authority, the opportunities which are given by the incumbency or a captaincy are actually worth the sacrifice of money...officers do not expect to live upon their pay, and incumbents, in the same way, do not expect to live upon their tithes or stipends. So long as the Church, like the Army, is an honourable profession...there will be plenty of men to enter the ranks of each for the mere sake of the profession, and bringing their private means to its service.²⁰

An increased sense of the ministry as a religious vocation rather than one of social status was one result of the religious revival.²¹

¹⁹ Haig, A. *The Victorian Clergy* (London : Croom Helm, 1984) P.16

²⁰ Quoted in Haig, A. *The Victorian Clergy* p.308

²¹ von Arx, J. 'The Victorian Crisis of Faith as Crisis of Vocation' in

Nevertheless the great majority of clergymen were neither wealthy nor occupied in work other than pastoral duties. A minority could rely on inherited wealth, but about only a fifth of the clergy active in the 1830s had links with either gentry or peerage.²² However the poverty of the clergy was essentially relative, not absolute; but this, in an intensely status-conscious age, was not much consolation. A distinguished man who knew too well the problems of straitened means, Charles Dodgson (father of Lewis Carroll) declared in an 1839 sermon on behalf of clergy orphans and widows:

that poverty and affluence are in fact relative terms...The circumstances of birth and education, the position in society which the individual occupies, all these must be taken into account, before one can rightly estimate the proportion which his means bear to his wants, in other words, the degree of his wealth or poverty.²³

In 1867 Bishop Wilberforce referred to the clergyman's finding himself "commonly in the poorest of all positions in a wealthy society - that of a poor gentleman", and others agreed in emphasising the pains of "genteel poverty".²⁴ This meant that many of the clergy shared much in common with some of the Anglo-Indians, to whom many clergy were closely related through family links.

Another link between some of the clergy and the Anglo-Indians was their attitude towards India. The inhabitants of India, sunk deep in Hindu idolatry, seemed to cry out for conversion. Although the East India Company was initially opposed to missionary endeavour, convinced that missionaries would only excite the natives and disturb its profitable

Helmstadter, R.J. & Lightman, B. (eds.) *Victorian Faith* p.269

²² Parsons, G. *Religion in Victorian Britain* p.199

²³ Quoted in Haig, A. *The Victorian Clergy* p.305

²⁴ *Ibid.* p.306

trading activities, the evangelicals managed gradually to change the Company's policy. Their view received official recognition when the Charter Act of 1833 marked the final abandonment of the toleration and non-interference in native affairs which had characterized the rule of the East India Company in the eighteenth-century. During the first two decades of Victoria's reign the evangelical vision of Britain's role in India reigned triumphant. These were the years when hundreds of Englishmen went out to India as missionaries.

It was not only by becoming Christian missionaries, of course, that Englishmen responded to the call to fulfil their imperial destiny. The thousands who went out to the Empire as soldiers and administrators were inspired with an equal sense of purpose. It was significant that the colonial armed forces and the imperial civil service attracted large numbers of evangelical recruits. An evangelical clergyman commented in 1858 that "the Indian army has been rich in good men. Both among officers and private soldiers has there been a remarkable number of intelligent and earnest disciples of the Lord".²⁵ The famous group of soldier-administrators who brought order to the Punjab after it had been annexed to Britain following the Sikh War of 1849 were almost all strong adherents to evangelical Christianity. The 'Punjab system' was the supreme example of the application of the evangelicals' idea of Empire.²⁶ The men who created it, Henry and John Lawrence, Edwardes, Nicholson and Sir Robert Montgomery, were the epitome of evangelical seriousness. They laboured under an intense sense of mission and duty, often working a fourteen-hour day,

²⁵ Bradley, I. *The Call to Seriousness* p.92

²⁶ The British administration in the Punjab stressed the personal authority of an individual officer and his rapport with those beneath him. See Allen, C. *Soldier Sahibs* (London: John Murray, 2000).

to subdue an area ten times the size of Britain.²⁷ Significantly, they had learned the principles of firm but fair government that were to make the 'Punjab system' the showpiece of the English administrative achievement in India, from James Thomason (1804-53), Lieutenant-Governor of the North West province from 1843 to 1853. Thomason was the son of one of Charles Simeon's curates who had gone out as a missionary to Bengal.

One of the most celebrated Christian soldiers was Sir Henry Havelock (1795-1857), who, after his death at the siege of Lucknow during the Indian Mutiny, became a national hero. Because of his lack of influence and finance to purchase promotion, he served twenty-three years, mostly in India, before he rose beyond the rank of lieutenant.²⁸ He was notorious among his fellow-officers for his prayer meetings, regimental temperance associations and Sunday schools, believing that it was his 'solemn Christian duty to devote his time and his attention to the spiritual welfare of his men'.²⁹ Young people were exhorted to follow his example:

A Lecture on General Havelock, considered as a model for young men, was delivered before the members and friends of the Young Mens' Christian Association, on Thursday evening, by the Rev. W. Landels, whose portraiture of his subject as a Christian soldier, and in the various relations of social life, was sketched with warm and glowing enthusiasm, which elicited frequent and rapturous applause from an audience whose sympathies were powerfully excited by the fervour and eloquence of the rev Lecturer's address. Capt. F. Robertson presided.³⁰

²⁷ Bradley, I. *The Call to Seriousness* p.92

²⁸ Haythornthwaite, P.J. *The colonial wars source book* (London: Caxton Editions, 2000) p.310

²⁹ Hibbert, C. *The Great Mutiny: India 1857* (London: Allen Lane, 1978) .199

³⁰ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (February 6, 1858)

The Indian Mutiny, which broke out in 1857, proved to be a fertile ground for creating Christian heroes. The idea of a noble and Christian death was especially poignant when the sacrifice was made by a young person. Such was the death of Arthur Marcus Hill Cheek, a young ensign of the 6th Bengal Native Infantry and sometime pupil of Cheltenham Grammar school, who was killed by mutinous sepoys when he was under the age of seventeen years. In his manner of dying he evidently "exhibited that Christian fidelity and heroism which justly entitle him to the glorious distinction of *the young Christian martyr of Allahabad*".³¹ His example was used to inspire others to heroic endeavours:

It is important that every deed of heroism, every shining example of piety, should be remembered, that those who hear of it may be stimulated and encouraged to do likewise....It is a sacred duty to preserve the records of the faithful who have stood out bravely to confess Christ before men. In thus gathering up the few precious memorials of Marcus Cheek, as we proceed, we hope to hold up a shining example of Christian fidelity, to stimulate other young persons to cultivate by prayer and diligence those Christian graces which can arm the unprotected sufferer with the same courage to bear affliction, even captivity and torture, without giving up their trust in the power and love of their Saviour.³²

John Nicholson's (1822-57) heroic death elevated him to the role of Christian martyr during the Mutiny. Son of an Irish doctor, his mother lived in Cheltenham for some years. His manner of administration of the Bannu district - personal, impartial, direct and when necessary absolutely ruthless - became legendary both with the British and Indians, some of whom later deified him as Nikalsain. On the outbreak

³¹ Meek, R. *The Martyr of Allahabad: Memorials of Ensign Arthur Marcus Hill Cheek of the Sixth Native Bengal infantry* (London: James Nesbit & Co., 1857) p.2

³² *Ibid.* p.9

of the Mutiny in 1857, he disarmed the sepoy regiments in the Punjab without hesitation and persuaded his superiors to let him form a 'Movable Column' to put down mutiny wherever it arose; it was at its head that he destroyed at Trimmu Ghat and the River Ravi large parties of sepoys hastening towards Delhi. He himself then went there to reinforce the beleaguered besiegers on the ridge and led the main assault on the city, 14 September 1857, in which he was killed during the storming of the Kashmir Gate in Delhi.³³ When the time came for Nicholson to die he was denied the potential consolations of a Christian deathbed. Early and mid-Victorian Christians feared sudden death because it allowed no opportunity for spiritual preparation and repentance.³⁴ In fact Nicholson laid fatally wounded for some days, and some of Nicholson's last thoughts were for his mother:

Tell my mother that I do not think we shall be unhappy in the next world. God has visited her with a great affliction, but tell her she must not give way to grief.³⁵

The end of the Indian Mutiny brought about a reassessment of missionary activity. Excessive evangelising was widely recognised as one of the factors that had destabilised the Bengal Army and precipitated the Mutiny.³⁶ In recognition of the fact that the mutineers had genuinely feared conversion to Christianity, missionary activity was curtailed and the public funding for mission schools reduced.³⁷ However, some of the evangelicals remained convinced of their right

³³ Keegan, J. & Wheatcroft, A. *Who's who in Military History* (London: Hutchinson, 1987) p.237

³⁴ Jalland, P. *Death* p.67

³⁵ Trotter, L.J. *The Life of John Nicholson* (London: John Murray, 1908)

³⁶ Allen, C. *Soldier Sahibs* (London: John Murray, 2000) p.340

³⁷ Keay, J. *A History of India* (London: Harper Collins, 2000) p.445

and duty to rule India. It was Sir Robert Montgomery, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, who proclaimed:

It was not policy, or soldiers, or officers, that saved the Indian Empire to England, and saved England to India. The Lord our God, He it was.³⁸

That they had been called to their task by God was summed up in the statement of their leader, John Lawrence, who in 1864 was to become one of the most famous viceroys of India, that:

we have not been elected or placed in power by the people, but we are here through our moral superiority, by the force of circumstances, by the will of Providence. This alone constitutes our charter to govern India. In doing the best we can for the people, we are bound by our conscience and not theirs.³⁹

After the conflicts in the Crimea and India, by the later 1860s the attitude of many different sections of the religious public in Britain towards the officers and men of the army had become a broadly sympathetic one, as it had towards the external aspects of military life and even towards the military ethos. This was a new development and also a strikingly rapid one, for it had been accomplished in little more than a decade.⁴⁰ Evangelicals were happy to demonstrate the compatibility of devout piety with distinguished military service and that a soldier could be a good Christian. Moreover, in spreading Christian sympathy with and admiration of the army, was the diffusion of the quite distinct view that Christians made the best soldiers; and this was particularly the accomplishment in an indirect way of the Indian Mutiny. The dramatic circumstances of that event, and particularly its

³⁸ Pearson, H. *The Hero of Delhi* p.276

³⁹ Quoted in Edwardes, M. *British India 1772-1947* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1967) pp.176-7

⁴⁰ Anderson, O. 'The growth of Christian militarism' p.72

suddenness and ferocity and the fact that women and children were involved, quickly created an atmosphere of hysterical tension at home. Among many of the pious this was intensified by their conviction that the Mutiny was in reality a challenge to Christianity itself, which had been allowed as a divine punishment for official compromise with false religions. In these circumstances any commander who decisively castigated the rebels was likely to become a popular hero.⁴¹ In the later years of the nineteenth century there can be no doubt that the work of the military and naval circles in Cheltenham, in the expansion and defence of the Empire, was done with the blessing and good-will of the evangelical clergy of the town, to whose congregations they mainly belonged.⁴² Christian soldier heroes continued to be popular, as demonstrated by the dedication of a new lamp standard in Cheltenham to General Gordon in 1887, two years after his death at Khartoum.⁴³ His brother, General Samuel Enderby Gordon of the Royal Artillery, lived at *Brooks Lodge, the Park*.

The evangelical movement in Cheltenham brought about a shift away from the values and attitudes of a fashionable spa to a quieter respectability. Guidebooks of the 1860s claimed to notice a higher moral tone in the town:

The town is no longer a type of fashionable watering-place ...the frivolities once so prevalent here are now more honoured in the breach than in the observance ...Education has also powerfully done its work for good in Cheltenham. The gross and vicious habits of a past generation have fled or died out before the spread of education and intelligence, and a comparatively healthy moral tone now permeates all classes. Occasionally a

⁴¹ Anderson, O. 'The growth of Christian militarism' p.50

⁴² Hart, G. *A History of Cheltenham* pp 209-10

⁴³ Chatwin, A. *Cheltenham's Ornamental Ironwork* (Cheltenham: Elston Boutique, 1974) pp.64-5

character of the old stamp may appear on the fashionable horizon...but he is carefully avoided and excluded from family circles.⁴⁴

Evangelicalism gave to Victorian imperialism both the air of self-righteousness and the overpowering sense of duty. It transformed the wholly secular and voluntary business of annexing territory and administering colonies into a great religious crusade and an inescapable moral imperative.⁴⁵ Missionary zeal was perhaps the strongest single characteristic of the evangelicals in the early nineteenth century, and it was certainly one of their most powerful legacies to the Victorians. Indirectly it was to shape Britain's attitude to the countries under its dominion and play a major part in determining imperial policy. The missionary zeal was sometimes given form in charitable bequests. For example, a memorial in Holy Trinity in Cheltenham provides evidence of the desire to further the spread of Christianity amongst the native Indians:

In a vault beneath this Church are deposited the remains of Elizabeth Boden who died the 24 August 1827 aged 19 years. By her decease the residual property of her father (the late Lt. Col. Joseph Boden of the Honourable East India Company's Bombay establishment) now in the court of chancery estimated at the sum of £23,000 or thereabouts devolves to the University of Oxford and according to the following directions extracted from his Will dated the 13th August 1811, is by that body appropriated in and towards the erection and endowment of a professorship in the Sanscrit [sic.] language at or in any or either of the colleges of the said university being of opinion that a more general and critical knowledge of that language will be a means of enabling my countrymen to proceed in the conversion of the natives of India to the Christian religion by disseminating a knowledge of the sacred scriptures amongst them more effectually than all other means whatsoever.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Hart, G. *A History of Cheltenham* p.208

⁴⁵ Bradley, I. *The Call to Seriousness* p.93

Memorial inscriptions can provide evidence of the religious beliefs of those who could afford to have these monuments erected. Victorian families usually took great care in their choice of gravestone inscriptions, sometimes to impress, but more often because they wanted their choice to be appropriate. Inevitably some mourners were more concerned with their own status on any family inscription.⁴⁶ As a rule, however, the inscriptions do express a sense of personal loss by extolling the virtues of the departed. In some cases it is possible to see what qualities were considered desirable and therefore what constituted gentility and respectability. A memorial in Christ Church, Cheltenham to a prominent Anglo-Indian who had served as a doctor with the East India Company gives a clear indication of the qualities valued by evangelical congregations:

To the revered memory of Richard Crosier Sherwood Esq of Suffolk Lawn, Cheltenham, who died suddenly on the 7th Feb 1850 aged
72 years.

Of steady virtue, and unsullied name,
High In his worth, and honest in his aim,
Integrity in all his actions shone,
And honor claimed him as a true-born son.
Twas his to gild with mild, but cheering ray
The private circle, and the social way.
A husband true, affectionate, firm, yet kind:
A parent all devoted: prone to bind
His children to the path, he himself had trod,
To win respect on earth, and seek their God;
A friend, the same, in sunlight and in shade,
Regardless of the hues of wealth, or grade.
In him the poor a firm protector mourn,
And charity bends, weeping, o'er his urn.
Oh! may the waftings of seraphic breath
Have borne his spirit, through the gate of death,
To that blest shore of Christian life, and light,
Where faith, and hope are lost in present sight.

⁴⁶ Jalland, P. *Death* p.292

Even after making allowances for the excessive sentimentality of this epitaph certain qualities were thought to be important. These included the need for a husband to be affectionate but firm and as a father to be devoted to your children by keeping them to a strict religious upbringing. The domesticity of the 'private circle' provided a moral view of the world. It placed a high premium on the quality of relationship between family members related by blood or marriage. The defining place of home in middle-class culture was based on a belief in the supreme importance of domestic familial affections.⁴⁷ The moral purpose inspired by evangelicalism created much of the characteristic tone and atmosphere of middle-class homes.

Richard Sherwood was related to Mary Sherwood (1775-1851), the evangelical tract writer. His son-in-law, commemorated in the adjacent memorial, Major James Grant Stephen of Hatherley Lodge, also had close links with the evangelicals and India. His grandfather was a curate to Simeon of Cambridge before he became a chaplain in Bengal, and his uncle was James Thomason (1804-53), so it is not surprising that the inscription has evangelical sentiments. Little is said on the Sherwood memorial about his occupation or achievements, preferring to praise his moral and personal qualities, which no doubt was calculated to inspire others.

The influence of the religious fervour of Victorian Britain, and especially evangelicalism, pervaded many aspects of middle-class beliefs and attitudes. This influence was particularly strong amongst the Anglo-Indians. It provided them with a code of conduct in carrying out

⁴⁷ Tosh, J. *A Man's Place* p.27

their work and the satisfaction of a job well done in retirement. The high standards of honesty and purity which later characterized the Indian Civil Service were partly due to the influence of evangelicals like Charles Grant, the leading exponent of the evangelical view on India. The principles of integrity, impartiality and unflinching application to duty which characterized the nineteenth-century Indian Civil Service were also the principles of evangelical Christianity. The model civil servant, reliable, punctual, respectable and undeviatingly honest, was almost identical to the ideal of the Christian gentleman as portrayed in the Evangelicals' manuals on conduct. They established public administration as a proper career for serious gentlemen and invested it with a distinct status and ideology. They called for the introduction of the serious middle class into the Civil Service and championed the solidly bourgeois virtues of industry, respectability and integrity. In doing this, the evangelicals played a crucial role in helping to develop the ethic of professional public service.⁴⁸ The approach of some of the particularly high-minded civil servants was like a religious creed.

According to some devotees:

There was no career which so surely inspired men with the desire to do something useful in their generation; to leave their mark upon the world for good, and not for evil. It was a rare phenomenon this, of a race of statesmen and judges scattered throughout a conquered land, ruling it not with an eye to private profit, not even in the selfish interest of the mother country, but in single-minded solicitude for the happiness and improvement of the inhabitants.⁴⁹

There is no evidence that Anglo-Indians were more religious than other members of the middle class in what was a religious age. Some were

⁴⁸ Bradley, I. *The Call to Seriousness* p.161

⁴⁹ Trevelyan, H. *The India We Left* (London: Macmillan, 1972) p.103

inspired by the evangelical call to serve and no doubt sincerely believed in the righteousness of their calling. Amongst probably the majority of Anglo-Indians such high-minded aspirations were rationalised as the need to be of good conduct. Once thought the result of belief, good conduct had been transformed into the very substance of faith itself. The cult of conduct was never quite developed into a 'system' or became totally divorced from its original identification with evangelical Christianity. Eventually, especially in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, for the majority of Englishmen, it meant little more than a vague sense that hard work and sportsmanlike play helped form character.⁵⁰ This attitude was well suited to conditions of service in India, and it was the new public schools that played a significant role in cultivating this outlook.

⁵⁰ Hutchins, F.G. *The Illusion of Permanence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967) p.22

Chapter 7

ANCIENTS OF THE COLLEGE

And we all praise famous men
Ancients of the College;
For they taught us common sense
Tried to teach us common sense
Truth and God's Own Common Sense
Which is more than knowledge!¹

The education of middle-class boys in the second half of the nineteenth century generally consisted of three clearly-defined stages: preparatory school, public school and, for a great many, a private tutor or 'crammer' before going either to university, the civil service or commissioned service in the army.² This was reflected in the growth of the number of public schools from a few dozen in the 1840s to over a hundred in the 1870s. This dramatic increase can partly be explained by the commercial success of the middle class in general who wished to provide their sons with the kind of education that had previously been the preserve of the aristocracy. They achieved their goal by founding new schools and by reviving old grammar schools, so that during the middle years of the century, the number of youths attending first-grade public or grammar schools more than trebled.³ Whereas the older public schools catered for the sons of the aristocracy and gentry, the new foundations of the 1840s, such as Cheltenham, were aimed at the very classes from which the servants of the East India Company were principally drawn. As a result, the role

¹ Rudyard Kipling *Stalky & Co.* 'Let us now praise famous men' verse 5 (1899)

² Mangan, J.A. (ed.) *'Benefits Bestowed'?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) p.59

³ Bamford, T.W. *Rise of the Public Schools* (London: Nelson, 1967) pp.18-36

of the public schools in the education of the Company's cadets became increasingly important.

Cheltenham College

Some of the new foundations were proprietary schools financed by shareholders who purchased the right to nominate pupils. Cheltenham was one of the first of such institutions. The founders' aim, as explained in the *Cheltenham College Prospectus*, was 'to provide for the sons of nobleman and gentlemen, a sound classical, mathematical, and general education, on moderate terms'.⁴ Despite the claim to attract the sons of aristocratic families, the College was decidedly aimed at the middle class. Most of the parents do not appear to have been particularly wealthy, as remembered by Francis Pigou who had a very distinguished clerical career and later was a member of the College Council:

As a rule, Cheltenham College represented that class of boys who for the most part had to earn their bread independent of their parents. We had no "swells" amongst us. The utmost any boy had of pocket money was about 2s 6d. This was regarded as representing considerable wealth.⁵

This continued to be the case throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. In 1891 on the occasion of the College's fiftieth anniversary it was declared that:

The connection of the school was peculiarly happy. They had little in them of the worn-out classes; they came from the cultured homes of English gentlemen. And there was this about them: they

⁴ *Cheltenham College Prospectus* GRO (D1950/Z3)

⁵ Pearce, T. *Then and Now An anniversary celebration of Cheltenham College 1841-1991* (Cheltenham: The Cheltonian Society, 1991) p.19

were not extraordinarily wealthy.⁶

Cheltenham College was set up after a meeting on 9 November 1840, at 29, *Montpellier Villas* in the house of George Simon Harcourt, a retired infantry officer who had fought at Waterloo. Major-General George Swiney of the Bengal Artillery presided. Those present decided to set up in Cheltenham 'a Proprietary Grammar School on the plan of those so successfully established in other parts of the country,' and appointed a committee to work out the best means of doing this. The committee consisted of the Rev. S. Middleton, Captain J.S. Iredell, Captain F. Robertson, G.S. Harcourt, Esq. and Fenton Hort, Esq. They opened a share list and thirty-six shares were subscribed for on the spot. Next day they held another meeting which the shareholders and the local parochial clergy were invited to attend to look into the question of suitable buildings or sites for building. At this they also resolved 'that this Committee understands that no person should be considered eligible [to become a shareholder] whom should not be moving in the circle of gentlemen. No retail trader being under any circumstances to be considered'.⁷

The College was divided into two departments: the Classical Department, and the Military and Civil Department. In the Classical Department pupils were prepared for the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and the college of the East India Company at Haileybury. In the Military and Civil Department there were classes for those intended for the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich; the subjects of study being mathematics, Latin, French, German, fortification,

⁶ Morgan, M.C. *Cheltenham College: the first hundred years* (Chalfont St Giles: Richard Sadler, 1968) p.140

⁷ *Ibid.* p.3

surveying, plan drawing and civil drawing, History and Geography. There were also Sandhurst Classes, for those intended for the Royal Military College, Sandhurst; the subjects being mathematics, Latin, French, German, history, geography, fortification, plan drawing and civil drawing. The Addiscombe Classes were for those intended for the East India Company's seminary at Addiscombe; the course of study consisting of mathematics, Latin, French, Hindustani, fortification, plan drawing, and civil drawing. There were also classes for Direct Commissions in the Queen's army and in the East India Company's Army. In addition there were Engineer Classes for those intended for the profession of civil engineer; subjects of study were mathematics, mechanical drawing, French, German, history, geography, surveying and civil drawing. Classes for those intended for Mercantile or similar pursuits studied arithmetic, French, German, history, geography, civil drawing and book keeping. The charge for boarders was £35 per annum, which with the tuition fee made the total annual cost, £54 2s for the Junior classes; and £58 2s for the Senior Classes.⁸ The charge for Day Pupils, varied from £16 to £20 per annum, according to the position of the boy in the school.

There were initially 181 shareholders and 120 pupils: 49 day boys, 21 half-boarders and 50 boarders. The original 200 Cheltenham shares were of £20 each, to which the governors added fifty of £30 and fifty of £40 within a year. From first to last the founding of College took less than three years, from November 1840 to June 1843. During that time it had 'already attracted many families hither as a place of residence'.⁹ By 1856 there were 600 shares whose nominal value varied from £20,

⁸ *Cheltenham College Prospectus* GRO (D1950/Z3)

⁹ *Ibid.* p.15

the original 200 shares, to £60. These were fetching up to £120, so that an original share was worth six times what had been paid for it in the first place, while a £60 share had doubled in value. The right of nomination of a pupil which the share conferred on the shareholder was being let for £12 p.a. On the strength of the market a further fifty shares of nominal value £100 were issued in 1856.

The list of shareholders gives some idea of the middle-class background of most of the pupils since most of the shareholders were parents, although they were permitted to let or hire out their nominations to other parents. (see Table 7.1) The first 200 shares were owned by 156 individuals. Sixty-five of the shareholders were styled as gentlemen, generally recognised by use of the title of 'Esq'. Three of these gentlemen also had their profession listed, in each case 'solicitor'. Other categories of shareholders which could be similarly styled as gentlemen were the three doctors and three titled names, amongst whom were Lord Sherborne and the Hon. Dowager Lady Grey. Apart from the gentlemen the largest two categories were the Anglo-Indians and the clergy. Whereas the clergy were a fairly uniform group, the Anglo-Indians included retired East India Company army officers and civilian officials as well as their dependants. Amongst these were Mrs. F.H. Billamore, who was the widow of Captain Billamore of the 17th Bombay Native Infantry and Mrs. Col. Graham, the wife of Colonel Graham of the Bengal Artillery. One of the Anglo-Indian shareholders was a member of the teaching staff at the College. This was Captain Adam Durnford Gordon from the Bengal Cavalry, who was the first professor of oriental languages. One of the founder members of the College was the prominent Anglo-Indian Captain James Shrubbs Iredell, who had retired from the 15th Bombay Native Infantry in 1827. The

Table 7.1

Cheltenham College Shareholders - the first 200 shares

	No of shareholders	%	No of shares	3 shares	2 shares	1 share	Cheltenham	Elsewhere
Anglo-Indians	27	17.31%	38	3	5	19	22	4
Clergy	26	16.67%	34	1	6	19	11	15
Gentlemen	65	41.67%	84	7	5	53	44	21
Women*	17	10.90%	21	1	2	14	12	5
Army/Navy	15	9.62%	17		2	13	10	6
Titled	3	1.92%	3			3	2	1
Doctors*	3	1.92%	3			3	2	1
Total	156	100%	200	12	20	124	103	53

* not including Anglo-Indians

Source: *Shareholders' Papers* Cheltenham College

presence of a significant proportion of clergy amongst the shareholders was a reflection of the importance given to education by that group. The main difference between the Anglo-Indians and the clergy was that whereas more of the latter came from outside Cheltenham, most of the Anglo-Indian shareholders were Cheltenham residents. In fact a far higher proportion of Anglo-Indians were local compared with the shareholders as a whole. (see Table 7.2) It is difficult to assess whether many of these moved to Cheltenham specifically to be close to the College, but certainly several Anglo-Indians were amongst the group who were involved in founding the College. Many of the directors in the early years of the College were also Anglo-Indians, including five of the original founders, some of whom remained on the board for up to twenty years. So the concerns and wishes of the Anglo-Indian parents helped to shape the ethos of the college, represented as they were by some of the more prominent members amongst Cheltenham's Anglo-Indian community. The directors also included members from further afield, including Major General Sir James Law Lushington, vice-president from 1846-59, who had been a chairman of the Court of Directors of the East India Company.

Table 7.2

Names on the database connected with Cheltenham College

Indian Army Officers	69
British Army Officers	25
Indian Civil Service	34
Naval Officers	10
Total	138

Source: Database - Appendices 1-4

In general the shareholders bought shares in the College for their own use. Virtually all the people on the list sooner or later sent their sons there. However, there were occasions when parents had to

supplement their own share holdings from shares hired out by others. For instance, Mrs. F.H. Billamore, who owned share number 67, sent five sons to the College in July 1841. In order to secure the nominations she had to get other shareholders to nominate some of her sons on her behalf. Generally, one assumes this was a business arrangement, although nominations as favours from relatives must have also occurred. In the case of at least one of her sons, Mrs. Billamore managed to secure a nomination from James Agg Gardner, who owned two shares.¹⁰ At least seven of the first 128 boys to enter the College were nominated by their uncles. Friendship also must have influenced nominations. No doubt this was the case when George Harcourt, who owned share number one, called upon his friend Captain Iredell, owner of share number two, to nominate his second son.

Another source for examining the social background of the pupils is the Cheltenham College Register.¹¹ The first names on the register were the 128 boys who came to the school when it opened in July 1841. Some of the families sending their sons must have had to invest in a considerable outlay for their education, since no fewer than 56 of the boys joined the school with their brothers. In most of these cases there were just two boys from any one family; but the widow of Captain Frederick Billamore was notable in sending five sons. As with the shareholders, the clergy were well represented amongst the parents, but by far the biggest occupational group were the Anglo-Indians, who accounted for thirty of the 128 original entrants. (See Table 7.3)

¹⁰ Cheltenham College Archives: *Form of Nomination*, July 17, 1841

¹¹ Skirving, E.S.(ed.) *Cheltenham College Register 1841-1927* (Cheltenham: Cheltenham College, 1928)

Table 7.3
The Occupations of Parents of Boys and their Sons entering
Cheltenham College

July 1841

Occupation/Status	Parents' Occupation	Sons' Occupation	Sons' Occupation - same as father
Women	5	-	-
Royal Navy	6	1	-
British Army	7	10	-
Indian Civil Service	11	2	1
Indian Army	19	20	9
Clergy	19	19	9
Gentlemen, etc	61	19	1
total	128	71	20

1900

Occupation/Status	Parents' Occupation	Sons' Occupation	Sons' Occupation - same as father
Doctors	5	4	-
Royal Navy	4	6	1
British Army	18	56	7
Indian Civil Service	10	1	-
Indian Army	9	14	6
Clergy	6	3	3
Gentlemen, etc	94	27	6
total	146	111	23

Source: Skirving, E.S. (ed.) Cheltenham College Register 1841-1927
 (The College, Cheltenham, 1928)

Of these, most of them were the sons of East India Company army officers, although a surprisingly large proportion were the sons of Indian civil service and medical officials. This indicates the success of the town in attracting these high-status groups. In 1900, when 146 boys entered the College, the Anglo-Indians were less represented amongst the fathers, although a fair proportion of sons followed their fathers into the Indian Army. This could be explained by the fact that these families had a tradition of service in India. Otherwise the main differences

between 1841 and 1900 were the far fewer members of the clergy and the larger number of British army officers sending their boys to Cheltenham. In 1900 seventeen of the fathers were old boys of the College and only thirteen lived locally, showing a marked difference from the situation when the College first opened. In general terms the Anglo-Indian and local influence was considerably diminished resulting in a school which was probably not much different from the large number of public schools which had opened in the second half of the nineteenth century. The figures for boys subsequently joining the British army are distorted by the outbreak of war in 1914, when all of the boys were old enough to join the armed services. Of the 76 boys from the 1900 intake who joined the British and Indian armies and the Royal Navy, 26 lost their lives in action or soon after.

Rubinstein looked at three different periods in the College's history, albeit with a smaller sample.¹² (see Table 7.4) He found that consistently up to 1900 the professional classes accounted for well over half the entrants.

The preponderance of sons of professionals led him to conclude that the nineteenth-century public schools were schools for the sons of the professional middle classes. However, his results suggest that he understated the number of those merely counted as no occupation or gent. or esq. Even when allowance is made for the professional occupations of some of those described as gentlemen, there are still a large proportion of names with no apparent occupation. Of the 61 so-called gentlemen listed as fathers of the boys who joined the

¹² Rubinstein, W.D. *Capitalism, Culture and Decline in Britain 1750-1990* (London: Routledge, 1993) p.118

College in 1841, apart from the Anglo-Indians, there were six solicitors and three surgeons or doctors. Although it is probably unwise to assume that the remaining 52 were all gentlemen of leisure, it is likely that a significant number lived on inherited income or the proceeds from investments or property. The small number of sons of businessmen is not surprising from the fact that anybody from the retail trade was prevented from becoming a share holder, though this did not prevent bankers and tea planters, for instance, from sending their sons to the College.

Table 7.4 <u>Occupational Categories of entrants at major public schools</u> <u>and their fathers, 1840-1895/1900</u> - Cheltenham:		
Fathers		
1840	Land	7 = 13.2%
	Professionals	36 = 67.9%
	Business	2 = 3.8%
	'no occupation', 'gent.', 'esq.' [known 53; unknown 7]	8 = 15.1%
1870	Land	14 = 18.7%
	Professionals	46 = 61.3%
	Business [known 75; unknown 5]	14 = 18.7%
1895/1900	Land	4 = 5.1%
	Professionals	53 = 67.1%
	Business	19 = 24.1%
	'no occupation', 'gent.', 'esq.' [known 79; unknown 3]	3 = 3.8%

Source: Rubinstein, W.D. *Capitalism, Culture and Decline* (1993) p.118

Rubinstein also concluded that public school entrants, in their own later careers, regularly followed in their fathers' footsteps.¹³ There may be some truth in this in a general sense, but a closer analysis suggests that the process was more complex. (see Table 7.5) Of the seventy-one 1841 entrants whose later occupation is recorded, only twenty actually followed the same career as their fathers. Again the clergy and the Indian Army appear to have been popular career choices, and half the sons of these two groups continued in their fathers' occupation.

	1841	1900
East India Company/Indian govt	22	15
Clergy	19	3
Army	10	56
Barrister/solicitor	5	7
Farmer	3	2
MP	2	1
Banker	2	1
Land agent	2	
Tea Planter	1	1
Tea & rubber merchant		2
Poet/artist	1	1
Civil engineer	1	2
Business/manufacuring		3
Royal Navy	1	6
Academic		3
Doctor		4
Other	2	4
Died at school or left early	8	3
total*	79	114

* the remaining names on the register have no recorded occupation.

Source: Skirving, E.S. (ed.) Cheltenham College Register 1841-1927

As far as the Indian Civil Service is concerned the picture is rather different: of the eleven East India Company civilians only one son

¹³ Rubinstein, W.D. *Capitalism* p.119

followed in his father's footsteps. This was William Fraser McDonell, son of Aeneas Ranald McDonell, a director of the College, and one of only five civilians to be awarded the Victoria Cross. Careers outside the big institutions of East India Company, the church and the army were varied. They included farmers in South Africa, a civil engineer in Australia, the legal profession and banking, a tea planter and even a poet: A.L. Gordon, son of Captain Adam Durnford Gordon, who went to Australia and committed suicide at the age of 36.

Haileybury College

The fact that only two of the class of 1841 got into the Indian Civil Service, whereas ten times as many entered the Indian army was partly due to the more rigorous selection for the East India Company's college at Haileybury. It was assumed that students would come to Haileybury well grounded in the classics, the Bible, and with some rudiments of modern history and moral philosophy. From the beginning of the college in 1806, there was an entrance examination given by a professor and the principal. By the 1830's it had become a formidable examination in which a student had to present evidence that he knew the Four Gospels of the Greek Testament and had to translate portions of Homer, Herodotus, Xenophon, Thucydides, Sophocles, and Euripides, as well as the Latin authors Terence, Cicero, Tacitus, Vergil and Horace. After 1836 outside examiners paid by the company were employed to administer the entrance examination and were drawn from Oxford, Cambridge, and King's College, London. The passing rate in the late

1830's appears to have been about 75 per cent.¹⁴ After passing the entrance examination to Haileybury a cadet would spend two years studying law, political economy and Indian languages. He then went out to India where he had to qualify in further tests in Indian languages before taking up an appointment. Until the middle of the nineteenth century the directors of the East India Company nominated youths to what were still called writerships. The number of appointments varied from year to year. In the period from 1802 to 1833, 1,190 writers were sent to the three Presidencies in India. The average was thirty-seven a year. During the same period, 7,727 military cadets were sent, an average of 258 per year.¹⁵

In an average year a director had close to eleven positions to which he could nominate young men. "Friendship" appears to have been the standard answer given by a director when asked his reason for giving a place to a particular individual. It may have been friendship for the boy's father or for another relative. For instance, Henry Binny Webster, son of James Webster of *Hatherley Court*, who attended Cheltenham College 1845-50, was nominated by Robert Campbell, a friend of James Webster.¹⁶ Many friendships were based on service together in India. Of the 110 directors who served between 1784 and 1834, well over half had resided in India. From 1834 to 1854 the Court of Directors became entirely Anglo-Indian. Between 1809 and 1850 almost 35 per cent of those entering the East India Company's Civil

¹⁴ Cohn, B. S. 'Recruitment and Training of British Civil Servants in India, 1600-1860' in Braibanti, R. (ed.) *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966) p.126

¹⁵ Cohn, B. S. 'Recruitment' p.103

¹⁶ OIOC (J/1/81/f56) Haileybury Cadet Papers, Petition No. 6 (June 1851)

Service had fathers who served in either the company's military service or civil service. In 1839-40 when the membership of the Court of Directors appears to be almost exclusively Anglo-Indian, this number reached 45 per cent.¹⁷

Few thought Haileybury's contribution to the Indian Civil Service was found in its academic instruction, distinguished as its faculty may have been, or in the fact that it was the first institution to offer training in oriental languages in Great Britain, or that it offered instruction in law and political economy before these subjects became courses of study at Oxford and Cambridge. Rather it was believed that the college instilled "a spirit of camaraderie" in the students, and "the friendships and associations formed at the College constituted one of the several bonds of comradeship among all the civil servants during their administrative careers, and helped to maintain an elevated standard of thought and feeling in the service as a *corps d'elite*".¹⁸

The Government of India Act of 1853 abolished the directors' patronage and enacted that appointments in the Indian Civil Service should be filled on the results of open competitive examinations. This meant that Haileybury students no longer had the field to themselves, having in future to pit their wits in examination against young men who had issued from other schools as well as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. As well as Cheltenham, Marlborough, Clifton, Bedford Grammar School and Kingston (Ireland) were well in the lead by the end of the nineteenth century.

¹⁷ Cohn, B. S. 'Recruitment' p.106

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p.135

In the last five years of Haileybury as an East India Company college, the Indian connection accounted directly for some 44 per cent of nominees. More than half of these were sons of Civilians; about a quarter were sons of those serving in other Indian services, principally the army; the rest were sons of directors and employees at East India House. The two other significant parental occupational groups were the aristocracy and gentry (26.8 per cent) and the clergy (11.3 per cent). Sons of those in legal and medical practice filled another 8 per cent of places. This left only about a tenth of places to be filled by sons of officers in the forces (3.3 per cent), bankers and stockbrokers (3.3 per cent), merchants (2.3 per cent), and others (0.9 per cent). Under the competition system, the proportion of the sons of fathers connected with India fell off sharply.¹⁹

In the first year in which the open examination was held (1855) 70 per cent of the successful candidates were Oxbridge-educated and the average for the first five years was almost 60 per cent. But after 1859 a decline set in, and by 1864 only 10 per cent of the ICS recruits were Oxbridge graduates.²⁰ This was partly because candidates discovered that universities were inefficient places at which to prepare for the open examination. There was a more effective alternative: the crammer. Crammers were a mid-Victorian phenomenon, the response of a market economy to a flood of examinations. There was no shortage of candidates since the rewards of success were considerable, as reported by the civil service commissioners:

¹⁹ Compton, J.M. 'Open competition and the Indian civil service 1854-1876' *The English Historical Review* 327, vol. LXXXIII April 1968 p.281

²⁰ Dewey, C.J. 'The education of a Ruling Caste: the Indian Civil Service in the era of Competitive examination' *English Historical Review* 347, 1973 p.269

The emoluments of a writership; the steady advancement in the service of those who devote themselves to it with zeal and perseverance: the infinite opportunities of public usefulness which it presents; the dignity, honour and influence of the positions to which it may not improbably lead; and the liberal and judicious provision for retirement at a moderate age; all render the Indian civil service a career full of interest and of pecuniary advantage ... We feel convinced, that when this system of competitive examination for the East India Company's service is generally made known and fully understood, it will draw away many young University men from the severe and uncertain competition of the bar, the moderate expectations of the church, and still more from the laborious future which the various employments of a scholastic nature hold out.²¹

Of the 1,600 recruits selected at the forty open examinations held between 1858 and 1897, virtually all came from three - predominantly middle-class - groups: the sons of professional men (67 per cent), of businessmen (21 per cent) and farmers and lesser gentry (12-13 per cent). Some historians believe these figures reveal the steady rise of a new and vigorous business class breaking into citadels of privilege hitherto reserved for sons of the gentry and the established church.²² Indeed, those who profited most from the abolition of patronage were the clergy and the professional classes whose sons together made up nearly a half of the 'new competitiveness', whereas representation of the landed interest was cut from a quarter to a tenth. But this does not necessarily mean that there was a concerted attack on the power of privilege. There were usually more prosaic reasons for the growing numbers of middle-class recruits. As far as the clergy are concerned there were presumably two main reasons: firstly, that clergymen, on the whole, were not rich and their sons had to earn their own living;

²¹ *Report from the committee...(on) the examination of candidates for the civil service of the east India Company* (1854-5) p.269

²² *Ibid.* p.269

secondly, that in the early nineteenth century far more educated men, proportionately, went into the church than subsequently, simply for lack of alternative occupation. Moreover, the rise in the number of public schools was not matched by an increase in the number of suitable occupations available. The professions which were regarded as being most suitable for gentlemen could not accommodate this greatly enlarged pool of gentlemanly aspirants. Indeed, with the decline of patronage and the advent of competitive entrance examinations, career opportunities for public-school men in the army, the civil service and the liberal professions actually declined.²³ One result of this was the continuation to the end of the nineteenth century of what the Victorians called 'the younger son question'.²⁴

The Role of the Public Schools

The proprietary schools like Cheltenham did not arise because there were more opportunities for lucrative professional employment to which they provided access. Such opportunities lagged far behind educational expansion. Boys in mid-nineteenth-century public schools were not, for the most part, groomed for well-paid employment but were in many ways handicapped in their search for it by an irrelevant education and the outward signs of genteel status. The schools offered not so much a livelihood, as a valued status. They developed a new exclusiveness that guarded the child from social promiscuity and contamination. Those proprietary schools flourished which reinforced

²³ Musgrove, F. 'Middle class education and employment in the nineteenth century' *Economic History Review* 2nd ser, 12, 1959, pp.99-111

²⁴ Dunae, P.A. 'Education, emigration and empire. 1887-1905' p.196 in Mangan, J.A.(ed.) *'Benefits Bestowed'?*

the solidarity of social and socio-religious groups.²⁵ Hence Cheltenham College's assertion that 'the object of this institution is to provide for the sons of nobleman and gentlemen ... strictly in unison with the principles of religion, as taught by the United Church of England and Ireland'.²⁶ Some evangelical parents moved to Cheltenham because they believed that Dean Close, the "Evangelical Pope", guaranteed the school's purity.²⁷ In general, however, education was a means of providing access to a subculture of social separateness and of ensuring status for their children. It was membership that was desired; the education provided was of secondary importance.²⁸ This assumed a link between status and character and that many of the characteristics of the gentleman could be instilled by education.²⁹

Nevertheless the public schools did not explicitly set out to provide a definition, a distinguishing mark, for those who were to be classed as gentlemen. But they did, all of them, though in varying degrees, deliberately try to encourage and develop the qualities that made a gentlemen. This approach to education was endorsed by those already in India. Sir William Denison, the Governor of Madras, concluded in 1864 that what was needed in the Indian Civil Service was not 'men of an extravagant amount of knowledge. We would dispense with many of the "ologies", if we could get with the ordinary education of a gentleman, the habits and principles of a

²⁵ Musgrove, F. 'Middle Class Families and Schools 1780-1880'
Sociological Review Vol 7 (1959) p.175

²⁶ Cheltenham College Prospectus GRO (D1950/Z3)

²⁷ Dewey, C. *Anglo-Indian Attitudes* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993) p.27

²⁸ Mangan, J.A. *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p.128

²⁹ Compton, J.M. 'Open competition and the Indian civil service 1854-1876'
The English Historical Review 327, vol. LXXXIII April 1968 p.269

gentleman.'³⁰ The demand grew for boarding schools that would not merely prepare for examinations but "build character" as well. That is why increasingly the emphasis was on manners, on responsibility, on character, rather than on scholarship.³¹ So, although Cheltenham College was established to provide a sound education that would provide access to the right sort of careers, as time went by, more and more stress was being put on character training.

It was a genuinely and extensively held belief that games inspired virtue, developed manliness and formed character.³² Games had been encouraged from the very first, originally as an answer to the problem of a large number of unruly boys with unregulated and unsupervised leisure. But it was the building of a purpose-built gymnasium in 1865 that reflected the enhanced status of games at Cheltenham College.³³ The growing obsession with games and its supposed beneficial effect on character was advanced by the concept of manliness which contributed to the ethos of the public school system. The famous headmaster Edward Thring of Uppingham was an influential advocate of the benefits of a public school education:

There is no point on which my convictions are stronger than on the power of boarding schools in forming national character...There is a very strong feeling growing up among the merchant class in England in favour of the public schools; and hundreds go to schools now who thirty years ago would not have thought of doing so. The learning to be responsible, and independent, to bear pain, to play games, to drop rank and wealth, and home luxury, is a priceless boon. I think myself that it is this which has

³⁰ Compton, J.M. 'Open competition p.273

³¹ Mason, P. *The English Gentleman* (London: Pimlico, 1982) p.162

³² Mangan, J.A. *Athleticism* p.9

³³ Morgan, M.C. *Cheltenham College* p.49

made the English such an adventurous race; and that with all their faults..the public schools are the cause of this "manliness".³⁴

To the early Victorians the concept of manliness represented a concern with a successful transition from Christian immaturity to maturity, demonstrated by earnestness, selflessness and integrity; to the late Victorians it stood for neo-Spartan virility as exemplified by stoicism, hardiness and endurance.³⁵ By the final quarter of the nineteenth century, at least in the rhetoric of idealists, manliness had evolved into the somewhat controversial and sometimes confusing phenomenon of 'muscular Christianity'. The term was appropriate to the extent that it captured that excessive commitment to physical activity which was an unquestionable feature of middle-class male society in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century.³⁶ It also coincided with a renewal of interest in Britain's global empire.

It was believed that it was the games field which prepared boys for imperial adventures. The rise of imperialism put a premium on authority, discipline and team spirit allegedly learnt at school on the games field. The need to prepare for imperial service was incessantly preached in the late-nineteenth century public schools. The public schools made the cultivation of physical and psychological stamina in preparation for the rigours of imperial duty their special mission:

Many a lad who leaves an English public school disgracefully ignorant of useful knowledge, who can speak no language but his own, and writes that imperfectly, to whom the noble literature of his country and the stirring history of his forefathers are almost a sealed book, and who has devoted a great part of his time and nearly all his thoughts to athletic sports, yet brings away with him

³⁴ Quoted in Newsome, D. *Godliness and Good Learning* (London: John Murray, 1971) p.222

³⁵ Mangan, J.A. & Walvin, J. (eds.) *Manliness and Morality* p.1

³⁶ *Ibid.* p.3

something beyond all price, a manly straightforward character, a scorn of lying and meanness, habits of obedience and command, and fearless courage. Thus equipped he goes out into the world, and bears a man's part in subduing the earth, ruling its wild folk, and building up the Empire; doing many things so well that it seems a thousand pities that he was not trained to do them better, and to face the problems of race, creed and government in distant corners of the Empire with a more instructed mind. This type of citizen, however, with all his defects, has done yeoman's service to the Empire; and for much that is best in him our public schools may fairly take credit.³⁷

By the end of the nineteenth century, as a youthful poet in the *Cheltonian* acknowledged, English playing fields were recognised training grounds for imperial battlefields:

How many a charge through the ranks of the foe
Have been made by a warrior, who years ago,
Hurried the leather from hand to hand
And 'gainst heavy odds made sturdy stand?
'Neath old England's banner in every land
Our football players to guard it, stand.³⁸

Another aspect of the public school spirit was the clannishness associated with it. The middle class placed a great deal of importance on personal contacts made through family, school and college, and in freemasonry, parliament, business and church, which created bonds which had always provided the principal means of patronage and promotion, and continued to be important well after the introduction of competitive examinations. It was in the public schools where boys assimilated a set of values relating them to their fellow pupils which remained profound for the rest of their lives. This was particularly the case amongst the elite of the Anglo-Indians, the covenanted civil servants, especially those who had attended Haileybury:

³⁷ Quoted in Mangan, J.A. *Athleticism* p.9

³⁸ Quoted in Mangan, J.A. 'Imperialism and an ideal of boyhood in fact and fiction' *Book Window* vol V no. 2 (1978) p.2 p.138

Haileybury formed a tie which the vicissitudes of official life could never break. In the swamps of Dacca, in the deserts of Rajpootana...wherever the Haileybury men met they had at least one set of associations in common. What matter if one wore the frock-coat of the Board of Revenue while the other sported the jackboots and solar topee of the Muffasil Commissioner..Had they not rowed together on the Lea? Had they not larked together in Hertford ...? ³⁹

Even among less exalted Anglo-Indians the ties of school remained strong, so that far from home in every corner of the empire one was sure to come across fellow pupils. This was especially true in India. In Kipling's *Stalky and Co.*, when somebody says of Stalky, fighting on the north-west frontier, "There's nobody like Stalky", the narrator replies, "That's just where you make the mistake", I said, "India's full of Stalkies - Cheltenham and Haileybury and Marlborough chaps ..".⁴⁰ Memoirs and diaries of service in India are full of chance encounters with old school acquaintances, such as this one from the memoirs of Kendal Coghill of the Bengal Fusiliers, son of Admiral Sir Josiah Coghill of Cheltenham. It comes from an incident during the siege of Delhi in 1857, during which he rescued a wounded engineers officer:

When visiting my own hospitals to learn the numbers of killed and wounded I turned into the Engineer's hospital and asked is any officer there had lost an arm lately, as when I bound him up I cut the arm off with a pen-knife and threw it away. The orderly sergeant suggested my walking round to see, and on passing a cot I heard myself called and found my friend who feebly thanked me. Seeing he was getting on well I was leaving and he asked my name. "Coghill" said I "2nd Fusiliers". "Is it Kendal Coghill?" said he. "Yes" said I "but who are you that know my name?" "Warren", said he. "What Edmund Warren?" "Yes". "By jove! this is strange the last time we met ten years ago at Cheltenham College I swore to myself that if ever I met you in after life I would have your blood for bullying me and making me

³⁹ Trevelyan, G. *The Competition Wallah* (1907) pp.6-7

⁴⁰ Quoted in Hyam, R. *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914* (1976) p.147

your fag - and by Jove - looking at my blood stained clothes - I have more of your blood now than I bargained for."⁴¹

By the end of the nineteenth century old boys of Cheltenham College could be found in many parts of the empire as was pointed out during the Cheltonian Society's banquet for the Cheltenham College Jubilee in 1891, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the College. The Chairman told the company that telegrams of greeting had been received from Bangalore, Bombay, Madras, Poona, Colombo and Malta; and the speaker proposing "Our Soldiers and Sailors" said there was "no campaign, no skirmish hardly, of British troops, in which there was not to be found" a number of Cheltonian officers, thereby giving emphasis to the strongly developed military side of College.⁴²

The environment of the public schools imparted certain ideals to prepare boys for lives of service. Spartan living conditions, long hours of work, harsh discipline, and corporal punishment were well calculated to produce young men with the physical and mental stamina necessary to survive the rigours of public service. The monastic character of public school life helped prepare young men for the all-male society of the mess and for protracted absences from family and female company. Even schoolboy pugilism, such as the fights that went on in the sandpit at Cheltenham College, taught physical courage, self-endurance and mental resilience. These schools sought to combine the strengths of the aristocratic tradition - patriotism, corporate spirit, gentlemanly honour and obligation - with those of the

⁴¹ Coghill Papers, Centre for South Asia Studies, Cambridge

⁴² Morgan, M.C. *Cheltenham College: the first hundred years* (1968) p.140

bourgeois tradition - moral earnestness, energy and self-discipline.⁴³ The virtues and qualities they set out to inculcate in their pupils included courage, self-assurance, honesty, self-sacrifice, and group loyalty. These attributes represented a code of living which was intended to be unselfish, active, honourable useful and good. But it could suffer in application from ruthlessness, arrogance, lack of sympathy and perhaps an undue emphasis on the virtues of success. At least one writer has suggested that the code of living became so robust that it could be represented as reaching its perfection in a code of dying.⁴⁴ And although the products of the public school system may have possessed general character attributes and social skills which well fitted them for the roles of colonial "policemen" and "heroic" warriors, many observers have pointed to the intellectual mediocrity and complacency, diletantism, stolidity, insensitivity, nationalist and class arrogance of the public school product.

Be that as it may, the public schools played a crucial role in cultivating a gentlemanly ethos. They both responded to the growing demand for this sort of education and actively promoted the type of schooling they were expected to provide. The major employers such as the East India Company also played an important role in determining the attitude it wanted to see in its recruits. Thus their influence was not so much in the academic curriculum followed by the schools, but in the character training that the public school nurtured.

⁴³ Otley, C.B. 'Public School and Army' *New Society* (17 November, 1966) p.755

⁴⁴ Newsome, D. *Godliness and Good Learning* (1971) p.236

The success of Cheltenham College had an effect on the character of the town. The school fulfilled its aim to attract the gentry, even though many of the middle-class parents could be said to be from the 'pseudo-gentry.' No doubt many were attracted to Cheltenham because of its growing reputation as a centre for middle-class schooling, especially with the opening of Cheltenham Ladies' College followed later in the century by Dean Close School. These educational enterprises helped Cheltenham retain some prosperity, which could have been undermined with the decline of the town as a fashionable spa. The opening of the College was one of the most visible achievements of the Anglo-Indians in Cheltenham, although they had to rely on help from a wider group of supporters. But the driving force behind the College was very much concerned with providing a first-class education at a reasonable price that serving and retired officers and their widows could afford for their sons. The role of the Anglo-Indians in setting up the College enhanced their reputation locally. The College authorities were always keen to extol the achievements of old Cheltonians in the service of their country which found favour in the ranks of the pseudo-gentry to which many of the parents belonged. Although no doubt most of the middle-class parents were mainly concerned about providing rewarding careers for their sons, the public service ethos gave added status to those seeking service in India and other parts of the empire.

The original conception was a locally-based institution attracting a large number of day boys as well as boarders. The first directors were almost exclusively prominent members of the Anglo-Indian and military elite of Cheltenham society. In later years the very success of the College meant it lost much of its local character with more of the

directors being drawn from further afield, as were the boys themselves. Nevertheless it continued to carry out many of the aims of the founders sending many young men to service careers in India and the colonies. In many ways it was the public school ethos of patriotism and self-sacrifice that led to the ultimate sacrifice in the First World War in which many Cheltenham College boys were lost.

Chapter 8

PILLARS OF SOCIETY

The Anglo-Indians of Cheltenham, whilst having several things in common, were nevertheless a diverse group. The database reveals something of their wide range of backgrounds and social circumstances. There were the very wealthy living in substantial mansions with close links to the aristocracy at one end of the scale, while at the other extreme there were retired officers and widows living on fixed pensions supporting relatively modest households. In many ways this reflected what was the case in the middle class generally. Sources of wealth and income were diverse and the distribution between individuals was very unequal. The middle classes were no more homogenous than the working class.¹ As far as economic considerations alone are concerned, it is difficult to see how such a diverse group could be considered as one. However, social historians have recognised certain activities that point towards a definition of a middle-class culture and set of values that were common to the middle class as a whole.

For instance, Morris has argued that it was the network of voluntary associations which gave coherence to a middle class deeply fragmented by politics, religion and status. Voluntary societies were organized groups of people formed to further a common interest.² As such they encompassed an extensive range of activities from poor

¹ Morris, R.J. (ed.) *Class, power and social structure in British nineteenth-century towns* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986) p.17

² *Ibid.* p.97

relief, medical aid, moral reform, public order, education and thrift, to the diffusion of science and culture and the organisation of leisure. All of these types of activity existed at one time or another in Cheltenham during the nineteenth century. The characteristic institutional form of the nineteenth-century voluntary society was that of the subscriber democracy. Money was collected from members. The funds were distributed and activities organized by a committee and officers elected by the subscribers at the annual general meeting. Normally the result was rule by an oligarchy selected from the higher status members of the society. The president was often a high-status local leader, the secretary usually a solicitor, and the treasurer perhaps a local merchant or banker. The committee included a number of hard-working regular attenders.³

An example of such a voluntary society was the Cheltenham Literary and Philosophical Institution, which existed from 1833-60. It began when, in January 1833, Henry Davies of Montpellier Library addressed a small gathering at the Imperial Pump Room on the advantages of literary and philosophical institutions. The following month some 50-60 gentlemen formed the society and rules and regulations agreed, and officers and a committee were appointed.⁴ In 1836 a purpose-built establishment in the Promenade was opened. It was financed by the sale of £10 shares and by annual subscriptions of two guineas and one guinea. Management was in the hands of a council, consisting of a

³ Morris, R.J. 'Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites' *The Historical Journal*, vol. 26, no.1 pp.95-118 (1983) p.101

⁴ Lacock, J. 'The Cheltenham Literary and Philosophical Society, 1833-60' *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal* 15 (1999) pp.10 -15; *Journal* 16 (2000) pp18 -25

president, two vice presidents, an honorary secretary, a treasurer and 15 committee members, of whom 10 were to be proprietors (shareholders) and 5 ordinary members. The Institution attracted support from the town's large number of doctors, including William Ingledew and Richard Sherwood of *Suffolk Lawn* who had both seen service with the East India Company. As proprietors they were among the elite of the membership. There was also a number of prominent Anglo-Indians who were annual subscribers. These included Thomas Colledge of *Lauriston House* and James Allardyce, both of whom had been doctors with the East India Company. There were several army officers from the database in the list of members including six Indian army officers and seven British army officers. These included Major General George Swiney of the Bengal Artillery, who was also a founding director of Cheltenham College, and Major John Harman Brown of the 90th Regt. who had been ADC to Lord Clive in India. The list of members also has the names of five retired officers from the Royal Navy.⁵

During the Institution's existence nearly 600 lectures were put on, mainly on scientific, literary or fine art subjects, plus historical or biographical ones, with occasionally more bizarre offerings. The predominant scientific concerns were chemistry, physics, biology, botany, mineralogy and geology. Literary authors and their works, oratory and elocution, music, painting, sculpture and architecture, education, transport and public health, steam power, aerial navigation, the

⁵ *Eleventh Report of the Cheltenham Literary and Philosophical Institution for 1843-4* (Cheltenham: H Davies, Montpellier Library, 1844)

daguerreotype and electric telegraph, capital punishment, wit, humour, women in society, phrenology, mesmerism, dreams, autography, idolatry, the sanitary advantage of baths and Egyptian embalming were all covered in the lecture programme during the Institution's twenty-seven-year existence.⁶

All previous attempts to set up a literary and philosophical society had failed. The reasons for this were hinted at when Dr. Henry Boisragon addressed the first monthly meeting. He castigated Cheltenham commenting on 'watering place imbecility' and the 'grovelling appetite for sensual indulgence and the languid ennui of tasteless and vapid pursuits'.⁷ He accepted that Cheltenham could not compete with a university city, but he declared that Cheltenham had educated visitors, opulent residents, men of talent, of moral respectability, of scientific and literary taste; some with special interests and knowledge. He was consciously appealing to the intellectual elite of Cheltenham, whom he expected to be in the ranks of the middle-class professionals of the town. Hence the significant number of doctors in the membership. The retired Indian and British army officers were not quite so obviously potential members, but of those officers identified in the database, those from the more scientific sections of the army, such as artillery and engineers, were likely candidates.

The voluntary societies were diverse in their purpose, form, size and membership. Within the voluntary societies the elite and their followers from the rest of the middle class looked for solutions to the problems of

⁶ Lacock, J. 'The Cheltenham Literary and Philosophical Society'

⁷ *Ibid.*

urban society, both the specific crisis of epidemic, riot and economic slump, and the longer term trends which worried those with power and authority.⁸ Although Cheltenham may not have suffered on the same scale as some of the large industrial towns of the north, seasonal unemployment and poverty were present as much as in any other town of comparable size. The hardship brought about by lack of employment in the winter was an annual crisis which the voluntary societies attempted to alleviate:

Sympathy for the Poor throughout the various districts into which Cheltenham is divided, appears to exist to an extent this winter that we never knew before. The general fund for giving employment to those of the able-bodied who are out of work, goes on accumulating, and now amounts to nearly £500, which, under the direction of the Committee, who have devoted themselves to its administration, is judiciously applied in payment for labour to the most necessitous and deserving of the poor of the parish. The public collections at the various churches have been uniformly of the most liberal description: and with these relief in food, clothing and firing, is dispensed, as the necessity of the case appears to demand, under the direction of the ministers and churchwardens of each respective church. The Soup Kitchen of St James's opened its benevolent supplies on Wednesday.⁹

The voluntary societies were able to use the churches to broadcast appeals for donations for the 'most necessitous and deserving of the poor'. Appeals to the 'sympathy for the poor' disguise the real motives behind such charitable activity. In fact the motives for charitable activity were as diverse and plentiful as the charities themselves. A unifying impetus among those who tried to organize charitable giving to the poor, was the prevalent notion that the beneficent had the

⁸ Morris, R.J. *Voluntary Societies* p.109

⁹ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (January 4, 1845)

right, even the duty, to exert a moral influence upon the needy. According to this view the charitable gift was part of a reciprocal relationship in which the recipient of charity should be in debt to the giver and thus under obligation to offer something in return. As far as the donor was concerned this ought to be those moral characteristics usually associated with the status of being 'deserving'. Such status was often perceived as both a prerequisite for relief and also a desirable consequence of the charitable relationship itself.¹⁰

The moral tone of this type of charitable relationship is even more clearly stated in charities which sought to curb activities which were considered as sinful. An example of this is the Cheltenham Female Refuge set up in 1844, which aimed to 'rescue' prostitutes who were seen as a problem in Cheltenham as in other towns in Victorian Britain. The minutes of the committee set up to launch the project reveal the attitude of those concerned:

A Committee of gentlemen meeting together in Cheltenham for the purpose of considering in what way it may be best to rescue such of those unhappy females who are living on the wages of iniquity, and who may be desirous of seeking refuge from the ways of sin and misery. The sympathy and commiseration of several persons towards the unhappy class alluded to, as regards their temporal, but much more their spiritual state, having been greatly excited.¹¹

When the provisional committee was formed, it was decided to augment it by inviting other gentlemen to join their number. Two of those who were approached were Captain Frederick Robertson, ex

¹⁰ Kidd, A.J. & Roberts, K.W. (eds.) *City, class and culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985) p.52

¹¹ Gloucestershire Record Office, D5130/1

Royal Artillery, and Captain George Schreiber, ex 18th Dragoons. Later members of the committee included Lieutenant-Colonel Ward and Lieutenant-Colonel Hennell of the 27th Bombay Native Infantry, who apart from being treasurer was a director of Cheltenham College and a member of the Literary and Philosophical Institution. It was quite common for the same individuals to be involved in several voluntary societies at the same time. For instance, apart from being a trustee of the Female Refuge, George Schreiber was on the committees of the Cheltenham Clothing and Provident Society, for the 'employment of aged widows in needlework, and for the sale of their work', and the Cheltenham Loan Fund, to 'advance sums of money from £1 to £15, by way of loans, to small tradesmen and the labouring classes generally, being properly recommended as deserving such assistance'. He was also a churchwarden at Trinity Church.

The active involvement of a number of influential members of the middle class was an essential prerequisite for any voluntary society to establish itself. When a subscription scheme was launched to raise funds, it was normal for the committee members to be the first to contribute money and so endorse the project. This was particularly important in the case of charities who had to appeal to the public for donations. The annual winter appeal for the unemployed poor is a typical example:

A meeting of the committee appointed last winter to relieve the distress uniformly prevalent among the poor, when severe weather deprives the labouring man of employment, was held on Wednesday, in the Queen's Hotel, to consider as to the desirability of resuming its benevolent action; the intense frost of the previous ten days having necessarily aggravated the sufferings of the labouring classes....It was determined to place any funds that

might be raised, at the disposal of an executive committee of twelve gentlemen, who, in furtherance of the immediate object of their appointment, were empowered to make grants of such sums as they might consider advisable to the recently formed 'Charity Organisation Society', as to the securest and best medium for dispensing relief to the really deserving among the unemployed poor; and also at once to re-open, under the direction of Capt. Pakenham and Mr. Price, the soup kitchen which had, last winter, provided wholesome nourishment to numberless families in want of food. These arrangements having been entered into, a subscription list was at once opened, and between fifty and sixty pounds subscribed by the gentlemen present.¹²

These included Major-General Sir Frederick Abbott of the Bengal Corps of Engineers, Captain St. Clair Ford, 14th Bombay Native Infantry, as well as Captain Healey Thompson and Captain George Pakenham.

Alongside charities to provide short-term relief were groups concerned with more specific concerns that required sustained attention over a long period of time. One such group was associated with the temperance movement which existed in many nineteenth-century towns. In the case of Cheltenham the initiative was taken by Major Kington who opened a coffee tavern in 1870. This was followed by others, and he opened his fifth coffee tavern on 13th October 1879 at 2, *Tivoli Buildings*.¹³ Like so many similar movements, it was closely linked to the local churches:

A number of gentlemen connected with Christ Church, assisted by the subscription of their friends, having defrayed the first cost, with the philanthropic object of checking if possible the progress of intemperance by inducing the bread-winners of the neighbourhood to prefer it to the Public-house. The premises were

¹² *Cheltenham Looker-On* (December 13, 1879)

¹³ Torode, B. *The Story of Tivoli* (1998) p.28

formally opened on Tuesday last by the promoters of the movement, among whom were the Revs. Canon Fenn, J.A. Owen and G.E. Gibson, Capt. Tickell, RN, Capt. St. Clair-Ford, Mr. Tuke, Mr. Blatchley and Mr. Watson. ¹⁴

Christ Church situated in the wealthy Lansdown area of the town, where a large number of Anglo-Indians lived, had a long tradition of giving to worthy causes. In 1857 a total of £1303 5s 2d was collected for charity, which was proclaimed in the local press:

The wealthy character of the congregation worshipping in this church is, indeed, sufficiently indicated by the liberality shown in the support of the various district charities for which their aid is habitually solicited.¹⁵

Some of the best supported charities were those concerned for the welfare of children. In Cheltenham the most successful were the Female Orphan Asylum and the Industrial School. The Female Orphan Asylum was founded in 1806. Its aims were to:

board, lodge, clothe, and educate destitute female orphans, particularly those descended from respectable parents; to instil into their minds principles of religion and morality, to train them up in habits of industry, and cheerful obedience, to make them good household servants; and to endeavour to teach them that the lowest stations in life may be rendered respectable by good principle and industry¹⁶.

This is an unequivocal statement of the right of the middle class, under the supervision of the elite, to assert their identity and authority against and over the working class.¹⁷ It also an example of the assertion of the right to exert a moral influence upon the needy. It shows that

¹⁴ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (October 18, 1879)

¹⁵ *Ibid.* (January 17, 1857)

¹⁶ *Royal Cheltenham Directory* (1870)

¹⁷ Morris, R.J. 'Voluntary Societies' p.96

'respectability' was a prerequisite for relief and also a desirable consequence of the charitable relationship itself. It demonstrates how the charitable gift was part of a reciprocal relationship in which the recipient of charity was under obligation to offer something in return, which in this case was to become 'good household servants'. So these girls were destined to serve the needs of the middle class by providing a supply of domestic servants to work in their houses.

A similar institution existed for boys called the Cheltenham Industrial School. Its aim was 'to receive boys who would otherwise be idling about the street, or commencing a career of crime, and give them suitable employment, in the hope of being able to instil into their minds something of the first principles of Christianity'. In its appeals for funds it used a similar tone to the Orphan Asylum:

The support of the public is earnestly requested for this institution, in which there are now upwards of 40 boys, who are being trained in habits of regular industry, so as to, fit them to become good and useful members of society. ¹⁸

It provides another example of the middle-class desire to exert a moral influence over the working class. In doing so, the founders of these voluntary societies often sought the approval of the aristocracy. Although very few of the gentry or members of the aristocracy were involved in the normal affairs of voluntary societies, they were asked to back the venture by being named as patrons. For instance, the patron of the Industrial School was the Right Hon. The Earl of Ducie. This particularly appealed to the pseudo-gentry, who regarded aristocratic backing as the ultimate seal of approval, and consequently confirmed

¹⁸ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (January 10, 1874)

their own status within society. It did have the practical value of raising people's perception of the charity as being worthy of support. The committee members and officers were usually drawn from the elite of the middle class, thus reflecting the hierarchical nature of society.

One of the most important, and ultimately most successful, of the voluntary societies was the Cheltenham General Hospital, formerly known as the Cheltenham Dispensary and Casualty Hospital. It always had high status patrons, such as Lord Sherborne and the Earl of Ellenborough, and its governing body included representatives from the elite of the middle class. Its original constitution was in keeping with the hierarchical membership recognised by Morris as a feature of the voluntary societies.¹⁹ The governing committee consisted of subscribers paying two guineas, entitling them to two votes at elections and twelve tickets of recommendation. Among its sometime committee members were prominent Anglo-Indians such as Colonel Burns of the 7th Madras Native Infantry and son of Robert Burns, Lieutenant-General George Swiney of the Bengal Artillery and Captain J.S. Iredell of the 15th Bombay Native Infantry. Annual subscribers, paying one guinea, were entitled to one vote and six tickets of recommendation.²⁰ Not only did membership of the governing committee confirm their high status, but it also, to some extent, conferred high status on the committee members. This was particularly true of long-standing members, as this example from much later shows:

¹⁹ Morris, R.J. 'Voluntary Societies' p.102

²⁰ *Report of the Annual Committee of the Cheltenham Dispensary and Casualty Hospital, 1835* (GRO HO3 8/1)

A token of esteem and appreciation of long and untiring service was presented, on Monday last, to Lt. Col. Croker-King JP, who during a period of over a quarter of a century, has successively served the Cheltenham General Hospital as Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, and finally President. When he was appointed President, he was re-elected annually for 20 years.²¹

Many of the voluntary societies in Cheltenham in the nineteenth century had Anglo-Indians and retired British and Naval officers sitting on their committees (Table 8.1). Their names were prominently printed in the trade directories which always included lists of the voluntary societies. Publicity was also given to donors when subscriptions were opened. This example from the appeal for funds for the Industrial School shows how this worked:

A list will shortly be published of donations and subscriptions, for which books have, by kind permission, been placed in the County of Gloucester Bank, at Mr. Williams's Library, at the Montpellier Library, and the Bible Depot, 7, Clarence Street, or they may be paid to the Hon. Secretary, who will gladly give any information that may be desired.²²

As the number of subscribers grew, lists of the donors would be published in the press, sometimes even stating the amounts given by each person. Participation in the charitable activities of the voluntary societies was intentionally a very public affair. Having one's name listed automatically associated you with the other people on the list. Sometimes the names would be arranged in a strict hierarchy either according to the amount given or social precedence. Officers were listed with their rank, which tended to make them stand out from the

²¹ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (May 10, 1913)

²² *Ibid.* (January 10, 1874)

Table 8.1

Public and Voluntary Work

	Town Commissioners	JP	CLPI Members	General Hospital Committee	Cheltenham College Directors	New Club Members
Indian Army officers	7	3	6	6	6	76
British Army officers	3	1	7	1	4	25
Navy officers	0	1	5	0	1	11
Civil service & medical	6	0	7	1	3	1
Total	16	5	25	8	14	113

names of civilians. So, although the number of army and naval officers were usually in the minority, they often seemed more significant than numerically would be justified.

The voluntary societies provided the stage on which the role of the gentleman could be performed. What was most clearly expected of a gentleman was public service, given voluntarily and if necessary at his own expense. In return he was accorded immense respect and his authority and privileges were accepted.²³ As archetypal gentlemen, army officers were expected to fulfil this role, especially when in retirement they had the time to devote to worthy causes. This eulogy from an obituary proclaims the virtues associated with the gentlemanly ideal:

The death of Maj. Gen. J.W. Frederick Bean which occurred on Monday will be very widely regretted; the deceased gentleman's long residence in the town, combined with the interest he took in many of its philanthropic institutions having made him known and respected beyond the circle of his personal friends. In his early life the deceased officer had a close connection with Cheltenham, which was renewed when, on retiring from military service, he took up his residence here. His loss will be particularly felt at Christ Church, of which he was Warden, and of the organizations connected with which he was an active supporter. He was also a member of the Board of Governors of the General Hospital and of other committees. ²⁴

The concept of gentility functioned as an instrument of social discipline and was adopted by the pseudo-gentry as a means to preserve social leadership and deference. Moreover, in a deferential society it was hoped that some of the attributes of gentility would rub off on those

²³ Harrison, J.F.C. *The Early Victorians* (London: Weidentfeld and Nicolson, 1971) p.99

²⁴ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (January 15, 1898)

lower down the social scale. In their philanthropic form, the voluntary societies enabled the middle class to assert their identity and authority against and over the working class and to adopt a paternalistic attitude towards the poor.

The other main type of voluntary society was concerned with the organization of leisure. As far as Cheltenham was concerned, this had a long history going back to Regency times when it prided itself as a town of pleasure. Some of the activities provided, such as 'taking the waters' at the town's spas, were commercial undertakings and not organized by voluntary societies. But in order to promote, and advertise, their enterprises businessmen often borrowed some practices from the voluntary societies. An example of this was publishing in the press a list of 'subscribers' who had put money into their activity. For instance a list of subscribers to the Summer Band was placed in the *Cheltenham Looker-On*.²⁵ Among the names were several army officers including Captain Fendall of the 20th Bengal Native Infantry, Colonel Andrew Campbell of the Bombay Artillery, Colonel Thomas of the Bombay Light Cavalry and Captain Kirwan, Cheltenham's official 'Master of Ceremonies'. It was hoped that seeing these names of prominent members of the middle class would encourage others to put money forward or buy tickets. It is not known whether the subscribers gave permission for their names to be published, but the activities involved were usually of a fairly public nature such as admission to the spas, gardens, dances and other forms of entertainment. This is a typical advertisement:

Sums of £100 entitle Purchasers to the use of the Walks and Waters, and admission to all public entertainments in the open air for the

²⁵ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (May 7, 1853)

purchaser and family for ever. The following noblemen, gentry and tradesmen have already purchased the above privilege.²⁶

There followed a list of names including some well known army officers, such as Captain Kirwan, Captain Frobisher of the 55th Bengal Native Infantry and Captain Iredell of the 15th Bombay Native Infantry. The same names appeared regularly in the lists of committee members and supporters of the events organised by voluntary societies. There was a Committee of Public Amusements which held meetings at the Assembly Rooms to organize a programme of social events and entertainments. These included, in January 1850 for example, three Grand Concerts, a Juvenile Ball, Amateur Theatricals, the Annual Ball, the Winter Ball and Card Assembly and the Master of Ceremonies' Ball. Admission to these events was by subscription, and the names of committee members and subscribers were published. At all these events army and navy officers were actively involved, and in 1849 the chairman of the Committee of Public Amusements was Admiral Sir J. Coghill, a highly respected member of the middle-class elite.

The Amateur Theatricals was particularly popular with the officers and the extent of their contribution can be judged from the fact that their presence was needed to put on performances:

The Second Amateur Dramatical Performance, appointed to take place at the Royal Old Wells, on the 4th next month, is now an uncertain fixture - two or three of the gentlemen who were to have taken principal characters in the pieces announced having been summoned to join their regiment earlier than they had anticipated.²⁷

²⁶ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (October 20, 1849)

²⁷ *Ibid.* (January 10, 1857)

A connection with the philanthropic voluntary societies was provided by linking some of the events with specific charities. The Amateur Theatricals in January 1850 was for the 'Benefit of the General Hospital and Dispensary'. The Annual Ball in the same month was for the 'Benefit of the Female Asylum and School of Industry'. So the people who attended the public entertainments could also feel they were contributing to a worthy cause. Even while they were enjoying themselves, the middle class could claim they were fulfilling their philanthropic duty.

It would be wrong to assume that all the Anglo-Indians and army and naval officers were members of voluntary societies or took a major role in the life of the town. The database suggests that relatively few were actively involved. Of those who were engaged in voluntary activity, the Indian army officers were clearly in the majority, numbering twice as many as the British army officers. This is not surprising since there were many more Indian than British officers in Cheltenham. It may also be the case that the Anglo-Indians had more reason to join voluntary societies. When they retired to Cheltenham they were likely to have been out of Britain for many years. They may have found it easier to settle in new surroundings by joining one or more of the variety of societies available. It would also have been a way of continuing the way of life that they had been used to in India. Club life was very much part of Anglo-Indian society and activities such as amateur theatricals were popular in the cantonments of British India. The earliest of a succession of exclusive clubs in Cheltenham was the Gloucestershire and Cheltenham Club 'for the gentry and nobility of the County of Gloucestershire'. Another exclusive club, known as the Imperial because it occupied the former Imperial Hotel was founded in 1856.

The Imperial Club was succeeded by the New Club which in 1874 built for itself spacious premises in the Promenade. Limited to 400, it was very popular with army and navy officers, who no doubt, liked its exclusive reputation (Table 8.1). According to the database, there were at least 113 members who were army and navy officers; many of whom were retired officers of the East India Company.

It may also have helped some Anglo-Indians to maintain the status that they had enjoyed in India. The only difference was that before retiring their status was derived from their rank and occupation, whereas in Cheltenham their status could depend to some extent upon their role in the voluntary societies of their choice. It is significant that participation in a voluntary society was not dependent upon their rank in the army or navy. The database shows that as many captains and majors were involved as colonels and generals. However most of the key positions held by Anglo-Indians and other officers were generally in the hands of the higher ranks. There were notable exceptions, such as Captain George Schreiber and Captain St. Clair Ford, and these tended to be men who were involved in several charitable institutions or who had lived in Cheltenham for many years. For instance Captain St. Clair Ford retired from the Indian Army in 1863 when he was only 33 years old, spending the rest of his life in Cheltenham, where he took on the role of a paternalistic squire. In this role he was consciously continuing the approach that he had adopted in India where he had set up a school and been involved in irrigation schemes.²⁸ Another pillar of Cheltenham society was Captain James Shrubbs Iredell who was similarly a long-standing resident:

²⁸ *Scraps from Indian and other journals* being extracts concerning the work of Lieut. St Clair Ford (Cheltenham Local History Collection, 1854)

Capt. James Shrubb Iredell, Bombay Army, died at Cobourg House, aged 77. Settling in Cheltenham, on his return from India, nearly 40 years ago, the active habits of Capt. Iredell soon brought him into connection with the Public Institutions of the Town; and when, in 1840, the Propriety College was projected he became one of its most zealous and earnest promoters, and was chosen as one of its original directors, and thenceforward continued a member of its board until 1862...Besides the active part he took in the establishment of the college Capt Iredell cheerfully identified himself with whatever had for its object the improvement of the town, of which he was an old Commissioner for nearly twenty years previous to 1852, when the Act at present in force extinguished the old Board: he was also for many years a member of the Committee of management of the Cheltenham General hospital, and a vice-president of that admirable charity.²⁹

The role of Town Commissioner was an important one before they came to an end in 1852. They were chosen on a fairly wide basis, the only qualification being ownership of property of £400 or the enjoyment of not less than £40 in annual rents.³⁰ They were empowered to raise a rate which was used to maintain the safety and cleanliness of the roads. Many of Cheltenham's important residents were Town Commissioners, including some of the prominent Anglo-Indians, including well-known figures such as Captain James Shrubb Iredell and Major James Glencairn Burns. At least thirteen are recorded on the database, whereas only three British army officers are known to have Town Commissioners. After the passing of the Improvement Act in 1852, their participation seemed to diminish and it appears that only solicitors and tradesman could be induced to serve.³¹

²⁹ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (May 18, 1872)

³⁰ Hart, G. *A History of Cheltenham* p.241

³¹ *Ibid.* p.208

Another area which offered opportunities to be involved in local affairs was the exercise of the franchise at general elections. There is no doubt that the majority of male Anglo-Indians in Cheltenham qualified for the vote, but the evidence in the poll books suggests that many did not choose to exercise their right (see Tables 8.2 and 8.3). In the elections of 1847 and 1852 less than thirty Anglo-Indians registered their votes. The Indian army officers accounted for around eight per cent of the middle-class votes, but the Indian civil service and medical officials' votes amounted to as much as four per cent in 1847 despite being a much smaller group. This was probably a result of many of the latter group being doctors with long-standing practices in the town, and therefore more likely to take an interest in the fortunes of Cheltenham. Some of the Indian army officers, having lived for many years abroad and used to a more paternalistic and authoritarian regime, may have felt excluded from the exercise of middle-class democracy, either through inclination or habit. More surprisingly, the British army officers' share of the vote was around seven per cent, almost the same as the Indian army officers, despite being generally much fewer in number. So years of absence while serving in India may have been the crucial factor disinclining some Anglo-Indians to vote compared to their compatriots in the British army and Royal Navy. The 1847 and 1852 elections also highlighted the differences in political affiliation, the majority of the votes of the military officers and civilian officials going to the Conservative candidate Sir Willoughby Jones.³² Craven Berkeley, the Liberal candidate received little support from these groups

³² *The Cheltenham Poll Book being an alphabetical list of the names of persons who voted at the General Election of a member for the borough of Cheltenham, July 30th 1847* (Cheltenham: J.J. Hadley, 1847)

Table 8.2

The General Election of 1847

	Indian Army Officers		British Army Officers		Naval Officers		Indian Civil Service and Medical Officials		Total Votes Cast*		
Sir Willoughby Jones (Conservative)	14	10%	16	11%	8	6%	7	5%	45	32%	142
Craven Berkeley (Liberal)	5	6%	1	1%	1	1%	2	2%	9	10%	89
Total	19	8%	17	7%	9	4%	9	4%	54	24%	231

Source: *The Cheltenham Poll Book being an alphabetical list of the names of persons who voted at the General Election of a member for the borough of Cheltenham, July 30th 1847* (Cheltenham: J.J. Hadley, 1847)

Table 8.3

The General Election of 1852

	Indian Army Officers		British Army Officers		Naval Officers		Indian Civil Service and Medical Officials		Total Votes Cast*		
Sir Willoughby Jones (Conservative)	15	8%	14	8%	6	3%	4	2%	39	21%	184
Craven Berkeley (Liberal)	6	4%	5	4%	2	1%	1	1%	14	10%	135
Total	21	7%	19	6%	8	3%	5	2%	53	17%	319

Source: *The Poll Book of the Electors for the Borough of Cheltenham who voted at the recent election* (Cheltenham: W Paine, 1852)

* Number of votes cast by 'gentlemen', professionals and military officers.

although in 1847 the Indian officers accounted for approximately six per cent of the middle-class vote as opposed to the one per cent contributed by the British army officers. This may have had something to do with the lower social background of some of the Indian army officers, although more British army officers voted for Craven Berkeley in 1852. Despite the Berkeleys' passion for hunting and horse-racing, in both 1847 and 1852 only ten per cent of Craven Berkeleys' middle-class votes came from the retired military and civilian officers. No doubt the Cheltenham Liberals alienated these groups to some extent by their support for a Radical agenda of extension of the franchise and the vote by ballot.³³

Summary

The main high-status situations in the voluntary societies and other positions of power in the town, as far as the Anglo-Indians were concerned, were amongst long-standing residents of Cheltenham who owed their influence either to their rank in society or their years of service to the community. In many respects this was not very different from the middle class of Cheltenham in general, where a few men emerged as leaders of the community, often combining their role in the voluntary societies with their official role as JPs or Town Commissioners. Some of the middle-class elite were able to spread their influence without actually getting involved in the running of the voluntary societies. In this respect they were closer to the aristocracy, who gave their support to charitable institutions in other ways. An example was Thomas Fortescue who retired to Cheltenham after a

³³ Hart, G. *A History of Cheltenham* p.231

successful career in the East India Company Civil Service in Bengal. His obituary shows how he was regarded by his contemporaries:

Throughout the long period of Mr. Fortescue's connection with Cheltenham he exercised unbounded hospitality, and won the respect and esteem of all classes by his liberality and readiness at all times to promote whatever conduced to their enjoyment, or could advance the prosperity of the town whose public institutions rarely, if ever, appealed to him in vain. His departure from amongst us six years ago was felt at the time to be a serious loss to Society, for there was no one possessing the same extensive connections among the wealthy and the titled of the land, animated by the same prosperity, prepared to occupy his place; while to the poor, who experienced of his unostentatious bounty, his loss was irreparable.³⁴

The Anglo-Indians in Cheltenham touched on several aspects of the life of the town as far as the public institutions were concerned. The Anglo-Indians played a significant role in voluntary societies, but only the New Club was heavily dependent on their support. Voluntary societies would probably have existed, as in other towns, without this particular section of the middle class. However, there is no doubt that certain individuals, mainly from the elite of the Anglo-Indians, having made their home in Cheltenham, were determined to take an active role in the life of the town. This meant that the voluntary societies benefited from their experience of leadership and administration acquired in the service of the East India Company or, in later years, the Crown. It enabled the Anglo-Indians to become identified with the middle class generally, while retaining their distinctive identity, which remained remarkably constant throughout the Victorian period. Remaining an exclusive minority, they never dominated Cheltenham, but they did contribute to a large extent to its particular ambience.

³⁴ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (August 24, 1872)

Chapter 9

RICHES FROM THE EAST

In her book on the history of Cheltenham, Gwen Hart asserted that it was 'very largely on the foundation of the wealth acquired in the East that the new Cheltenham was developed'.¹ In the eighteenth century the wealth acquired in the East was associated with the newly-rich returned from India, the 'nabobs' as they were called, from a corruption of the word 'nawab'.² Once they had made their fortune, the merchant, administrator and soldier were anxious to quit India as quickly as possible so that they might live the life of a gentleman back home.³ They had an infamous reputation since gentlemen with pedigree and pretensions were offended by the entry into their world of a group of *nouveau riches* who not only aped their manners but could outspend them.⁴ Macaulay described the nabob as:

an Anglo-Indian chief, dissolute, ungenerous, and tyrannical, ashamed of the humble friends of his youth, hating the aristocracy yet childishly eager to be numbered among them, squandering his wealth on panders and flatterers, tricking out his chairmen with the most costly hothouse flowers, and astounding the ignorant with jargon about rupees, lacs and jagshires.⁵

In particular the nabobs tried to buy themselves into Parliament as a first step to gentility and were accused of forcing up the price of a seat to intolerable levels. Paul Benfield (1741-1810), a Cheltenham

¹ Hart, G. *A History of Cheltenham* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1965) p.187

² Edwardes, M. *Warren Hastings* (London: Hart-Davis, 1976) p.37

³ Edwardes, M. *The Nabobs at Home*. (London: Constable, 1991) p.28

⁴ James, L. *Raj: the making and unmaking of British India* (Uxbridge: TSP, 1998) p. 47

⁵ Quoted in Kincaid, D. *British Social Life in India, 1608-1937* (London: Routledge, 1973) p.91

shopkeeper's son was in many ways the archetypal, unscrupulously corrupt, eighteenth-century nabob. Going out to Madras as a civil architect and engineer, he transformed himself into a Company contractor and became one of the principal creditors of the Nawab of the Carnatic. He was reported to have amassed a fortune of £500,000, and making full use of the system of rotten boroughs, he bought a parliamentary seat as MP for Cricklade and held it mainly as an absentee.⁶ He later bought a seat in Parliament as MP for Malmesbury and an estate in Hertfordshire. From 1793 until 1802 he was MP for Shaftesbury, another seat for which he had bought control. After the turn of the century, however, his fortunes collapsed, and he died as a bankrupt in France. The activities of people like Benfield caused the Earl of Chatham to pronounce this in the House of Lords:

For some years past, there has been an influx of wealth into the country which has been attended by many fatal consequences, because it has not been the regular, natural produce of labour and industry. The riches of Asia have been poured in upon us, and have brought with them not only Asiatic luxury, but I fear, Asiatic principles of government. Without connection, without any natural interest in the soil, the importers of foreign gold have forced their way into Parliament by such a torrent of private corruption as no private hereditary fortune could resist!⁷

Pay and Pensions

However, by the nineteenth century opportunities to shake the 'pagoda tree' in India from which gold coins (pagodas) would fall were coming to an end. The heady, rapacious days of Clive gave way to an era of duty, service and the high moral ground.⁸ There were people of conspicuous wealth that had been acquired in India, such

⁶ Moorhouse, G. *India Britannica* (London: Collins, 1983) p.50

⁷ Quoted in Edwardes, M. *Warren Hastings* p. 37

⁸ Wild, A. *The East India Company* (London: Harper Collins, 1999) p.98

as Warren Hastings, who visited Cheltenham in its early days when it was a fashionable spa . However, unless they chose to become residents, very little of their wealth benefited the town in the long run.

Any contribution from the Anglo-Indians to the economic future of the town was more likely to come from a more secure, and sustainable, source. The chance of a competence in return for service became the rule. No doubt, the sons of the middle class who accepted positions in India in the nineteenth century were equally as attracted by the lure of a large income as the 'nabobs' had been. But the attraction had now become a large salary rather than the prospect of unlimited fortune, and entailed a career-long commitment to life in India. The salary was not so large as to stir ambitions of saving enough in short order to return to England with the means to live like an aristocrat. Englishmen directed their attention to the rewards of steady service in India rather than to the more elusive ones offered by English society and politics.⁹ This meant that, instead of hoping for country estates and seats in Parliament, most Anglo-Indians in the nineteenth century were content to retire with a pension and the means to spend the evening of their lives in a genteel resort.

Despite their more modest expectations, some Anglo-Indians found it difficult to avoid living beyond their means. This was particularly the case if they fell into debt. Often young officers would get into debt at a very early stage in their careers. One result of the officers being drawn predominantly from the less affluent sections of the British middle class was that junior officers were unable to meet the expenses of their

⁹ Hutchins, F.G. *The Illusion of Permanence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967) p. 107

appointments. The young subaltern on being commissioned had to borrow the money, either from firms of army agents at an interest of about 10 per cent per annum, or from Indian moneylenders who charged about 24 per cent. Life insurance, demanded by the army agents before they would advance money, added another 3 or 4 per cent to their terms. A subaltern could scarcely pay the interest on such loans, far less the capital. An officer could not begin to clear his debts until he reached the rank and pay of a major, which is one reason why so many officers stayed in the Army in order to reach that rank.¹⁰

Not every officer chose to serve in India because of lack of money, but whatever their means many young officers felt obliged to be generous in their hospitality. Sir Charles Napier, Commander-in Chief in India, was very critical of the extravagance in officers' messes:

The damning sin of the magnificent armies in India (Queen's and Company's), is an outrageous and vulgar luxury. I say "vulgar" because we soldiers (like frogs in the fable) burst ourselves in trying to live like men of 20,000 a year in landed property! We, who in private life could hardly buy a pint of beer, must drink the most costly winesIf we can save a parcel of youngsters from ruin we shall not sleep the worse. ¹¹

Many officers were preoccupied with trying to increase their pay from allowances. A lucky few obtained extra-regimental appointments where their talents could be and were, put to good use. Officers who did not find staff appointments - either at headquarters or with the irregular regiments or in civil employment - had to find other ways of improving their pay. The most lucrative method was to find a post at one of the stations deemed to be on active service establishment,

¹⁰ Heathcote, T.A. *The Indian Army: The Garrison of British Imperial India, 1822-1922*. (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1974) p.127

¹¹ *The Times* (February 3, 1851)

where 'batta' or field service allowance, was payable. The result was that regiments at full batta stations were fully officered and those at half batta stations had usually only their colonel, who was always paid full batta by virtue of his rank, and the adjutant and the quartermaster, who both received extra allowances for being regimental staff officers. All the other posts on the establishments were held by officers on furlough or on civil or staff employment.¹² It has been calculated that only 3 out of every 5 British officers were normally with their troops. As Jacob, a Bombay officer, wrote: 'Every [British] officer of a native regiment of the line now endeavours to get away from his corps, to escape from regimental duty by every effort in his power. The *refuse* only is left.'¹³ The vast majority of the Company's officers who stayed to serve with their regiments were second rate and conscious of the fact. Promotion was entirely by seniority and grindingly slow.

Even those who were more careful with their money sometimes found it difficult to pay their way. In letters to friends and relatives many officers give the impression of being obsessed with financial problems. This extract from a letter by Captain Hardy to his wife in England in 1863 is typical:

Look at me, after 23 years of it, and never a gambler or extravagant, I have not at the present moment £100 to put my hand on.¹⁴

When Hardy retired in 1870 he was made a Colonel so his financial worries may have been eased somewhat, but many retired officers found it impossible to maintain the same standard of living as they had

¹² Heathcote *The Indian Army* p.135

¹³ Glover *An Assemblage of Indian Army Soldiers and Uniforms* (London: Perpetua Press, 1973) p.20

¹⁴ *Hardy Papers* (Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge)

enjoyed in India. Complaints about the difficulty of saving money for retirement were common, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, when it was remarked that the cost of living in India was rising:

It is a subject for regret that Government is not more open-handed to its retired servants, for pensions settled years ago are now quite inadequate; indeed pay in India appears to be far more liberal than it really is, for so much has to be expended on the increased number of servants necessary there to counteract heat, for conveyances, and in a multitude of special ways unknown in England that little margin is left for saving, and the Anglo-Indian finds himself at home with an income barely sufficient to procure what are termed necessaries, to say nothing of so-called luxuries which in his case are often necessaries. Living in India is much dearer than it was, hence there is little chance of putting by to meet a dearer rate of living than formerly prevailed at home - while the pensions remain the same.¹⁵

What this meant on a personal level is apparent from contemporary novels, such as this example dating from the beginning of the twentieth century:

It was rather rough luck after thirty-five years of hard labour to come home and find one couldn't afford to enjoy oneself! He reviewed the past and wondered rather guiltily if he had always spent too much money on himself? - only over the shooting perhaps, and it had not seemed much at the time, there had always been the pay to meet expenses. And it was a fact that he and Emily had come home free of debt, which was more than could be said for many retired Anglo-Indians with average families, who lived like gentlefolk and not disgraced their service by sordid habits and hospitality that was obviously grudging, if they entertained at all.¹⁶

¹⁵ Hunter, GY (Surgeon, Bombay Army) *Health in India. Medical Hints as to who should go there : how to retain health whilst there and on returning home.* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co, 1873) p.98

¹⁶ Perrin, A. *The Anglo-Indians* (London: Methuen, 1912) p.145

Although this may have been typical, many young men seeking adventure were attracted to service in India, especially for those who would not normally be able to afford the life style available there; and this continued to be the case well into the twentieth century:

You see, the Indian Army had an attraction for the British officer because it was the poor man's army. You didn't have to have private means. You could get a marvellous life in India with a chance of active service, fighting Pathans on the Frontier. That was the attraction of the Indian Army, and there was always quite a lot of competition to get into it.¹⁷

Even if Anglo-Indian army officers were frequently been short of cash, members of the Indian Civil Service enjoyed good pay and prospects of 'steady advancement' - £300 or more a year to start with, and several times as much quite soon. As well as offering satisfying work and status, there was 'liberal and judicious provision for retirement at an early age'.¹⁸ The young civilian was said to be a match worth 'three hundred a year alive or dead'. An annuity scheme whereby each man contributed four per cent of his salary and on retirement, with twenty-five years service, the Company would buy him an annuity of £1,000 a year. As to widows and children, they were covered by another scheme, by which the widow was entitled at least to the celebrated three hundred a year, while there was an allowance for each child.¹⁹ This is the standard of life an Indian civil servant could expect to be able to afford in India:

¹⁷ Brigadier John Dinwiddie: www.lib.lsu.edu/special/exhibits/india (Louisiana State University, 1996)

¹⁸ Reader, W.J. *Professional Men, the Rise of the Professional classes in Nineteenth- Century England*. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966) p.92

¹⁹ Mason, P. *The Men who ruled India* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963) Vol 1 p.290

A civilian enjoys the inestimable comfort of freedom from pecuniary troubles. ..Tom's assistant-magistrate keeps four horses and lives well within as many hundred rupees a month. If a man puts off his marriage to within a year or two of the age at which he may take a wife in England without being disinherited, he may always have a good house and plenty of servants, his champagne and his refrigerator, his carriage and buggy, an Arab for the Mem Sahib and for himself a hundred guinea horse that will face a pig without flinching. He will be able to portion his daughters and send his son to Harrow and Oxford; he may retire to a villa at Esher or a farm in his native county with a pension of a thousand a year and as much more from the interests of his savings.²⁰

Retirement provision for the Anglo-Indian army officers was not as generous but better than were current in the Queen's service. Pensions varied according to the rank and length of service of officers. Under the Company's rules every officer who had served 25 years in India (including one furlough) could retire on the full pay of his rank, computed at infantry rates. These rules, although allowing officers to retire without loss of pay at the age of 43 or thereabouts, did not oblige or even encourage them to do so. On the contrary, because of the substantial difference one promotion would make, men stayed on as long as they saw any chance of obtaining it. In the East India Company's army promotion went by regimental seniority in strict succession. This method made promotion extremely slow (except in time of war or pestilence) and allowed men who were unfitted by age or physical infirmity or even military incompetence to attain senior rank. The average time for a cornet or ensign to reach the rank of lieutenant was 7 years, and from lieutenant to captain 15 years. An officer would therefore be about 40 on obtaining his captaincy, and might well be prepared to serve on until 50 to become a major. In

²⁰ G.O. Trevelyan quoted in Mason, P. *The Men who ruled India* Vol 2 p.94

order to encourage officers to leave, a system grew up known as the 'subscription system'. An officer who wished to leave would be paid to go by his juniors, who thus all moved one place nearer to promotion. A substantial lump sum was thus given to the retiring officer to compensate him for the higher pay and pension he would have received had he stayed on to wait his turn for promotion. Proper rates were drawn up, and each officer subscribed in accordance with the amount laid down for his rank.²¹

Many men took their pension, plus the lump sum subscribed by their brother officers, and retired on reaching that rank, but those who stayed on could expect to become lieutenant-colonels after another six years or so, and the prospect of the rewards to be gained for this comparatively short time retained many elderly officers on the active list, as there was no compulsory age for retirement.²² Hence, of the 590 Indian army officers on the database, 155 became generals. By no means all Anglo-Indian officers were elderly when they finally retired. Bruce Seton of the Bombay Native Infantry, for example, retired after almost 29 years service in India. Born in Calcutta in 1804, he was under 50 when he retired as a Lieutenant-Colonel with a pension of £365.²³ Returning to England in 1846, he spent the next thirty years in Cheltenham and left £20,000 on his death.²⁴

To supplement the official benefits, contributory funds were set up by the civil and military officers in each presidency. For instance, at least 159 officers in the database contributed to the Madras Military Fund,

²¹ Heathcote, T.A. *The Indian Army* p.132

²² *Ibid.* p.151

²³ OIOC: L/MIL/10/108 *Register of Bengal, Madras and Bombay officer's retirements*

²⁴ OIOC: L/AG/33/3 *Register of Wills*

which was subscribed to by officers in the Madras Presidency. There were similar schemes for Bengal and Bombay. Officers paid a lump sum on joining and on each subsequent promotion. One of the main purposes of such schemes was to provide for an officer's dependants. On the officer's death, pensions were provided for his widow and legitimate children. Sons benefited until their twenty-first birthday, and daughters until they married. Widows' pensions were payable from the fund in accordance with the rank of deceased subscribers. The widow of a colonel received Rs. 238.6 each year in India, or £312 18s 0d in England. In the 1861 Census returns for Cheltenham several widows of Indian army officers are described as 'fundholders', although sometimes they are referred to as 'pensioners' or 'annuitants'.

Whatever the state of their personal finances, virtually all those who left Britain did so with the expectation of returning.²⁵ This is despite the fact that the average officer of the Indian Service was able to enjoy a far higher standard of living than that to which he could have aspired at home.²⁶ It has been suggested that India became, not a place where one could earn enough money to return to England and live as an aristocrat, but a place where one could live like an aristocrat on limited means.²⁷ This, however, did not stop returning Anglo-Indians from attempting to provide themselves with at least a comfortable retirement, with at least the outward signs of a genteel lifestyle.

²⁵ Marshall, P.J. 'British Immigration into India', Emmer, P.C. and Moerner, M. (eds.) *European Expansion and migration: Essays on the intercontinental Migration from Africa, Asia and Europe* (1992) p.184

²⁶ Heathcote, T.A. *The Indian Army* p.116

²⁷ Hutchins, F.G. *The Illusion of Permanence* p.198

Middle-class Incomes

The degree of 'gentility' depended to a large extent on the amount of money one had available to spend on accommodation and servants and all the other trappings of respectable society. Nevertheless, to be called genteel you did not necessarily have to be rich. It was possible to gain entry or remain in genteel society on a fairly modest income. A lack of funds could be overlooked if one was related to a family of quality, preferably from the landed gentry. There was however a minimum income which was necessary to be a member of the pseudo-gentry. Due to insufficient data on incomes for the nineteenth century, statistics on the average middle-class income, not to mention the problem of defining what was considered middle-class, are difficult to find. The range of opinions during the period was wide:

As the result of extended observation during three years experience of home life, I am inclined to place the minimum income at £500 per annum. No married man, who in the tropics has held the position of "an officer and a gentleman", can secure the comforts of home life, in a house of his own, with an income of less amount than this; and even with this sum, attention to economy is indispensable, or he will not "make both ends meet", as the expression hath it. Placing his rent at about one-seventh of his income, which is regarded by those versed in these matters to be about the proper proportion, he will be enabled to secure a respectable house and all the necessaries and most of the comforts of life. This allows for the support and education of one child; if there be more than this, from £80 to £100 should be allowed for each additional member of the family. ²⁸

In general terms a minimum income of £300 may have been representative of the pseudo-gentry as a whole, although there must

²⁸ Waring, EJ *The Tropical resident at Home: letters addressed to Europeans returning from India and the colonies on subjects connected with their health and general welfare* (London: J Churchill, 1866) p.233

have been wide variations. One of the attractions of marrying members of the Indian Civil Service was that they were said to be worth £300 dead or alive, which represented the minimum pension that civil servants received on retirement.²⁹ A middle-class dignity could hardly be sustained on an income much lower than £300 per annum. Such an income could run to a commodious house and at least three indoor servants. The really successful professional or commercial man might earn anything up to £1000 or more, in which case he was likely to maintain a horse and carriage with groom.³⁰ But whatever your income, to be accepted into genteel society one had to at least give the outward appearance of being reasonably well-off with independent means. No doubt many found this difficult, especially those on fixed incomes, but the concept of genteel poverty implies that having a certain level of income was not the only measure of respectability.

Homes fit for heroes

One of the first requirements on returning to England would be to find suitable accommodation. Some of the less well-off had to content themselves with renting an apartment, which could risk social exclusion from more fortunate members of the pseudo-gentry. The constraints of having to maintain an appropriate life-style are illustrated in contemporary fiction such as this example from 1842:

My friends, - that is to say my relations - are 'very genteel', though some of them being younger branches of good families, are not very rich, consequently have the utmost dread and abhorrence of contact with limited means, or any thing that looks like it, and

²⁹ O'Malley, L.S.S. *The Indian Civil Service, 1601-1930* (London: John Murray, 1931) p.70

³⁰ Tosh, J. *A Man's Place* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1999) p.12

acknowledge no relatives, who do not live in such and such houses, in such and such parts of the town. When I arrived, in my ignorance, I wished to take a small house, suitable to my income; you know I have no one to live for but myself, and by so doing, hoped to be able to see my friends at dinner as usual; but I was told, "If you take that sort of house, nobody will go near you - nobody ever goes to that end of town, - nobody lives there." I was forced to consent notwithstanding the disadvantages of a northerly exposure. After inquiring into the rents, and finding them beyond what I intended to give, I wished to content myself with a flat (or floor as it is called in England), as sufficiently large for my accommodation - here again I was opposed. Flats were exclusively the habitations of old annuitants, and there were none of my friends who would like to be seen coming out of a '*common stair*', to avoid which odium I was forced into a '*self-contained house*', much larger than a single person required, and demanding more servants than I had intended.³¹

Cheltenham was able to offer retired Anglo-Indians a choice of property in the middle-class quarters of the town. Much of this housing had been built by speculators in response to the demand for accommodation brought about by the growth in Cheltenham's popularity as a spa. When the spa trade declined it released vacant property onto the market. Originally intended to be let for the season to a fashionable clientele, attractive terraces and villas were now available to those who wanted elegant living at a reduced price. Contemporary writers were able to point out that house-rent was moderate, much lower than it had been a few years previously, and that even in the season, furnished houses and apartments could be obtained at a reasonable rental.³² Although the initial impetus had faltered in the 1830s, speculators continued to build and gradually increased Cheltenham's housing stock. If anything this had the effect

³¹ Campbell, M *The Nabob at Home; or, The Return to England* (1842)
Vol. 2 pp.242-3

³² Lee, E. *Cheltenham and its resources* (London : Whitaker & Co., 1851)
p.35

of further lowering the rent of the older houses, while at the same time there were houses being built that were aimed specifically at the conspicuously wealthy. Granville, who visited Cheltenham in 1840, found that villas on the Lansdown estate were selling for £5,000 each and houses in *Lansdown Terrace* were let, unfurnished, at £100 per annum; and the two largest at the end of the terrace for £250.³³ During the nineteenth century at least twenty Indian army officers, five Indian civil servants, seven British army officers and three naval officers lived in *Lansdown Terrace* alone. When Number Ten, *Lansdown Terrace* was sold in 1858, the sale particulars give some idea of the standard of living of those people at the higher, affluent end of Anglo-Indian society:

No. 10, Lansdown Terrace, with coach house and stables, the late residence of Gen. Gray deceased. To be sold by private contract. The house contains handsome entrance hall, dining room 21ft. by 18ft, double drawing room, with folding doors, the front room being 28ft. by 20ft. the back room about 18 ft. square; library and a morning and bath room, with 8 first and secondary bedrooms, capital domestic apartments, conveniently arranged and fitted up with fixtures. The excellent furniture may (if desired) be taken at a valuation, thereby rendering the above very desirable for any family seeking a first-class residence, with immediate occupation. There are two shares in Christ Church, the interest in which will be transferred to the purchaser of the house. The coach house and stables are behind the house, and have a servant's room over them.³⁴

In actual fact, Major General James Gray, a town commissioner, was in the Royal Artillery, but many of his close neighbours were Anglo-Indians. At Number 8 lived Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Pratt Kennedy of the Bengal Artillery and founder of Simla, who left £35,000 on his death in 1875.

³³ Granville, A.B. *The Spas of England* (Bath: Adams & Dart, 1841) p.310

³⁴ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (January 2, 1858)

Another area where houses were exchanged for high prices was Pittville. During the nineteenth century at least forty-five Indian army officers, four Indian civil servants, twenty British army officers and six naval officers lived in Pittville. The houses varied in size and value, but the biggest villas went for over £2,000. For instance *Alwington Villa* was bought by John Bird of the East India Company civil service for £2,060 in 1847.³⁵ During the early decades of the century Pittville was a developing area, and quite a few potential owners bought building plots and then had the houses built. This was the case with *Harwood House*, bought by Colonel William Larkins Watson, of the Bengal Native Infantry and town commissioner, as a building plot in 1834 for £300. The house was occupied by Watson until his death in 1852 and by his family until 1888.³⁶ He left £25,000 on his death so his family were well provided for.

As a rule it was unusual for families to stay in one house for that length of time. This was especially so with families who rented their house, which was more usual in any case, and the Anglo-Indians were no exception. Anglo-Indians would be quite used to frequent upheavals as part of their service in India. Many Anglo-Indian families appeared to move house on a regular basis. Contemporary writers commented on this tendency:

This pensioned existence in England for Anglo-Indians is a difficult question. After a lifetime of experience in one direction the guillotine of completed service severs the past from the present completely... Haven't you noticed how restless Anglo-Indians are at first - some even for the rest of their lives? They often change

³⁵ Blake, S. *Pittville, 1824-60* (Cheltenham: Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums, 1988) p.74

³⁶ *Ibid.* p.65

house and localities several times before they finally come to anchor, if they ever do.³⁷

In choosing where to settle in retirement Anglo-Indians would not necessarily have any attachment to any particular place, especially having been away from England for many years. Even when they had settled on a particular town, they would think nothing of moving three or four times, sometimes moving to another house in the same street. The fact that people normally rented accommodation made it more possible to keep changing houses. Apart from the grandest houses in the more exclusive locations, house rent was relatively inexpensive. For instance a 'genteel freehold residence' could be rented for as little as £30 per annum, according to this sale notice from 1858:

For sale by auction very known as Nos 7, 11, and 12 Leamington Place. All that very desirable freehold residence, well and substantially built, and most pleasantly situate in the road leading to Prestbury, known as no 7 Leamington Place, The dwelling-house comprises front and back parlours, 4 bedrooms and dressing room, entrance hall, 2 water closets and excellent servants' offices in the basement. There is a neat railed in flower garden in front of the house, and a small walled in garden at the rear, with a back entrance from a good road. The premises are now, and have been for several years past, in the occupation of Mrs Banner, at the reduced rent of £30 per annum...No. 11 is in the occupation of Mrs Hastings at £35 per annum.³⁸

For comparison with other middle-class assets in 1858, a brougham might cost £70 and a phaeton £60. By 1874 rents had increased, but you could still rent in the St. Mark's area of Cheltenham 'a villa residence', with detached stabling, standing in grounds of about half an acre, containing 'a handsome drawing room, dining room with bay window, morning room, six bedrooms, box loft and capital offices, with

³⁷ Perrin, A. *The Anglo-Indians* p.166

³⁸ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (June 12, 1858)

servants' bedroom in basement' for £70. For as little as £45 one could rent *Florence Villa* in the fashionable Park area of the town described as a detached residence, with garden adjoining, containing 'two attics or store rooms, small room in tower, five bedrooms, drawing room with bay window, 22ft 6in by 13ft 6in, dining room, 18ft by 11ft 10in, breakfast room, 14ft 10in by 11ft 10in, study, 14ft 8in by 9ft 6in, entrance hall and domestic offices'. It also enjoyed 'gas service and hill water'.³⁹

It is difficult to calculate the average house rent in Cheltenham, bearing in mind the diversity of house types and locations available. But in 1858, when the *Looker-On* was extolling the 'continual prosperity of Cheltenham', it remarked on the greater amount raised by the Borough Rate compared with four years previously. It was said to amount to £3,000, claiming that this represented the rental for 150 houses. In other words it would mean that the average rent was reckoned to be £20 per annum.⁴⁰

Servants

Of course accommodation was just one of various expenses that had to be found in order to maintain a genteel life style. Many returning Anglo-Indians would have agreed with Colonel Howe Showers who wrote to his son in India, later Major-General St. George Showers, while taking the waters in Cheltenham in 1828 that:

Nothing is to be done in England without money. A bachelor allowing him to keep a house and manservant requires from £800 to £1000 a year to live comfortably and well.⁴¹

³⁹ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (October 3, 1874)

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (May 15, 1858)

⁴¹ Showers Papers (Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge.)

A significant expenditure for the middle-class household was the cost of employing domestic servants. Most Anglo-Indians would have been used to having servants in India, so it is not surprising that most of the 200 Anglo-Indian households sampled from the 1861 Census of Cheltenham contained domestic servants. Only eighteen per cent of this sample recorded no servants, although it was quite possible that some of these may have had daily domestic help from servants who lived in their own homes and so would not have been entered in the Census as members of their employers' households. There were, however, important differences between the employment of domestic servants in India and Britain in the nineteenth century. First of all, servants in India were cheap to employ, costing in the 1880s from £12 to £24 per annum depending on their position and responsibility.⁴² In India an unlimited domestic service was needed to make work and life possible for a middle-class European and his family. They were needed to make up for the deficiencies in such things as water supply, sanitation, shops and transport. In 1882, Annette Beveridge, the wife of an Indian civil servant had to deal with a staff of thirty-nine, which apparently was required for a family of three children with a full social life.⁴³ Also the perpetual change of stations, endured by most Anglo-Indians, with its accompaniments of finding houses, buying and selling furniture, packing and unpacking, making weary, inconvenient journeys would have been even more difficult without unlimited help from servants. In Britain the need for a vast army of servants was restricted to the great mansions of the aristocracy.

⁴² Beveridge, W.H. *India Called Them* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1947) p.198

⁴³ *Ibid.* p.195

In Cheltenham the largest complement of servants was eight, which was the case in two households out of a sample of 187 Anglo-Indian families. Most - 58 per cent - had domestic staff comprising two to four servants (see Table 9.1). Even allowing for the better conditions and more settled existence of most retired Anglo-Indians, the situation was in stark contrast to what they had been used to in India. The total of 503 servants employed in the 164 households was just over eight per cent of the total number of domestic servants - 5901 - in Cheltenham in 1861. However, the 200 houses in the sample of Anglo-Indian households represented only two per cent of the 9095 inhabited houses listed in the census.

So, although, the Anglo-Indians were not the major employers of domestic servants in Cheltenham, they did make a not inconsiderable contribution to the provision of work, especially for women, who made up by far the majority of domestic servants - 5253 in 1861.

Servants in household	Households in each category	Total servants in each category	% of households in each category
8	2	16	1
7	3	21	2
6	8	48	4
5	16	80	8
4	26	104	13
3	36	108	18
2	53	106	27
1	20	20	10
0	36	0	18
Totals	200	503	100

Source: Cheltenham Census Returns, 1861

School fees

Another important financial consideration for the Anglo-Indians was the cost of educating their offspring. Many Anglo-Indians came to Cheltenham in order to send their sons to Cheltenham College. This was a major reason why the town continued to attract wealthy residents long after the decline of the spa trade. This was a fact recognised in contemporary guides to the town:

Cheltenham can no longer depend upon the annual influx of visitors for support. Its present large population requires some more settled means of livelihood and it cannot rely on a safer source of revenue than that derived from our educational institutions...To the welfare and prospects of the town the College is of the greatest importance, directly or indirectly, it causes to be expended in the town little short of £150,000 per annum. This estimate is made after due regard of the number of families it causes to reside here for the education of their sons...When it is considered also that the Grammar School has brought numerous families to reside here, whose style of living approaches the aristocratic, we can safely say that this Institution, next to the College, will prove hereafter of eminent use in promoting the prosperity of the town. If it causes to be spent here £20,000 or £30,00 annually, it must be considered a great public adventure.⁴⁴

There were obvious attractions to sending their sons to a school which prepared boys for the East India Company training colleges. At Addiscombe cadets were required to pay £30 per annum (later £40) for their education, the rest of the £75 per annum which was the actual cost of maintaining each cadet being borne by the Company.⁴⁵ After the transfer of the Indian Army from the Company to the Crown, the military patronage of the Court of Directors was vested in the Secretary

⁴⁴ *Hadley's Guide Book* (1856) quoted in Hart, G. *A History of Cheltenham* p. 208

⁴⁵ Heathcote, T.A. *The Indian Army* p130-1

of State for India. Under regulations introduced in 1862, the Secretary of state had the right to appoint twenty cadets each year to the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. These cadetships were open only to the sons of former Indian servants, and their fees, subject to a means test, were paid out of Indian revenues. The 'Queen's India Cadets' were not obliged to join the Indian service, although in practice few of them were wealthy enough to join the British, and the scheme was certainly intended to fill Indian needs. Sons of former Indian military or civil officers therefore had an advantage over other candidates because, even if they had sufficient means not to qualify for free tuition, there were twenty places reserved for them at the College.

Other expenses

There were many indirect ways in which the prosperity of Cheltenham was increased by the spending power of the middle-class inhabitants as well as by wealthy visitors. This was evident in the large variety of service trades that depended upon the needs of a substantial middle-class population. In particular the growth of a consumer retail trade relied on customers who were able to pay for quality and luxury goods. It is difficult to ascertain to what extent the Anglo-Indians contributed to this development. In the early part of the nineteenth century many of the retail businesses were connected with the spa trade and the health concerns of many of the visitors. For instance of the thirteen advertisements in Griffith's guide of 1826, five were from chemist and druggists; two were from musical instrument sellers and two were perfumers; the remaining four were concerned with coach travel and 'fly wagons'.⁴⁶ In contrast in Deacon's *Court Guide and*

⁴⁶ Griffith, S.Y. *Griffith's New Historical Description of Cheltenham* (1826)

Gazetteer of 1880 there were a far greater variety of businesses, catering as much for wealthy residents as much as visitors.⁴⁷ While most of them were aimed at middle-class customers in general, there were notable examples that were intended for Anglo-Indian customers. For example, all six of the tailors and dressmakers made a point of mentioning that they made outfits for India. W. Thomas of *Ormund House* and 8, Montpellier Street traded as a 'Civil and military tailor and Indian outfitter'. C. McCloughlin trading as a 'Gun Manufacturer' claimed to have 'letters from gentlemen in the United Kingdom and India speaking in terms of satisfaction in which their orders have been executed'. Other advertisements appealing to middle-class tastes included carriage makers, livery stables, wine merchants, florists, estate agents, house decorators, fine art dealers, cabinet makers and upholsterers and a selection of educational establishments including Mr. Wooder, of *St. Germain's*, Leckhampton Road, who described himself as an 'Army Tutor'. The existence of these retail outlets in Cheltenham point to the fact that there were sufficient wealthy customers, without which they could not have survived. It is also clear that a number of them counted Anglo-Indians amongst their customers.

Probate valuations

The evidence so far presented suggests that the Anglo-Indians did contribute to the prosperity of the town, but it would be misleading to assume that their effect was uniformly considerable. There were inevitably major differences between individuals because of their particular circumstances, be it family background, size of pension or

⁴⁷ *Deacons's Court Guide and Gazetteer* (1880)

availability of additional funds. These differences are noticeable when looking at the probate values of individual Anglo-Indians. Probate amounts do not necessarily represent the true value of a person's wealth, because they only indicate what a person was worth at death. Nevertheless, they do offer a means of comparing relative values between a particular group of individuals, such as the Anglo-Indians. An examination of a sample of 115 probate values from the database reveals a wide variation in wealth (see Table 9.2). The top six with probate values over £40,000 include four generals, a lieutenant-colonel and James Webster who made his money as an East Indian merchant in Calcutta. But there is no strong relationship between military rank and probate values (see Table 9.3). This may be a sign of the weakness of relying on probate records, but it could also mean that some Anglo-Indians had other sources of income that supplemented their basic pensions. This could take the form of stock holdings, such as the East India Stock issued by East India House, or miscellaneous funds and annuities.

Probate valuations	Number of records	Percentage of total records
£40-70,000	6	5%
£20-39,999	11	10%
£10-19,999	22	19%
£5-9,999	18	16%
£2-4,999	16	14%
£1-1,999	11	10%
£500-999	14	12%
£1-499	17	15%
Total	115	100%

Source: *Register of Wills and Probate* (OIOC L/AG/33/1)

Some of them may also have inherited money from their links with the aristocracy or gentry, although this was not typical of many.

Table 9.3 Probate valuations by rank

Valuation	Generals	Colonels	Lt-Cols	Majors	Cpts	Lieuts	Ensigns	Total
£40-£70,000	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
£10-39,999	12	6	7	3	3	2	0	33
£1-9,999	18	11	9	3	3	1	0	45
£1-999	5	6	9	3	5	2	1	31
Total	39	23	26	9	11	5	1	114

Summary

Very few returned to Britain with riches made in India. Most East India Company civil and military officers could rely on a steady income, but not spectacular wealth as had happened in the early years of the British involvement in India. Some army officers and rather more civil servants probably managed to save money while still serving in India for their retirement, but many did seem to find it a struggle to maintain the standard of living that they had enjoyed in India.

Whatever the truth about the extent of the Anglo-Indian contribution to Cheltenham's prosperity, contemporary writers believed that they played an important role:

The critical position of British India appears to be awakening a sense of its reality, and causing no small anxiety to those who are in any way connected with the country. To Cheltenham especially the subject is one of the very importance, seeing how largely it is dependant upon the Anglo-Indian portion of its population for its welfare and prosperity.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (June 5, 1858)

The fact that the large majority of these Anglo-Indians were retired meant that it was their pensions and any other annuities that were brought to the economy of the town. This was in contrast to the usual view of Victorian towns and cities, in which old age was seen as a time of relative poverty. The idea of the prosperity of Cheltenham depending upon the pensions of its more wealthy population could only be possible because of the particular expectations of these people. It was helped because many of the Anglo-Indians in particular retired at a relatively young age and continued to live active lives. These people also wanted to enjoy the adornments of a genteel life style, as well as spending money on entertainment and public amusements. It was therefore the expenditure of a minority of the population that found its way into the economy of the town through the purchase of housing, provisions, labour, schooling, luxury items and a variety of services.

This was before pensions became generally available, even for middle-class occupations, and only those who had made provision for their old-age could look forward to a comfortable retirement. The reality of a substantial proportion of the population with disposable income was evident in the fact that in 1860 Cheltenham was amongst the most wealthy of the smaller boroughs. It has been calculated from income tax returns that twenty-one per cent of the population had annual incomes of £100 or more.⁴⁹ This was the level in 1860 at which income tax became payable. Very few of these taxpayers, if any, could have been employed in working-class trades. In the larger industrial cities the proportion of income tax payers was typically

⁴⁹ Rubinstein, W.D. *Britain's Century* (London: Arnold, 1998) p.289

between ten and fifteen per cent. As far as Cheltenham is concerned, the idea of eighty per cent of the population depending on the remaining twenty per cent is probably an over-simplification, but the economy of towns like Cheltenham cannot be explained in the same way as towns with big manufacturing industries or agricultural markets.

Chapter 10

THE MEMSAHIBS

Introduction

Most accounts of Anglo-Indian society mention the role of women. They were an increasing influence in British India as more and more European women came to India as the wives of civilian and military officials or as those seeking husbands. This was especially the case after the opening in 1843 of the Overland Route, which shortened the distance to India from 16,000 miles via the Cape of Good Hope, to only 6,000 miles. It reduced the journey time between England and India to around 35-40 days instead of three months. However, the database of Anglo-Indians in Cheltenham gives the impression that they were all male. This was, of course, not the case; there were at least as many Anglo-Indian women as men in nineteenth-century Cheltenham. The fact that they do not appear in the database is due to the inadequacy of the available evidence. In most of the records, from which the database was compiled, women rarely merit a mention. Where they do appear in the sources, they are often referred to in terms of their husband's name. This is especially the case with the wives of army officers, who were referred to by their husband's rank. For example:

Mrs. Colonel Lee gave an evening party at her residence Pittville Lawn Villas, on Friday. Mrs. Captain Cox, of Suffolk House, entertains a large circle of friends on Wednesday evening.¹

¹ *Cheltenham Journal and Gloucestershire fashionable Weekly Gazette* (December 23, 1850)

But this does not mean that women played an insignificant part in the Anglo-Indian society of Cheltenham. For a start, there were overall considerably more women than men living in Cheltenham. In Cheltenham, in 1861, there were 17654 females over the age of 20, compared with only 11164 males. Inevitably there were a great number of single women. A large proportion of women, 5253 in all, were domestic servants. This number reflected the middle-class economy in the more affluent parts of the town where the employment of servants was common. Even more, 7642, were listed as unwaged and 'indefinite' by the 1861 Census Report; a further 1251 were entered as property owners. It was amongst these categories that the women of the pseudo-gentry were to be found. The disproportion between the sexes in Victorian times was greater among the middle classes than among the working classes.² For instance in the middle-class Lansdown area of Cheltenham out of 1368 people in 1861, 1023 were female and 345 male, a ratio of 3:1.³ The preponderance of women in the Anglo-Indian areas of the town was quite marked. For instance, according to the *Cheltenham Free Press Fashionable Directory of the Residents and Visitors for 1859*, of the 28 households listed in *Park Place*, 15 were in the name of women, the majority being spinsters or widows

Women of Property

Especially striking is that the census data shows that in Cheltenham as a whole there were three times more women described as owning

² Holcombe, L. *Victorian Ladies at Work* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1973) p.11

³ Rudman, S. *Victorian Legacy* (1998)

property than men.⁴ (see Table 10.1) This is according to the occupational schema developed by Booth in the 1880s with regard to the 1861 Census Reports and was very similar to other areas with significant Anglo-Indian populations such as Bath.⁵

Table 10.1 1861 Census - Cheltenham Property Owners

	Age 20 & over	%	Property owners	%
Men	11164	38.74%	396	24.04%
Women	17654	61.26%	1251	75.96%
Total	28818	100%	1647	100%

It is not always clear what Booth counted as 'property', and certainly these figures do not take into consideration the size of individual property holdings. However, it is apparent that in economic terms women were more important than has been implied in the past.

Information from the 1861 Census returns provides some evidence about the property owned by Anglo-Indian women. From a group of 200 heads of household with Indian connections in Cheltenham, eleven women described themselves as fundholders (See Table 10.2). This was not a precise term and could refer to someone receiving an annual allowance, as well as to a person with an investment producing an annual return.⁶

⁴ Gatley, D.A. *1861 Census Data Base* (Staffordshire University, 1997).

⁵ Armstrong, W.A. 'The Use of information about occupation' in Wrigley, E.A. (ed.) *Nineteenth-Century Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) pp.191-310

⁶ Higgs, E. *A Clearer Sense of the Census* (London: HMSO, 1996) p.111

Table 10.2		Anglo-Indian female heads of household in the 1861 Cheltenham Census		
	Widows	Spinsters	Born India	
Fundholder	10	1	6	
East India Pensioner	5	1	1	
East India Stockholder	1			
Railway shareholder*	1			
Landed proprietor	1			
Government pensioner	1		1	
Total	11	1	7	
*she was also an East India pensioner				

These annuities were considered as safe investments for those who required a steady income without administrative worries. They appealed to widows and spinsters, who were regarded as the ardent saving section of the community.⁷ An annuity was the purchase of an income out of capital for a fixed, regular sum to be paid to a beneficiary. It was the classic form of income provision for dependent female relatives. Annuities could be perpetual, even a type of property to be inherited, but were often for life or a fixed period with conditions attached, for example with a prohibition on remarriage, or to take care of the testator's children. This type of income was similar to a pension. In fact it was the prospect of not only retiring on full pay but also having pensions provided for their widows and orphans that was one of the attractions of working for the East India Company. Widows' pensions were payable from the various funds set up for the purpose in accordance with the rank of deceased subscribers. For instance, the widow of a colonel received £312 18s 0d per annum, and the widow of a lieutenant £93 8s 9d per annum. Widows remarrying lost the pension, except that, if widowed again, the pension was again paid. If

⁷ Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. *Family Fortunes: men and women of the English Middle Class, 1720-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987) p.212

she had married another officer, she was not able to draw two pensions, but only that of highest rank held by either of her late husbands.⁸ Women with fixed incomes were vulnerable because, even if a woman possessed a fortune in stocks, and in her own name as well, control of it would not be in her hands, but placed in the custody of male trustees. If her trustees were vigilant, honest and active, her fortune would be given over to safe investments, which would pay her a fixed, regular income, subject of course to the inroads if inflation. If the trustees were dishonest, or if they simply refused to act, a woman could be left with no recourse at all.⁹ Some women were able to minimise the risk by nominating close relatives as trustees. For instance, Catharine Billamore of 10, *Oxford Parade* in Cheltenham appointed her two nephews as Trustees.¹⁰

The amount of wealth in the hands of women cannot easily be calculated, but female investors became increasingly important in helping to finance the joint stock companies behind municipal utilities and railways.¹¹ In the eighteenth century women investors were only minor players in the canal mania of that time.¹² However, by the middle of the nineteenth century women were often the largest single group of investors in such enterprises as railway building, although in

⁸ Heathcote, T.A. *The Indian Army: The Garrison of British Imperial India, 1822-1922*. (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1974) p.152

⁹ Copeland, E. *Women Writing about Money* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p.17

¹⁰ PRO Prob 11/1957

¹¹ Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. *Family Fortunes* p.212

¹² Ward, J.R. *The Finance of Canal Building in eighteenth-century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974) p.23

general their holdings were relatively small.¹³ Nevertheless, such investments were attractive to widows and spinsters on fixed incomes. For example, according to the 1861 Census returns Mary Stewart of 3, *Rodney Place* received a pension from the East India Company and was the owner of railway shares. Other Anglo-Indian women owned East India stocks. A list of proprietors of East India stocks for April 1858 includes six spinsters and four widows living in Cheltenham.¹⁴

Wives, Widows and Spinsters

The disproportionate ratio of men to women meant that there was always going to be a relatively large number of unmarried women, especially in the ranks of the middle class. This gave some concern to commentators at the time:

There is an enormous and increasing number of single women in the nation, a number quite disproportionate and quite abnormal...proportionally most numerous in the middle and upper classes, who have to earn their own living, instead of spending and husbanding the earnings of men; who, not having the natural duties and labours of wives and mothers, have to carve out artificial and painfully-sought occupations for themselves; who, in place of completing, and embellishing the existence of others, are compelled to lead an independent and incomplete existence of their own.¹⁵

This effect was even more marked for the Anglo-Indians because of the attitude to marriage amongst the officials in India. Officers were

¹³ Reed, M.C. *Investment in Railways in Britain, 1820-44* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) p.125

¹⁴ 'Proprietors of East India Stock (14 April, 1858)' *The East India Register and Army List for 1858*

¹⁵ Greg, W.R. 'Why are women redundant' (1862) quoted in Gagnier, R. *Subjectivities: a History of Self-representation in Britain, 1832-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) p.214

discouraged from marriage before they reached field rank: 'subalterns do not marry, captains may marry, majors should marry, and colonels must marry' was the usual formula. In some cases a man who wished for marriage before middle-age was frowned on since it was regarded as an infidelity to the ideal of work. This attitude not only applied to men serving abroad, since contemporaries noted with alarm the growing disinclination of middle-class men to marry, and the tendency among the middle classes to postpone marriage till late in life. Since middle-class women were expected not to work before or after marriage, they were regarded as expensive luxuries.¹⁶ Men in prestigious positions in India were not expected to marry until they were able to support their wives in a proper style.¹⁷ But in India under the Company's rule there were few Englishwomen to marry in any case. At the beginning of the nineteenth century marriage was the exception, at any rate below the rank of major; senior officers fairly often lived in open concubinage of long standing with Indian women.¹⁸ As more and more English women came to India the moral climate changed. Feminine influence began to set the tone in Anglo-Indian society and Englishwomen regarded with horror any sexual link with Indian women.¹⁹

Many daughters of Indian military officers married other military officers. It was common to find two or three sisters in a military family marrying

¹⁶ Holcombe, L. *Victorian Ladies* p.11

¹⁷ Marshall, P.J. 'British Immigration into India', Emmer, P.C. and Moerner, M. (eds.) *European Expansion and migration* (New York and Oxford: Berg, 1992) pp.179-196

¹⁸ See Dalrymple, W. *White Mughals* (London: Harper Collins, 2002)

¹⁹ Mason, P. *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men* (London: Macmillan, 1974) p.176

officers. Widows of officers also frequently found consolation by marrying other officers in India. Some officers were bereaved more than once, even marrying a third or fourth time after tragic losses of earlier wives and children.²⁰ Many officers married while on furlough, bringing their wives back to India with them. In a lot of cases their wives were in some way connected with Indian families, partly because the social conventions of the time tended to restrict the number of eligible young women that an officer met to those of his own circle and partly because the life of an Indian Army officer's wife would not appeal to anyone who had not some idea of what was involved. The difficulty of meeting suitable partners caused by "civilisation combined with the cold formalities of society and the rules of etiquette," which "imposes such restrictions on the sexes, that there are thousands of marriageable men and women of all ages capable of making each other happy, who never have a chance of meeting either in town or country", was the reason for advertisements such as these appearing in the press:

A Gentleman, aged 23 holding an excellent appointment in India, wishes to correspond with a young lady between 18 and 22 years of age, with a view to marriage; must be dark with a good figure, lively and amiable; money no object. Advertiser is dark, tall, and good looking. Address with Editor.

A medical gentleman, home from India, and who will soon return, wishes to marry before going out. He is about 40 years of age, and possesses good means, and would like a lady from 24 to 30 years of age. Address with Editor.

A Gentleman, age 32, tall, fair, handsome, and considered good looking, occupying a good position in India as an indigo planter, and returning there next September, would like to correspond with Nos. 7240, 7065, 7198, and 7143 with a view to matrimony. Address with Editor.

²⁰ Heathcote, T.A. *The Indian Army* p.148

A Civil Engineer in India, age 38, holding a good Government appointment, with private property, and who will be in England next Autumn, wishes to open correspondence with a lady not over 30, with a view to marriage and to return to India with him. Address with Editor. ²¹

It was not uncommon for wives and widows to include their husband's rank in their name. This, no doubt, helped them to maintain their position in the social hierarchy, but, especially in the case of widows, it can also indicate the source of their income. The 1861 Census lists a variety of such 'occupations' amongst the Anglo-Indian women heads of household. They include a widow of a surgeon in the Indian Army, a colonel's wife, a captain's wife, an admiral's widow, wife of a civilian in India, as well as more specific descriptions, such as the wife of Captain Bigg, HM Indian Army, Captain Pollard's wife, Bengal Engineers, and the widow of Lieutenant General Sir W.S. Whish.

Precedence

Relative status was important to Anglo-Indian women. Social status in India depended entirely on what one did, or in the case of married women, on what one's husband did. Because roughly half the Anglo-Indian men in India were employed by the Government, official rankings were the ones that counted socially.²² If middle-class women in general were keen on the strict observation of the rules of polite society, Anglo-Indian women in particular were even more vigilant. Over the years, British society in India came to be governed by a rigid etiquette and what one official called 'the demon of precedence'.

²¹ The *Matrimonial News* (1873) quoted in Lawson, CA *At Home on Furlough* (Madras: The 'Madras Mail' Press, 1875) pp.78-9

²² Macmillan, M. *Women of the Raj* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988) p.48

Precedence determined the order in which you went in to dinner, where you sat, and the order in which you left at the end of the evening. It was the memsahibs in particular who were keen on strict adherence to the rules of precedence. Vere Birdwood, who was the sixth generation of her family to live in India, had this to say about the attitude of Anglo-Indian women:

The husband might accept with a shrug of his shoulders that he had not been placed in quite the right position, but his wife would certainly be extremely put out.²³

Although she was writing about the early years of the twentieth century, this emphasis on protocol and hierarchy was typical throughout most of nineteenth century and it is likely that this heightened awareness of position and status came to characterize Anglo-Indians on their return to England.

It has been claimed that middle-class women in general were preoccupied with the minutiae of social interaction within and outside the family.²⁴ As society in the nineteenth century became more formalised, there was a tendency to organize social institutions by the use of specialised personnel to carry out its functions.²⁵ In nineteenth-century England upper- and middle-class women took on the role of maintaining the fabric of society, as semi-official leaders but also as arbiters of social acceptance or rejection. Balls and elaborate dinner parties became the functions at which a husband and wife together cemented their social status. Invitations to dinner were always

²³ Quoted in Allen, C. *Plain Tales from the Raj* (London: Futura, 1976) p.101

²⁴ Davidoff, L. et al. *The Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy, 1830-1960* (London: Longmans, 1999) p.124

²⁵ Davidoff, L. *The Best Circles*. (London: The Cresset Library, 1973) p.16

sent in the combined names of the lady and gentleman, those to balls in the lady's name only. Responses, however, in both cases were directed to the lady alone.²⁶ These subtle intricacies of social etiquette were considered to be of some importance. The rules were even observed when "fashionable movements" were reported in the press as can be seen from this item from the *Cheltenham Looker-On*:

General and Mrs. Podmore entertained a select circle of friends, including the earl of Ellenborough, and Hon. Craven Berkeley, at dinner on Thursday, at their residence, Osborne House, and in the evening Mrs. Podmore opened her drawing room for a Ball, to which a large party of her friends were invited.²⁷

Announcements like this and the following leave no doubt that it was the women who were in charge of social events:

The Fashionable Engagements of January:

Mrs. S. Smith's Evening Party, on Tuesday; Mrs. Lambert's on Wednesday; and Mrs. Owen's Ball on Thursday. On the same evening Mrs. Elphinstone also gives a large Dinner Party, at her residence, Glack Villa. In the week following we have first the Subscription Ball, on Monday; on Tuesday, the 22nd, Mrs. Morris Reade's Evening Party; Wednesday, the 23rd, Mrs. Aislable's and Miss Haywood's *soiree dansant*, at Hale's room, and Mrs. Kirby's Party; and on the evening following, Mrs. Mitchell's Ball, at the Assembly Rooms.²⁸

The Household

In general, however, middle-class women were expected to centre their lives on the family and the household. This entailed intense preoccupation with furnishings, decoration of rooms and gardens, with

²⁶ Langland, E.L. *Nobody's Angels* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995) p.40

²⁷ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (February 1, 1851)

²⁸ *Ibid.* (January 12, 1850)

the appearance, behaviour and language of household members.²⁹ But the most pressing responsibilities facing the mistress of the house in the nineteenth century were the managing of domestic finances and the supervision of the servants.³⁰ In India, all servants except the ayahs were men. The majority of the Indian servants employed by memsahibs were landless labourers from the outlying areas of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay attracted to work for the British families by the higher wages they paid. By contrast during the nineteenth century in Britain, the proportion of men in domestic service slowly declined as new jobs were created in the towns. Since the wages for male servants were higher than for females, only very rich families employed men in specific roles as footmen and butlers, and it was felt that men servants for indoors were a luxury not many people could afford.³¹

For Anglo-Indian wives returning to England they had the additional problem of adjusting to a more modest household compared with what they had become used to in India. For most of the nineteenth century in India ten servants was considered the barest minimum. This was partly because there were no labour-saving devices in household work and because the restrictions of caste meant that it was impossible to find a single servant who could do a great variety of household tasks. Also servants were necessary for the prestige of the Raj: among other things that the British had picked up from India was that the number of servants was a measure of status.³² By the early twentieth

²⁹ Davidoff, L. et al. *The Family Story* p.124

³⁰ Branca, P. *Silent sisterhood* (London: Croom Helm, 1975) p.53

³¹ Chaudhuri, N. 'Memsahibs and their Servants in Nineteenth-century India' *Women's History Review*, Volume 3, Number 4, 1994 pp. 549-62

³² Macmillan, M. *Women* p.146

century there was a decline in the number of servants in British households in India. As in England, modern conveniences probably were one reason for this. In the 1870s filtered water was supplied to both Indian and British sections of Calcutta. As modern water systems provided running water in large cities, *bhisties* or water carriers became redundant. With the introduction of electricity which occurred in the British sector of Delhi before the end of the nineteenth century, memsahibs possibly had less need to employ *masalchis* who lighted lamps and candles and punkahmen. Thus while Emma Walter had thought 19 servants indispensable in 1839, another memsahib from Bombay reported in *Queen* that she required only five in 1896.³³ However, although the number of servants deemed essential in an Anglo-Indian household decreased over the decades, British families in India continued to employ more servants than did comparable middle-class families in Britain. The relatively extravagant standard of living of the Anglo-Indians caused difficulties on their return to England where the harsher economic circumstances of many retired officials demanded a much more rigorous monitoring of domestic expenditure:

The daughters of civil or military officials; born in the tropics; brought up in luxury, with little or no instruction, and least of all in domestic matters; sent home at an early age for education; at seventeen or eighteen years of age, or even earlier, returning to their parents, well-versed perhaps in everything excepting domestic economics; marrying men probably as ignorant as themselves of the details of housekeeping; drawing a liberal income, sufficient for all the necessaries and most of the luxuries of life; entertaining hospitably; spending money with a lavish hand, and taking little or no forethought for tomorrow, so long as they

³³ Chaudhuri, N. 'Memsahibs and their Servants in Nineteenth-century India' *Women's History Review*, Volume 3, Number 4, 1994 pp. 549-62

keep free from debt. After twenty or thirty years thus spent, they have to return to England to live on comparatively small means, with a less knowledge of household affairs than is possessed by nine out of ten women of the same age and position in life at home.³⁴

In organising their households Anglo-Indians women aspired to a nostalgic idea of Home, although when they did finally return it did not always live up to expectations. The memsahibs struggled to keep Britain alive in the midst of India.³⁵ The result of this was noted by Vere Birdwood:

Once you stepped inside the home you were back in Cheltenham or Bath. We brought with us in our home lives exact replicas of the sort of life that upper middle-class people lived in England at that time.³⁶

Women and India

Although this may have made it easier for Anglo-Indian women to integrate into the British way of life when they returned home, in other ways their background and their experience of life in India were in marked contrast to most middle-class women. This was especially true of women who lived through such disasters as the retreat from Kabul in 1842 when the European women and children were taken as hostages, and the events of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. The massacres of women and children at Cawnpore and the privations of those besieged in the Residency at Lucknow cast a long shadow over the history of British India. News of these disasters were reported in the papers such as this report in the *Cheltenham Looker-On*:

³⁴ Waring, E.J. *The Tropical resident at Home* pp.235-6

³⁵ Macmillan, M. *Women* p.13

³⁶ Quoted in Macmillan, M. *Women* p.82

Died: At Cawnpore, during the attack on the intrenched barracks, between the fifth and 27th of June, 1857, Frances Money Evans (with two infants, Fanny Rolanda and Frederic Gambier) wife of Capt. H.L. Evans, Deputy Commissioner in Oude, and eldest daughter of S. James and M. Rolanda Gambier of Ashley Lodge, Cheltenham. They were killed by a portion of the roof of the building, struck by cannon shot, falling upon them.³⁷

Reports of deaths and injury in tragic circumstances caused distress for relatives, who, more often than not, were female members of the family:

Capt. Hardy, who was wounded in the gallant attack of the 1st Bombay Lancers upon the mutineers at Nusseerabad, is the brother of the Misses Hardy, of Lansdown Crescent.³⁸

It was particularly hard for the mothers who lost sons in the fighting:

The two most distinguished in the roll of glory - Generals Nicholson and Neill - are of this number: the mother of the former and the aunt of the latter, being both amongst us. The name of Lieutenant Battine, son of Mrs. Battine, of Pembroke Lodge, and who, we all so well remember a few years ago as among the most promising of the pupils of Cheltenham College, appears also in the list of the fallen on the march to Lucknow.³⁹

There were even sad occasions when a woman had to mourn the loss of both a husband and a son. This happened when Mrs. Pennycuick suffered such a loss, although on this occasion her grief was recognised by the commander-in-chief:

During his late stay in London, Sir Charles Napier was frequently transacting business in the Horse Guards; on one of these occasions, it was suggested that it might be a satisfaction to Sir Charles, and a consolation, though a mournful one to Mrs. Pennycuick, if he were to charge himself with the delivery of the

³⁷ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (January 16, 1858)

³⁸ *Ibid.* (July 18, 1857)

³⁹ *Ibid.* (November 21, 1857)

medal, etc., to which her husband had been entitled. He readily engaged to do so. Sympathy for the widow and warm regard for his fallen friend engrossed the hero's thoughts, and two hours were not suffered to elapse, after his return to Cheltenham, ere he found or made an opportunity to discharge the sad duty which he had undertaken, and Mrs. Pennycuick had the mournful satisfaction of receiving the expression of Sir C. Napier's high appreciation of her husband's merits, and the token of his country's approbation of his services, at the hands of the man whom that husband most valued.⁴⁰

Even those women who were spared such traumas had to put up with a lot of discomfort from disease and the unhealthy climate during their time in India, which must have been especially trying for young mothers, as General Sir Campbell Claye Grant Ross remembered:

Like all mothers, our mother was the best in the world. She bore ten children and only those who remember India at that time can know what this means. The heat, the flies, the mosquitoes, the poor food for infants, the ever imminent risk of illness, the annual journeys in palanquins or bullock-carts over the insufferable plains to and from the hill-stations, the long partings from husband or children, and the anxieties of war-time made martyrs of our mothers in those days.⁴¹

The regular changes of station and the difficulties of travel in India caused considerable inconvenience. A woman who married into the more active units of the army had taken a step as decisive as entering a convent. She and her children became camp equipment, jolted in bullock-carts and on the backs of camels, exposed to dust, sun, heat, cholera, malaria, moving always from tent to bungalow and back again, 'gypsies without a home beneath the stars.'⁴²

⁴⁰ *Cheltenham Examiner* (March 21, 1849)

⁴¹ Ross, R. *Memoirs* (London: John Murray, 1923) p.16

⁴² Mason, P. *The Men who ruled India* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963) p.325

The difference between conditions of service in India and the relatively sedate lifestyle back in England meant that the experience of many Anglo-Indian women contrasted with the cosy middle-class background of some of their contemporaries. This did not prevent them from hoping for a more settled existence, but many did not achieve this until they returned permanently to England.

However, not all Anglo-Indian women spent the majority of their adult life in India. For various reasons there was always a number of women with Indian connections living in Cheltenham. Some were born in India but had emigrated to England, others were staying at home with their children whilst their husbands carried on their duties in India, and many were the widows of soldiers who had died on active service or from disease. Those born in India, but choosing to spend the rest of their lives in England, tended to fit easily into the conventional middle-class mould, although they often maintained their links with India through relatives and friends. For example Amy Whinyates (1785-1875), who was born in India and emigrated to England at the age of 6, remained in the family home in Cheltenham. She did voluntary work, principally at the National School, and also provided child care for her brother's children while he was serving in India:

In Cheltenham she was ever busy in good works, was an active member of various charitable societies, and for between twenty and thirty years a daily visitor at the Bath Road National School, where she taught the children herself...During the long residence abroad of her brother Frederick, Amy gave every care to his two sons Fred and Edward who were left in her charge, nor can they, her two nephews, ever forget her constant solicitude for their welfare.⁴³

⁴³ Whinyates, F. *Whinyates Family Records* Vol II (1894) p.472

In fact education and child care were among the few occupations considered suitable for middle-class women. Although some preferred to involve themselves on a charitable basis, others saw it as a respectable means of earning a living. An example is this advertisement in the *Looker-On*:

A lady, having resided some years in India, and now living in the neighbourhood of Cheltenham, wishes to obtain charge of a few Indian children, to educate with her own little girl. They would have a happy home, combined with every care and attention. Good references required, and can also be given to people of position in India and at home. Inclusive terms, for children under ten, £60 per annum. Remuneration not so much a consideration as the advantages of companionship for her one child, combined with home education. The children of gentlemen alone treated with.⁴⁴

Child care could provide a supplement to a widow's pension:

A lady, the widow of an Indian officer, of many years' experience in tuition, and in the charge of Indian children, has at present a few vacancies. Arrangements can be made for children to remain during the holiday. The highest references given.⁴⁵

The presence of numbers of Anglo-Indian children was due to the practice of sending children home for their education and because the Indian climate was considered to be bad for them. Also, it was thought that boys having servants within call could become lazy and unable to do anything for themselves.⁴⁶ Sometimes children as young as six were sent to England, and very few children older than eight

⁴⁴ *Cheltenham Looker-On* (February 21, 1874)

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* (January 13, 1872)

⁴⁶ Wilkins, W.J. *Daily Life and Work in India* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1888) p.57

were left in India.⁴⁷ Every mother was forced to make a choice between children and husband, which meant a major sacrifice either way. Those who chose to remain with their husbands did so at some cost to their children. Many mothers could rely on relatives at home to care for their offspring, but it did mean that when they were reunited they were relative strangers after long periods of separation. This was a constant cause of anxiety for many Anglo-Indian families and what has been termed a "discourse of family sacrifice" runs through countless family letters, fictional works, and other contemporary commentary on British life overseas and also comprises a substantial component of many retrospective reminiscences.⁴⁸ Bringing up young children in India was fraught with difficulties. Annette Beveridge, who was married to an Indian civil servant and was recurrently ailing herself, was continually having one child or another laid low by fever or dysentery. She had in her time to fight three pitched battles with death - one for herself at Shillong in 1879; one for her younger son in Calcutta and Arrah in 1885-86; one for her elder son in Darjeeling in 1889. She had to set herself with all her might to bring her younger daughter round to health at Mussoorie in 1882. Of the six members of her family, only her husband Henry and the first-born, Letty, were not at one time or other in desperate danger through disease in India.⁴⁹

When the time came for sending the children to England, mothers could not avoid feelings of guilt, for 'abandoning' them or for leaving

⁴⁷ Kaye, M.M. *The Sun in the Morning* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1992) p.113

⁴⁸ Buettner, E.A. *Families, children, and memories: Britons in India, 1857-1947* (unpublished PhD thesis, Michigan, 1998) p.175

⁴⁹ Beveridge, W.H. *India Called Them* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1947) p.202

their husbands if they chose to go with their children. In 1884 Annette Beveridge was faced with the prospect of being divided from her husband with half the world between them. However, she planned to follow him in six months' time. Before she could go she had to make careful arrangements for the care of her three children. Like many other parents based in the empire, they were heavily dependent upon relatives to take in younger children as well as to supervise them during their boarding-school holidays when they were older.⁵⁰ The Beveridge children were to stay behind in Southport, at a small private school kept by a family friend called Fanny Lewin. Henry and Annette went to see the school at Southport and Fanny Lewin had spent a week at the family home in Scotland getting to know her charges. Annette left nothing to chance. The three would be in the special charge of a German nursery governess. They would be within easy reach of a married couple who were close friends of the Beveridges. Childless themselves, these two were adopted as Uncle Henry and Aunt Alice and the children spent their holidays with them. As Annette confessed to her diary, she had at times bad attacks of weakness about leaving them.⁵¹

Anglo-Indian mothers with large families might have years of anxiety about providing an education and finding a career for their sons. They could not always rely on patronage to meet their wishes. When Lieutenant-Colonel Bulkley of the 20th Bombay Native Infantry died in Cheltenham, after 31 years' service in India, he left a widow with three

⁵⁰ Buettner, E.A. 'Parent-child separations and colonial careers' in Fletcher, A. & Hussey, S. (eds.) *Childhood in Question* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) pp.113-132

⁵¹ Beveridge, W.H. *India* p.241

or four sons unprovided for. Despite this she was unable to obtain a commission for any one of them.⁵²

Another area where women played a significant role was the church. If only because there were more women, they must have made up the greater proportion of the congregation, especially in the churches situated in the middle-class areas of the town. Although for many women church attendance probably performed a social function, the Evangelical character of some religious leaders in Cheltenham inspired a more earnest attitude. Popular Evangelical preachers gained strong support from female members of their congregations. Rev. Francis Close of St Mary's, was no exception. Numerous gifts were lavished upon him from admiring disciples. These included 1,500 pairs of embroidered slippers, carpets, antimacassars, window-curtains, and 'many a nicknack of crotchet-work', and most generous of all, a gift of £2,235 towards the erection of his home.⁵³ It is possible that the Evangelical ideals of holiness and purity could rationalize the motivations for electing not to marry.⁵⁴ This might bring some comfort to spinsters who were often not always valued in Victorian society.

Closely related to their religious activities, middle-class women were often involved in charitable institutions. Generally the officials of these voluntary organisations were men, with women providing assistance in a supporting role. There were some voluntary societies in Cheltenham

⁵² House of Commons *Report from the Select Committee on Indian territories: Evidence of Captain Robert Guthrie Macgregor* (OIOC: IOR/V/4/SESSION 1852)

⁵³ Munden, A. *A Cheltenham Gamel: Dean Close of Cheltenham* (Cheltenham: Dean Close School, 1997) p.28

⁵⁴ Mintz, S. *A Prison of Expectations* (New York: New York University Press, 1983) p.163

where women did take a leading role, notably the Cobourg Society, giving relief to poor women in their own homes during their confinement, and the Servants' Home.

Summary

Victorians defined the difference between male and female by describing women as fragile, passive, and emotional, in contrast to men, who were held to be strong, active, and intellectual. These differences, in turn, dictated differing patterns of behaviour for men and women. Men were to be active in the public world, competing against each other for power and wealth; while women, from the sanctuary of the home, were to nurture their husbands and children, and so uphold the society's values. Women therefore possessed great influence, a power that made itself felt indirectly by shaping the consciences of men. Anglo-Indian women were honoured, especially in their absence at Home or in the hill stations, as superior beings, as the Vestal Virgins of the religion of conduct.⁵⁵ This resulted in the heightened value of women in the colonial context as repositories of western civilization, although their behaviour was carefully monitored. Sometimes this was carried out by other Anglo-Indian women who were quick to pronounce on the social failings of their compatriots. For instance Augusta Becher in Lucknow made these observations when her husband joined the 61st Bengal Native Infantry in 1850:

I had to make acquaintance with all the ladies of the regiment. Colonel Macdonald commanded, and his sweet, gentle wife, then and ever since my dear friend, stands pre-eminent in my memory as the only refined and lady-like specimen of them all.

⁵⁵ Hutchins, F.G. *The Illusion of Permanence* p.49

Mrs Talbot and some hoydenish daughters came to call, in mittens, not gloves!⁵⁶

Advice books urged women to keep up their accomplishments and to spend their time engaged in elegant cultural pursuits.⁵⁷ This presumed gentility of their womenfolk was a part of the British pretence of aristocratic status.⁵⁸ By the middle of the nineteenth century the middle-class behavioural code can be seen to have gradually taken effect in Anglo-India, and it was the memsahibs who played a significant role in bringing it about.

The existence of empire sharpened the distinctions of gender. By its very nature the British imperial experience brought into prominence the 'masculine' virtues, such as control and self-discipline, and played down the 'feminine' virtues, such as tenderness and feeling. The everyday life of the British in India, with women for the most part secluded, though by no means inactive, in darkened bungalows, and with men engaged in the work of empire in court and camp, reinforced the distinction between home and the world, and between the private and the public, which lay at the heart of the British domestic ideology. In this way the experience of the British in India reinvigorated the division between 'masculine' and 'feminine', which then returned to England to nourish further the ideology of separate spheres.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Becher, A. *Personal Reminiscences in India and Europe, 1830-1888* (London: Constable, 1930) p.69

⁵⁷ Collingham, E.M. *Imperial Bodies* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001) p.63

⁵⁸ Hutchins, F.G. *The Illusion of Permanence* p.107

⁵⁹ Metcalf, T.R. 'Ideologies of the Raj' *The New Cambridge History of India* III.4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) pp.93-4

Throughout most of the nineteenth century the common perception of Anglo-Indian women changed very little. In the early years of the century Lady West noted in her journal:

The society here (Poona) is very formal, and the ladies very self-sufficient and consequential, thinking of little but their fine pearls and local rank.⁶⁰

Flora Annie Steel writing at the beginning of the twentieth century observed that 'Englishwomen often return from a lifetime spent in India absolutely untouched by its influence.'⁶¹ But what is beyond doubt is that Anglo-Indian women had a substantially different background and experience of life compared with other women of their class, and their time in India had a major impact on their lives, whether or not they were prepared to admit it. In fact, many Anglo-Indian women, like their male compatriots, wrote about their experiences in India. They could also take pride in the knowledge that they were part of the tradition of Anglo-Indian families who, by the 1890s, could proudly number among their forbears soldiers killed in the retreat from Kabul, government officers who had known the famous Lawrences, grandmothers who had survived the siege of Lucknow, or aunts who had died in childbirth in a moffusil bungalow. They could count among their living relatives a cousin or two in Calcutta, an uncle in Bombay, a brother serving in a Native Infantry regiment, or a sister married to a District Judge. For those born into such families, India was the expected destiny and 'more than half the Anglo-Indian women in India today (1900) have spent their girlhood and early childhood in the country - which in most cases

⁶⁰ Quoted in Kincaid, D. *British Social Life in India, 1608-1937* (London: Routledge, 1973) p173

⁶¹ Steel, F.A. *India* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1905) p.198

means that they have been sent Home at the age of seven or thereabouts, returning at seventeen to face the chief business of their lives.'⁶²

⁶² Diver, K.H.M. *The Englishwoman in India*. (William Blackwood & Sons: Edinburgh & London, 1909) quoted in Barr, P. *The Memsahibs* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1976) p.201

Chapter 11

ATTITUDES AND VALUES

The growth of Britain's overseas empire, especially in the Indian subcontinent, led to the rise of what has been called an imperial service elite.¹ It was a largely middle-class group, since few aristocrats came to India. They usually did not need to, because India was for those who had to make their own living. Pay was good for both officials and non-officials and it stretched further than it did at home.² This group was drawn primarily from the gentrified middle class and some historians have referred to them as a 'service middle class'.³ Those attracted to Indian service were drawn from a broad band of British families who regarded themselves as aspiring to genteel status and the occupations appropriate to it. Such families being socially below the aristocracy and most of the landed gentry and not having any significant involvement with manufacturing industry were very much part of the pseudo-gentry.

Although some people claimed India was a 'refuge of last resort for the bankrupt, incompetent and ne'er-do-well, the flotsam and jetsam of English middle-class life' and a 'temporary convenience' in the determined struggle to maintain a social position, the conquest of India was acknowledged as one of the supreme achievements of the middle class:⁴

¹ Stone, L. & J.C.F. *An Open Elite?* (1984) p.412

² Macmillan, M. *Women of the Raj* (1988) p.46

³ Marshall, P.J. 'British Immigration into India' p.189

⁴ Charles Trevelyan quoted in Bourne, J.M. *Patronage and Society* (1986) p.32

The Indian empire is the triumph of the middle classes of England; they won it, and they have kept it....Well may the middle classes of England be proud of their great creation, and proud of their great instruments and representatives in the work. It is the business-like talent, the energy, the will, the sobriety, the justice of this class which has conquered India. It is that combination of moral and intellectual characteristics which is the type of excellence with our middle classes, and a type attained and fulfilled by many of them in a certain degree, and by not a few in a very high degree, which has been the instrument of conquest and preservation in the East.⁵

The appropriation of pseudo-aristocratic attitudes and culture meant more for the Anglo-Indians than just the adoption of aristocratic styles of life. The 'great instruments and representatives in the work' were members of 'not an aristocracy of blood, not an aristocracy of fashion, not an aristocracy of talent only; it is an aristocracy of character'.⁶ By the middle of the nineteenth century character was often described as "manliness", or what has been called "the new gentlemanliness", becoming the characteristic mindset of many in public service and political life.⁷ Manliness implied the possession of "manly vigour". This included energy, virility, strength as well as moral qualities such as decisiveness, courage and endurance. These virtues had traditionally had a strong military resonance, but it has been pointed out that they were considered applicable as much to the struggle of life as to the battlefield.⁸

Nevertheless, the example of the British army officer class was taken as a model to be copied by those whose economic circumstances would

⁵ *The Times*, Saturday November 14, 1857

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Tosh, J. 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England'
Transactions of the RHS 12 (2002) p.457

⁸ *Ibid.* p.460

normally have excluded them from the ranks of the landed gentry, where gentlemen by birth, who were a cut above other gentlemen, were to be found. To be considered eligible to even associate with the gentry class there were certain qualities that had to be acquired. In particular it was essential that anybody aspiring to the status of an officer had to behave in the manner that showed one to be a gentleman. This is a conclusion which can be drawn from a statement made by the Adjutant-General, Sir John MacDonald, in 1840:

It is the proud characteristic of the British Army that its officers are gentlemen by education, manners and habits; that some are men of the first families in the country, and some of large property, but the rules and regulations of the service require strictly that they should conduct themselves as ought gentlemen in every situation in which they may be placed.⁹

The insistence on the need for members of the officer corps to be 'officers and gentlemen' meant that even officers whose background was not that of the landed interest were induced through their assimilation and socialisation into the privileged world of the regiment to accept these social values.

The qualities valued in an officer were the qualities valued by the country gentry: courage, physical toughness, a determination to stand up for one's rights, a touchy sense of honour. These were endorsed and added to by the Civilians (ICS) in the evidence they submitted to inquiry after inquiry:

The British gentleman had 'a high and self-sacrificing sense of duty'. He might be bored, might be depressed, might be ill; still he sacrificed his leisure, his feelings, his health, if the 'exigencies of the service' required it. Gentlemen were brave - morally and physically. They accepted responsibility for difficult decisions and stared mobs straight in the eye. Gentlemen were chivalrous. They

⁹ *The Times* (24 October, 1840)

protected women and peasants; they were courteous to creatures weaker than themselves. Gentlemen were honest. They were incapable of accepting a bribe or telling a lie. And gentlemen were energetic: their love of field sports stopped them slipping into the 'fatally sedentary' lifestyle of the Indian upper class.¹⁰

Whereas for many landed families military service could confirm social status, for those without land it offered a way into respectable and fashionable society. Many of these members of the pseudo-gentry admired the life of a country gentleman and believed that serving in the Indian army was the nearest they could get to it.

The outward appearances of gentility, and the status this conferred, were not intended to be ends in themselves but were supposed to be the outward sign of a common ethos of service which elevated the status of the Anglo-Indians and served to ennoble their lives. This common ethos was particularly revered by the members of the Indian Civil Service, as described by the politician and author George Otto Trevelyan:

It is impossible for the civilian to have any misgiving concerning the dignity and importance of his work. His power for good and evil is almost unlimited ... He is the member of an official aristocracy owning no social superior; bound to no man; fearing no man .. He is well aware that his advancement does not hang upon the will and pleasure of this or that other great man but is regulated by the opinions entertained of his ability and character by the service in general ... A civilian ... makes it his aim to turn off his work in good style, trusting for his reward to the sense and public spirit of his chief ... He never speaks of his duties save in a spirit of enthusiasm or of his profession without a tone of profound satisfaction. ¹¹

¹⁰ Dewey, C. *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: the Mind of the Indian Civil Service* (London: The Hambleton Press, 1993) p.215

¹¹ Quoted in Mason, P. *The Men who ruled India* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963) Vol. 2 p.94

Many of a similar persuasion had no doubt that the Indian Civil Service was a fine career, which held out splendid prospects to honourable ambition. But a more important consideration was the conviction that there was no career which so surely inspired men with the desire to do something useful in their generation; to leave their mark upon the world for good, and not for evil. It was almost a matter of faith for many Anglo-Indians that the Indian Civil Service was a race of statesmen and judges scattered throughout a conquered land, ruling it not with an eye to private profit, not even in the selfish interest of the mother country, but in single-minded solicitude for the happiness and improvement of the inhabitants.¹² Despite being very much a generalization, such beliefs had some basis in reality. The Indian Civil Service took over functions which had been performed for centuries past by the officials of the Mughal empire. What was new was the professionalism and integrity they brought to an administration which, by the time the British arrived, had declined into open nepotism and bribery. Unlike the early soldiers of fortune who served the East India Company, with their greedy acceptance of the Indian custom of *dastur* or official gifts, it is generally accepted that the Indian Civil Service did set a remarkably high standard of moral probity.¹³ The growth of evangelicalism among the middle class inspired an almost missionary zeal for the task in some members of the service. James Thomason, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, was the son of a chaplain with the East India Company and a pupil of the evangelical preacher Simeon. He wrote to a friend in England of 'the high and responsible duty to which we are now called to address

¹² Trevelyan, H. *The India We Left* (London: Macmillan, 1972) p.103

¹³ Masani, Z. *Indian Tales of the Raj* (London: BBC Books, 1987) p.13

ourselves, with regard to this great country which God has placed in our hands.'¹⁴

In the years following the Indian Mutiny of 1857 the mood did undergo a gradual change. More stress was placed especially on the thanklessness of the task, partly because of the Indian's sullen rejection of their efforts. This gave to service in India an ethos of stoical self-sacrifice which seemed to sustain the officials in their work. Indian service was a stern duty to be persevered in, no longer a project of hope to be undertaken in joy. The 'civilians' were still dedicated men, but dedicated now to the task itself and not to any future ideal that might come out of it.¹⁵ They took pride in the sufferings it involved: 'long years of exile, a burning sun which dries up the Saxon energies, home sickness, thankless labour, disease and oft-times death far from wife, child, friend or kinsman.'¹⁶

W.D. Arnold, son of Thomas Arnold of Rugby, gave form to this rather melancholy state of mind, in a curious autobiographical novel called *Oakfield, or Fellowship in the East*. Published in 1853, it owes a lot to Arnold's evangelical background, but its attitude towards self-sacrifice was echoed throughout most of the nineteenth century:

You know I never liked India, but one always takes a sort of stoical pleasure in doing a very unpleasant duty. You may imagine what zest stable duty may acquire by being regarded as a chronic martyrdom!¹⁷

¹⁴ Quoted in Mason, P. *The Men who ruled India* p.303

¹⁵ Porter, B. *The Lion's Share* (London: Longman, 1975) p.43

¹⁶ W. Hunter, quoted in Edwardes, M. *Bound to Exile* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1969) p.164

¹⁷ William Delafield Arnold quoted in Hutchins, F.G. *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967) p.21

This attitude about having to do an unpleasant duty was still evident in the later years of British India:

"I am out here to work, mind, to hold this wretched country by force....We're not pleasant in India, and we don't intend to be pleasant. We've something more important to do." He spoke sincerelyHe expected no gratitude it was his dutyHow Ronny revelled in the drawbacks of his situation!¹⁸

The concept of duty became more than a discharge of one's obligations. It became a moral imperative which demanded respect and total commitment. It became a code by which the officials' actions were measured and it provided the justification for carrying out their actions. It has been suggested that humanity and devotion to the immediate calls of duty without thought of brilliant ends or ideal results were, in the last resort, the reason why the empire held together so long.¹⁹ In India the officials worked tirelessly to prevent famine, build railways, secure law and order: the kind of task that did not require imagination and sympathy; work which was hard, but not emotionally demanding. They knew they would get very little tangible out of it, certainly not the gratitude of the Indians; no reward at the end of the day save the knowledge in their hearts of a good work done.²⁰ The sense of duty and service seemed to be their prime motivation. A sense of duty was regarded as one of the most important qualities needed by those put in positions of power:

The first and cardinal quality that you want is a deep self-sacrificing sense of duty; not a conventional one, satisfied by doing and avoiding certain prescribed or proscribed things: but

¹⁸ Forster, E.M. *A Passage to India* (1924; London: Guild Publishing, 1978 edition) pp.48-9

¹⁹ Hyam, R. *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914* (London: Batsford, 1976) p.161

²⁰ Porter, B. *The Lion's Share* (London: Longman, 1975) p.44

such as is only satisfied when it has done its best, whether the sacrifice demanded thereby be that of ease, personal feeling, or private opinion. This sense of duty is one of the quietest and least demonstrative of qualities, because it finds so much of its reward in itself. You cannot go into the general market and lay your hands upon it as a visible commodity.²¹

When Brigadier General Sir Henry Lawrence fell mortally wounded leading the defence of the Residency at Lucknow in July 1857, he famously said he wanted no other memorial on his tomb than, 'Here lies Henry Lawrence who tried to do his duty'. Inevitably not all Anglo-Indians gave themselves to the service of the empire because of a sense of duty, of mission, or of the self-satisfaction of making a good name rather than a lot of money. There was bound to be some who went to India to escape bankruptcy, disappointment or disgrace at home, or because of the superior opportunity for making money or exercising talents abroad.²² Whatever their reasons, governing India was a task causing untold personal hardship and frustration. Two million Britons died in India. Everyone who went there suffered from the heat, the dust, persistent diarrhoea and recurrent dysentery, to say nothing of the risks of malaria and cholera; suffered too from the lack of privacy, yet acute loneliness, the long separation from wives and families, or, if wives joined them, the hazards of childbirth and infant health posed by a country lacking adequate medical resources.

Despite the disadvantages of Indian service there was plenty to attract the pseudo-gentry and most hoped to leave it with a 'competence' or an 'independence', which would enable them to live out the latter

²¹ *Report from the committee...(on) the examination of candidates for the civil service of the East India Company*, quoted in Dewey, C.J. 'The education of a Ruling Caste: the Indian Civil Service in the era of Competitive examination' *English Historical Review* 347, 1973 p.268

²² Hyam, R. *Britain's Imperial Century* p.375

part of their lives in respectable circumstances. Moreover, social status was assured, since army officers and civil servants were treated as 'gentlemen' by their peers and maintained a style of life in India more elaborate than would have been available to most of them at home. This, combined with the deference with which they were met by Indians, their semi-despotic political position and the young age at which they attained positions of great responsibility, tended to encourage in them an inflated notion of their own importance.²³ In India the usual indicators of social rank were replaced by professional position, and the civilians' position as rulers allowed them to occupy the summit of the social hierarchy, despite sharing a similar social background with the military. Although the civilians styled themselves as the aristocracy of Anglo-Indian society, the dominance of the official section of the community was such that the society as a whole took on an aristocratic air. In the artificial society of Anglo-India, where the usual social regulators of birth and rank were subsumed beneath official position, the most effective way of maintaining social dominance was to emphasize the code of precedence which governed social relations. J.D. Gordon, a barrister in an up-country station, wrote with some bitterness of the way in which precedence functioned:

In England there is a nasty radical notion prevalent that men must be taken on their individual merits, but here we look at matters differently. If a man is in the Civil Service he must be a gentleman; if in the army the odds are in his favour; if, however, he is in the railway he must be a cad. The police, as directly connected with the Civil Service, are not beyond the chance of salvation. Where barristers, merchants, and such like uncovenanted scum are to go, deponent sayeth not. These little distinctions can be so charmingly

²³ Collingham, E.M. *Imperial Bodies* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001) p.20

emphasized in the precedence arrangements of big dinner parties.²⁴

The irony was that the order of precedence only had any validity in India. Most Anglo-Indians were painfully aware that what they had been at Home was not nearly so significant as who they were in India, and of course the reverse was true when they returned Home.

'Scorpion' wrote to *The Pioneer* in 1881 to say:

Were all the Europeans in India put into a list showing actually what their real social precedence was, I think the eyes of many people in highly paid appointments would be opened, and they would be unpleasantly reminded of the fact that Indian officials out of India are nobodies.²⁵

Not only was Anglo-Indian society hierarchical and artificial but it was also in some ways a peripheral group with anachronistic aspirations.²⁶ Although the social life of the Anglo-Indians cast an aura of tradition and nobility over Anglo-Indian officialdom, the British officials in India formed a most unusual kind of society with a fossilized culture, cut off from close contact with home and cut off also from most real contact with Indian society. It has even been suggested that the narrowing group of 'old-service' families, from which the civil servants were selected, were really a throwback to an eighteenth-century society.²⁷ However, it was on their return to England that the contrast with contemporary British middle-class society became clear to the Anglo-Indians. It was the very different circumstances between life in

²⁴ Gordon, J.D. *Work and Play in India and Kashmir* (1893) quoted in Collingham, E.M. *Imperial Bodies* p.155

²⁵ Quoted in Macmillan, M. *Women of the Raj* p.157

²⁶ Collingham, E.M. *Imperial Bodies* p.21

²⁷ Cohn, B. S. 'Recruitment and Training of British Civil Servants in India, 1600-1860' in Braibanti, R. (ed.) *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966) p.140

India and Britain which caused problems for the returning Anglo-Indians. Many Britons long resident in India encountered considerable difficulties in the course of readjusting to life in Britain during furlough and retirement. The widespread sense of dissatisfaction centred upon their reduced social and economic standing relative to that of contemporary British society. They returned Home to middle-class lifestyles far removed from the political, economic and social elites. This was the situation confronting retired Anglo-Indians in the early years of the nineteenth century, and evidence suggests that it continued to be the case for most of the remaining period of British rule in India. For instance in 1824 the following observations were recorded concerning the predicament of the Anglo-Indians:

The best European society in India is usually made up of individuals from the middle ranks of life in this country, and it rarely occurs that a man of noble family or connexions is to be found in the number. When, therefore, people in India gradually rise to high and lucrative appointments, they become first in consideration in the circle wherein they move, and receive a degree of homage which, in England, is scarcely offered to the highest hereditary aristocracy. But when, after being thus taught to acknowledge no superior, and with difficulty to tolerate an equal, the proud and wealthy East Indian revisits his native country, he suddenly discovers that his glory is eclipsed; that, to use a homely, but expressive phrase, he is nobody in the land. His wealth is rivalled by thousands; his Asiatic dignity will barely secure his admission into the coteries of the untitled gentry: from the privileged entrees of high life he is absolutely excluded.... He finds a kindred feeling in all the magnates of India who, in our northern regions, have dwindled, like himself, into little men; they retire, in offended dignity, from the middle station of English society, because they cannot climb to the highest posts of aristocracy, and stand aloof from the rest of their countrymen in self-chosen, Brahminical solitude.²⁸

²⁸ Proctor, G. *The Lucubrations of Henry Ravelin, Esq* (London: G. & W.B. Whittaker, 1824) pp.145-6

Later on, with the benefit of hindsight, some writers attempted to warn those still abroad of what they might expect upon their return. Edward Waring, a retired army physician who had served both in India and Jamaica, published a collection in 1866 entitled *The Tropical Resident at Home. Letters addressed to Europeans Returning from India and the Colonies on subjects connected with their health and general welfare*. Waring provided a guidebook to resettlement for the long-absent 'native' beginning permanent reacclimatization in retirement.²⁹ When Waring wrote concerning the situation facing his readers on their return to England, matters were as difficult as they had ever been:

Another source of disappointment arise from a feeling , which is more or less experienced by all, but especially by those who have held high and important positions in India and other portions of our colonial empire, of their comparative insignificance as individuals in the busy world of England and of London in particular. For years, perhaps, in their distant homes, they have been held in high and deserved respect, have exercised wide and powerful influence, have been leaders in the society in which lot has been cast, have probably had "Honourable", or some other distinctive title attached to their names, have had their sayings and doings recorded in the public prints; in fact, they have been, in their respective spheres, great men. They come to London and find that they are nobodies.³⁰

Expressions of displeasure at the prospect of being merely 'ordinary' and 'insignificant' in Britain also occurred in fictional accounts of the Anglo-Indians. In 1912, Alice Perrin published *The Anglo-Indians*, one of her many fictional accounts of the British community in India. She wrote on the basis of long-term personal experience there, her father having been a general in the Bengal Cavalry and her husband an

²⁹ Buettner, E.A. *Families, children, and memories* p.288

³⁰ Waring, E.J. *The Tropical resident at Home* (London: J Churchill, 1866) p.15

officer in the Public Works Department.³¹ The novel includes an encounter on the streets of London:

An omnibus passed him packed with people He recognised the profile of a fellow civilian, rather senior to himself, who had retired two or three years ago after holding a very high appointment. Grimly Mr. Fleetwood smiled. Logan was on a state elephant last time he saw him, going to open some show or other - now here he was in a 'bus, squeezed up in a row of very ordinary people, looking very ordinary himself; paying a penny for his fare!³²

M.M. Kaye recalled a similar encounter in London in the 1920s when her parents were returning from a shopping trip to Oxford Street on the Underground:

My parents met another old friend: an ex-Governor of Assam, also retired, who recalled wistfully that on the last occasion that they met he was on an official visit to the Viceroy and had arrived in Calcutta in the Governor's private yacht, to travel up to Simla in a special train complete with platoons of ADCs, assorted hangers-on and acres of red carpet. And now here he was, fighting for a strap on the Underground!³³

Many Anglo-Indians settled in London, favouring such localities as Kensington, which 'will be found a most desirable locality, offering the advantages of a fine dry soil, together with a bracing, yet not too keen air, and wholesome drinking water; excellent dwelling-houses, not too crowded together, and the rents to suit all incomes; convenient of access to different parts by river, road, or rail, and proximity to the gardens and park, which is by no means immaterial where children are

³¹ Buettner, E. 'From Somebodies to Nobodies: Britons Returning Home from India' in Dauntton, M.J. & Rieger, B. (eds.) *Meanings of modernity: Britain in the age of imperialism and world wars* (Oxford: Berg, 2001) p.221

³² Perrin, A. *The Anglo-Indians* (London: Methuen, 1912) p.120

³³ Kaye, M.M. *The Sun in the Morning* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1992) p.414

concerned'.³⁴ However, for many the pace of life in London and their relative anonymity was an unpleasant shock and Hunter had this advice to Anglo-Indians deciding to live in London:

In truth the big man in India is by no means necessarily a big man at home ... It is wise to appreciate the position at once and good-humouredly accept the fact that however important they may appear to be among salaaming natives, Anglo-Indians will probably find themselves of little account among pushing Londoners.³⁵

Contemporary novels also painted a rather disagreeable picture of life in the capital for retired Anglo-Indians:

Colonel Cheapstow had not been two days in London before he discovered that instead of living above the world as he used to, at a distance from its bustle and turmoil, and vulgar occupation, he was let down to actual contact with its gross materials. To mix in the streets with people who never thought of giving way, and to be disturbed by noises which no orders could silence, to be brushed by in walking, or pressed upon in crowded rooms, were acts of familiarity which made him almost wish he had retained his own space and place at Lucknow.³⁶

One of the main difficulties facing Anglo-Indians returning to England was the lack of money. This became more acute after the First World War when prices and expenses continued to rise whilst pensions remained the same. But it had always been a cause for worry for Anglo-Indians without any income beyond their pension. Matters were not improved by the failure of Anglo-Indians to save for retirement when still employed, which became increasingly difficult for those on average salaries:

³⁴ Hunter, G.Y. (Surgeon, Bombay Army) *Health in India. Medical Hints as to who should go there : how to retain health whilst there and on returning home.* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co, 1873) p.85

³⁵ *Ibid.* p.90

³⁶ Campbell, M. *The Nabob at Home; or The Return to England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842) Vol 2 p.114

It is a subject for regret that Government is not more open-handed to its retired servants, for pensions settled years ago are now quite inadequate; indeed pay in India appears to be far more liberal than it really is, for so much has to be expended on the increased number of servants necessary there to counteract heat, for conveyances, and in a multitude of special ways unknown in England that little margin is left for saving, and the Anglo-Indian finds himself at home with an income barely sufficient to procure what are termed necessaries, to say nothing of so-called luxuries which in his case are often necessaries. Living in India is much dearer than it was, hence there is little chance of putting by to meet a dearer rate of living than formerly prevailed at home - while the pensions remain the same.³⁷

Even in earlier years, when the cost of living was less in India, retired Anglo-Indians could still have problems making ends meet on their return Home. Having become used to a relatively extravagant standard of living, many found it difficult to adjust to a more frugal existence in England:

After the extravagance with which in India the superabundance of wealth is usually lavished, and the magnificent scale of establishment maintained by every individual in that country, the East Indian becomes so disqualified for the prudent regulation of income in England, that I would believe it would be difficult to find one instance where a family, in the first years after a return from the east, do not exceed their resources however large they may be.³⁸

Many Anglo-Indians had to learn to economise and cut down on unnecessary luxuries, whilst trying to maintain a respectable existence which was essential if one was to remain in the ranks of the pseudo-gentry. Waring had this advice for those who found themselves in distressed circumstances:

³⁷ Hunter, G.Y. *Health in India* p.98

³⁸ Proctor, G. *The Lucubrations* p.144

Those who are compelled to retire with an income of less, perhaps, than half the minimum may manage as thousands are obliged to do, very comfortably, so long as they are content to do without a house and establishment of their own... There is hardly a seaport or provincial town throughout the length and breadth of the land in which retired half-pay officers and others, gentlemen and ladies by birth and education, with very limited incomes, are not to be found residing in apartments or boarding-houses, and in this manner securing all the necessaries and many of the comforts of home life.³⁹

One consequence of the difficulty of integrating with English middle-class society was the tendency for retired Anglo-Indians to 'fix their tents in close proximity to each other'. This was partly due to a sense of humiliation and embarrassment about their relative poverty compared with the status they had enjoyed in India. It was a source of pain to compare themselves with more fortunate members of the pseudo-gentry:

A feeling of pride prevents men from aiming to mix in a society, the members of which, being richer, can afford to live in greater state and luxury than themselves. Poverty is a comparative term, and there can be no doubt that, for the most part, "old Indians" of the present day, in comparison with the upper ten thousand of English society, are a poor class. How few of them muster a thousand a year, how many of them have not half this sum, and yet many of these are entitled by family and rank to mix with the best society in England! When brought in immediate contact with the richer class, they feel their poverty, and this leads them to enter into a common cause, and they make for these small communities, colonies you may almost call them, where something like an equality of means exists among the members.⁴⁰

Another cause for disappointment was the fact that the Home that they had dreamed of returning to at the end of a long exile in India did not always turn out to be as pleasant as they had imagined. During

³⁹ Waring, E.J. *The Tropical resident* p.240

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* pp.62-3

their years in India Anglo-Indians often idealised their vision of Home and longed to return to the cool climate and green fields of England. Since many Anglo-Indians retired when they were in their forties some hoped they would be able to find useful work in England to supplement their pensions.

The highly tinted visions of what you would do when once you got home, which you dreamed in the day time for many months previous to your departure from India, prove baseless fabrics of a too fertile imagination; and you sometimes are so bored by unavoidable inactivity that you would fain be back in a place where the sun if hot, is not ashamed to show itself.⁴¹

In Cheltenham apart from a small number of East India Company doctors, the database suggests that most Anglo-Indians were unable to find work. An exception was Captain Adam Durnford Gordon of the Bengal Native Infantry who became Professor of Oriental Languages at Cheltenham College, but in general most Anglo-Indians had to be satisfied with unpaid voluntary work. In most cases they found that the skills they had acquired and exercised in India were not appreciated in England, as Lawson points out:

To have for a quarter of a century lived more or less *en prince*, and been accorded deputy viceregal honours, is not the best preparation for intimate association with "City men", who rank an Indian Collector with an English tax-receiver, and an Indian judge with a provincial "beak".⁴²

It did not help that whereas many aspects of the British society in India remained constant, it was common for returning Anglo-Indians to be bewildered by the great changes that had occurred in England. In the early nineteenth century there was nothing very remarkable about

⁴¹ Lawson, C.A. *At Home on Furlough* (Madras: The 'Madras Mail' Press, 1875) p.295

⁴² *Ibid.* p.462

the social life of the British in India. It was simply the lifestyle of the pseudo-gentry which early Company officials had brought with them and replicated in another setting. What is remarkable is that the style of Anglo-Indian socializing changed so little. Throughout the nineteenth century a distinctive Anglo-Indian culture developed, marked by continuity rather than change. As late as the 1930s the social calendar of the Anglo-Indian was filled, just as it would have been throughout most of the nineteenth century, with balls, theatricals, fancy-dress parties, picnics, fetes and horse races, with a little more emphasis in the twentieth century on sporting activities such as gymkhanas or polo. Set against changing patterns of socializing in Britain, the fixed nature of Anglo-Indian social life became increasingly effective as a signifier of the official community's position as a form of aristocracy.⁴³ But it also made it more difficult to integrate back into a society in England which had moved on since the early nineteenth century .

Financially unable to lead the glamorous life of the leisured classes that they were used to in India, retired Anglo-Indians sunk into insignificance. They were often regarded as bores by those without colonial experience:

They are too prone to talk shop and to prose about their service grievances, and their Indian experiences; and when they discover that they do not interest, but rather bore, they retire within themselves and mope. As the illusion of their importance is dispelled their self-esteem is shocked, and they grow crotchety, peevish, and irritable.⁴⁴

It is not surprising therefore that they tended to stick together. This is why certain parts of London, and towns like Edinburgh, Cheltenham

⁴³ Collingham, E.M. *Imperial Bodies* pp.151-2

⁴⁴ Hunter, G.Y. *Health in India* p.90

and Tunbridge Wells, were regarded as centres for retired Anglo-Indians. But many could not help feeling resentful about the lack of appreciation and respect for their years of service in India:

No one in England was interested in the problems of an Indian district, nor in the least impressed by the achievements of these worthy, conscientious people who so seldom settled happily into the life of their own country after retirement and whose thoughts never left their old life.⁴⁵

Only those who had any experience of India gave much thought to the contribution of the Anglo-Indians or took much interest in their work. This remained the case even in the early twentieth century when the Empire was becoming more apparent in the public consciousness:

England does not half appreciate the full value of her Anglo-Indian sons. Authors have sung their vices rather than their virtues, and the steady doggedness with which a man, bereaved of wife and children, a prey to discomfort and dejection, will plod through the weary work of a long hot-weather day remains still without its due crown of laurel. Yet nothing is finer; nothing in the whole history of the world is more worthy of praise...In truth, his [the Anglo-Indian official] patient endurance of much evil is marvellous; for it is only given to the few to feel India anything but an exile.⁴⁶

Anglo-Indians often complained of being 'lost in the sea of English life' and of being strangers in their own country:

I felt at that moment the difference between my cousin and myself; she was firmly rooted in her native soil, and made an integral part of her own society, - I, like a loose weed, floated on its surface, unconnected with all around me; their feelings, their views, their interests, or even their recollections, had nothing in common with mine.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Trevelyan, H. *The India We Left* p.111

⁴⁶ Steel, F.A. *India* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1905) p.197

⁴⁷ Campbell, M. *The Nabob* p.245

In India it was common for Anglo-Indians to imagine themselves as 'exiles' from the home country. But as General Ross of the Bengal Staff Corps explained, in many respects they became exiles from India when they retired:

I think they constituted a caste apart from that of the stay-at-homes. They were always doubly in exile. Among the fires of India they yearned for the cool pearly skies and the flowered woodlands of the homeland; but then, when they had returned, they still dreamed of the mighty suns, mountains, and plains of India. So too their children born in India. For myself I prefer such a heritage to any political or commercial one: but it has its disadvantages: we suffer in health, and our memories are apt to make us, I think, aliens even in the land of our fathers.⁴⁸

The feeling of being 'a caste apart' also resulted from the manner and bearing of some retired Anglo-Indians. Military men, conditioned to instant obedience from those below them, and those with long service in India, surrounded by servants, in a community where they were used to exercising authority, were especially prone to resent any opposition. The caricature of a retired 'Poona colonel' exploding in wrath at some minor irritation in his club in London or Cheltenham is based on at least a modicum of truth.⁴⁹ Hunter gave this advice to his readers:

A rather peremptory style in addressing inferiors is apt to be acquired in India, which requires to be softened down at home., where also the interlarding of conversation with Hindoostani may be judiciously avoided.⁵⁰

Similar accusations were implied by other contemporary authors, such as this one referring to Anglo-Indians in Cheltenham, although its sentiments probably had their origins in the English dislike of nabobs:

⁴⁸ Ross, R. *Memoirs* (London: John Murray, 1923) p.17

⁴⁹ Heathcote, T.A. *The Indian Army: The Garrison of British Imperial India, 1822-1922* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1974) p.150

⁵⁰ Hunter, G.Y. *Health in India* p.91

When a family return from long sojourning in the East, to exhibit their accumulated wealth, and shiver out the evening of their days under our pale northern sun, they are as incapable of amalgamating with the society to which they return, as if they had never issued from its bosom....I am never in company with an East Indian, that I cannot at once detect him among a hundred; he is sure to stand out in relief from the figures around him. The mannerism of studied refinement, the indescribable air of conscious importance and the confidence of his pretensions, all proclaim as plainly as though he should speak it, that the man has condescended to revisit his country, with a thorough contempt for such of its barbarous inhabitants, as have not been civilised by a voyage to Bengal.⁵¹

Here is a more charitable appreciation of the typical Anglo-Indian, admittedly written by one of their number:

Thirty and odd years of active service in India may sometimes make men quaint in some things, and crotchety in others; but never hardly do they deprive them of the aspect of gentlemen. ... You can hardly fail being struck by the superiority of their general appearance to that of their home-staying neighbours. They may not dress as well, they certainly do not usually seem in such robust health as they might do; but there is an intellectuality, a sedateness, and honesty about their faces which encourage confidence and kindly feeling. These peculiar characteristics are doubtless attributable to in great measure to the circumstance that from his youth upwards the Anglo-Indian official is loaded with grave responsibilities which necessitate thoughtfulness, probity, and vigour of mind and body. In England, subsequently, such men too often sink with unimpaired faculties into an uncongenial retirement.⁵²

In the evening of their lives many Anglo-Indians took pride in what they had achieved in India even if it was not appreciated by their own countrymen or by the Indians themselves. They looked back on their experiences with nostalgia, tinged with resentment that their work was

⁵¹ Proctor, G. *The Lucubrations* p.129

⁵² Lawson, C.A. *At Home on Furlough* (Madras: The 'Times' Press, 1868) p.222

not always recognized. When their service was over, India, 'giving up the body, claims the soul'.⁵³ Many Anglo-Indians would have been able to identify with the characters in E.M. Forster's *Passage to India*:

[Mr & Mrs Turton] reached their bungalow, low and enormous...Their withdrawal from the club had broken up the evening, which like all gatherings, had an official tinge. A community that bows the knee to a Viceroy and believes that the divinity that hedges a king can be translated, must feel some reverence for any viceregal substitute. At Chandrapore the Turtons were little gods; soon they would retire to some suburban villa, and die exiled from glory.⁵⁴

⁵³ Steel, F.A. *India* p.197

⁵⁴ Forster, E.M. *A Passage to India* p.26

Chapter 12

CONCLUSION

Perhaps it is only now, more than fifty years after Indian independence, that Britain's rule in India and the role of the Anglo-Indians can be seen in perspective. Until recently much writing on the British in India has focused on the negative aspects of the British Raj, often by post-colonial social theorists and literary critics who have not moved beyond the 'old nationalist assumption that the process was one of conquistadors subjugating natives, of foreign devils vanquishing the traditional owners'.¹

The problem, now being addressed by historians, is that much of the contemporary evidence and the copious memoirs of retired Anglo-Indians sometime portray a very different view of the experience of empire. Although these give a one-sided and usually favourable opinion of the British empire in India, this should not dissuade historians from taking them seriously. Some of the generalisations made by writers in the post-colonial era do not stand up when confronted with the evidence of those living at the time. Unsurprisingly, there was not anything particularly remarkable about the Anglo-Indians compared with any other similar group either then or at most other times in history, including the present. They were motivated by the same fears and aspirations that have been universally the lot of mankind. What is fascinating is the way in which individuals and groups responded to the changing circumstances in which they found themselves. The manner in which they made sense of their situation tells us much about their

¹ Windschuttle, K. 'Rewriting the history of the British Empire' *The New Criterion* Vol18 No.9 May 2000

attitudes and values. Society is made up of individuals, but it is how they related to each other and the rest of the world that makes generalisations possible.

The term 'pseudo-gentry' is a generalisation which enables attention to be focused on a particular group of people who shared certain values and circumstances. The pseudo-gentry were a large, propertyless, leisured class living in the style of the gentry, and aspiring to their status but often living on the profits of endeavour in the form of annuities or the interest on government stock. They have not always been recognised as an important group, partly because much of the research on the middle class has concentrated on the growing middle class in the industrial cities of the midlands and northern England.² The commercial success of this group has obscured the importance of the pseudo-gentry. There were some occupations which flourished in both sections of the middle class, especially amongst the professions, which were growing in power and influence throughout the nineteenth century.³ There were also instances of families of the pseudo-gentry whose fortunes were based on the profits from trade. But the outlook and values of the pseudo-gentry were distinct enough to differentiate them from other members of the middle classes.

The pseudo-gentry were concerned about the need to keep up a respectable appearance by adopting genteel cultural patterns of behaviour. They did this by copying the education, manners, and

² For example: Morris, R.J. *Class, sect and party; the making of the British middle class, Leeds, 1820-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990) and Wolff, J. & Seed, J. (eds.) *The Culture of Capital; art, power and the nineteenth-century middle class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988)

³ Corfield, P.J. *Power and the Professions* (London: Routledge, 1995) p.33

behaviour of the landed gentry and aristocracy. Possessing independent sources of income, their wealth did not mainly derive from landed property and they often chose to live in genteel resorts and watering places. Typically they included impoverished landowners, the better clergy, retired merchants, officers on half-pay, lawyers, doctors, widows of wealthy tradesmen and maiden ladies with private incomes. Many acquired a resemblance to the landed gentry through the possession of leisure and a similarity of interests and outlook, and often by being directly related.

The term 'pseudo-gentry' is particularly applicable to the Anglo-Indians who took advantage of the gentlemanly employment available in India. The Company's service offered an accessible avenue to social status and financial security to those whose poverty and lack of connections excluded them from genteel employment at home. This meant that the recipients of East India patronage were drawn from the pseudo-gentry, especially from the genteel poor and the sons of East Indian Company servants.⁴ Otley, who studied the data from Hodson's *List of officers of the Bengal Army, 1758-1834* found that the majority of Indian army officers came from the middle class.⁵ In contrast, the officer class in the British army was dominated by the aristocracy and landed gentry. P.E.Razzell in his analysis of the social origins of officers in the British army found that in 1830 as many as 21 per cent of the officers came from the aristocracy and that an additional 32 per cent came from the landed gentry.⁶ So that while the middle

⁴ Bourne, J.M. *The Civil & Military Patronage of the East India Company, 1784-1858* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 1977) p.172

⁵ Hodson, V.C.P. *List of the officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1834* (1927)

⁶ Razzell, P.E. 'Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army: 1758-1962'; *British Journal of Sociology* XIV, (Sept.1963) p.253

classes were never excluded from membership of the officer corps, the dominant position of the landed interest ensured that a military life-style, ethos, norms and standards were primarily based on the principal characteristics of the landed interest.⁷

There were therefore considerable differences in the social background and status between the officers of the British and Indian armies. Officers of the King's, or Royal, Army serving in India looked down on their compatriots serving in the East India Company's Army.⁸ Several of the Indian army officers on the database, however, had close relatives in the British army so the differences were not always so obvious. Despite this, British army officers had always been considered socially a cut above British officers in the Indian army.⁹ The popular view was that service in India was for the 'second eleven'.¹⁰ This attitude was confirmed by professional soldiers like Wolseley, who believed in the inferiority of the East India Company officers:

The great bulk of the young men who then usually went to India were then socially not of a high order. Of course, though very poor, many were sons of old officers of good families, whose poverty compelled their sons to serve in India, if serve they would in the Army. But the great bulk of those I met at Chatham, and afterwards in India and Burmah, I remember, as wanting in good breeding and all seemed badly educated.¹¹

Many Anglo-Indians would, not unnaturally, have disagreed with this opinion, as did this wife of an 'Indian' officer:

⁷ Harries-Jenkins, G. *The Army in Victorian Society* p.43

⁸ Kincaid, D. *British Social Life in India, 1608-1937* (London: Routledge, 1973) p.x

⁹ Farwell, B. *Armies of the Raj* (London: Viking, 1989) p.46

¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp.32-3

¹¹ Evidence before the 'Commission for inquiring into Naval and Military Promotion and Retirement', 1840, XXII quoted in Spiers, E.M. *The Army and Society, 1815-1914* (London: Longman, 1980) p.23

Some of the wives of officers in the English corps, who used, on account of their own supposed superiority, to affect greatly to look down upon the married ladies of the "NI", as well as upon their husbands...As a rule I have never met with gentlemen anywhere to surpass in breeding and manners the officers of the Native Infantry regiments in Madras, Bengal and Bombay.¹²

Whatever the case, India was where gentlemanly employment might be found and so the pseudo-gentry in particular saw in its bureaucracy and armed forces a chance to secure the level of social status and economic security which they were denied at home.¹³ It was possible for them to maintain a standard of living closer to the aristocratic ideal than was possible in England. In many ways they were able to live the life of the country gentry, with opportunities to indulge in field sports and hunting to an extent which would have been prohibitively expensive for many Anglo-Indians at home. Many Anglo-Indians appeared also to be very aware of their relative status in society which resulted from the class conscious, close knit community of the civilian and military officials. When they returned to England they were anxious to retain the status they had enjoyed in India, although for those on small pensions or annuities it could mean a retirement in genteel poverty. This determination to live up to a certain standard in spite of the lack of material resources was one of the attitudes that contributed to the values of the Anglo-Indians.

Of course, not all members of the pseudo-gentry were Anglo-Indians, but the recipients of East India patronage were drawn mainly from the pseudo-gentry who were attracted by the social status and financial

¹² Marryat, F (Mrs Ross Church) *Cup, Sketches of Anglo-Indian Life and character* (London: Richard Bentley, 1868) p.61

¹³ Bourne, J.M. *Patronage and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986) p.181

security the Company's service offered.¹⁴ It is also true that the strongholds of the pseudo-gentry in London, and in provincial spas like Bath, Brighton, Cheltenham and Harrogate, were where many of the Anglo-Indians chose to reside in their retirement. It was in such places, among the genteel worlds of the professions and propertyless independent incomes that the middle class predominated. These were worlds which were not only socially inegalitarian but also conservative, deferential and conscious of hierarchy at all levels, recognizing in the claims of kinship and that of wider friendship the reciprocity of duties and obligations which set limits to wealth and power and selfishness and encouraged emulation rather than conflict.¹⁵

The principle of innate, inherited superiority, that was upheld by the aristocracy and respected by the pseudo-gentry, could also be applied in a generalised way to Britain's overseas possessions. Some historians have claimed that this was a source of racism when transplanted to the colonial arena, but more recent research points out that individual social ordering often took precedence over collective racial othering.¹⁶ Indeed it can be argued that the existence of late colonial empires even served to shore up domestic aristocratic bastions, since they appeared to confirm on a global, modern stage old-fashioned conceptions of power and privilege.¹⁷ It is not surprising that the Anglo-Indians were enthusiastic supporters of traditional aristocratic ideas of superiority. India provided opportunities

¹⁴ Bourne, J.M. *The Civil & Military Patronage* p.202

¹⁵ Bourne, J.M. *Patronage and Society* p.136

¹⁶ Cannadine, D. *Ornamentalism* (Harmondsworth, Allen Lane, 2001) p.10

¹⁷ Anderson, B. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and spread of Nationalism* (London & New York: Verso, 1991) p.137

for the pseudo-gentry to play at being aristocrats to an extent that was not usually possible at home:

India appealed to the sort of country gentleman in England, the type that liked to have an estate of his own and that sort of thing. Most of us never had a chance of having a country estate in England. The tradition was very much the public school tradition based on the English squire's idea of looking after his tenants ...The English country gentleman who had his big estates looked after his tenants. That sort of spirit went on through the type of people who went out as district officers in the Empire, in the Colonial Service and in India. We were expected to take over our districts and run them in much that sort of spirit.¹⁸

The concept of the traditional country gentry was maintained in India right up until the end of British rule. To some extent it carried on in India at a time when in England the landed gentry were on the wane. The myth of the landed gentry was especially kept alive by the officers of the Indian Army, where the undistinguished middle-class professional backgrounds of the officers were ignored:

It was tacitly assumed that none of us had chosen to serve in India for purely economic reasons, but simply because it offered better opportunities ... for indulging one's sporting instincts and leading the gentlemanly life. When every three years or so we went home on leave it was supposed that we spent the time exercising the family hunters, dry-fly fishing or stalking in Scotland. Nobody really believed this but the fiction was upheld.¹⁹

The identification of the Anglo-Indians with the landed gentry had very little to do with reality and was mostly about the outward appearance of gentility. Even if it had some relevance to their status and life-style in India, most returning Anglo-Indians found that these things did not

¹⁸ John Stubbs: www.lib.lsu.edu/special/exhibits/india (Louisiana State University, 1996) Speaking about his experience as a district officer in the 1930s, he reveals how enduring these ideas were.

¹⁹ Morris, J. *Hired to Kill. Some chapters of autobiography* (1960) quoted in Collingham, E.M. *Imperial Bodies* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001) p.153

count for much in England and many encountered difficulties in adjusting to the changed circumstances. They attempted to deal with these problems in a variety of ways. Many were able to call upon friends and family, especially if they had maintained their links in Britain. It was also possible for them to find other communities of Anglo-Indians in resorts like Cheltenham. In these places they formed a distinctive and supportive group, and readily identified themselves with the pseudo-gentry of these towns, whose attitudes and values were very similar to their own. Many Anglo-Indians believed that their service in India entitled them to an enhanced status, which may have been encouraged by the appreciation on the part of the pseudo-gentry of the virtues of public service. Despite this many were disillusioned by the attitude to 'colonials' exhibited by many people in England. This continued to be the case even during the early twentieth century when imperialism had more popular appeal:

One of the most curious points about the work which the Anglo-Indian does is the absolute ignorance concerning it which exists in England. Here we have a community which for generations in generations has sent sons and daughters to this dependency of the Crown; which has not sent them out once and for all as it might have done to Canada or Australia, but which has received them and their children back again to its very heart, full as they must be of strange new life, and which has not in any way grasped what that life is or realised its procedure.²⁰

Many in the middle class subscribed to the idea that wealth and status carried a responsibility to act morally and to demonstrate care towards those under their authority. With privilege went duty, personal self-discipline and public service.²¹ A public service ethos was

²⁰ Steel, F.A. *India* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1905) p.197

²¹ Gunn, S. & Bell, R. *Middle Classes: Their Rise and Sprawl* (London: Cassell & Co., 2002) p.87

embedded in the family tradition of an important section of the middle class, including the Anglo-Indians. It has been pointed out that the Empire and, in particular, experience in the Indian civil service was the background of many of the individuals who were instrumental in the major social reforms in the first half of the twentieth century.²² The Victorian idea was that good government depended on personal qualities, and a sense of loyalty among the administrators to certain standards. The emphasis was on public spiritedness. These ideas rested on a middle-class upbringing by extolling the virtues of humanity and devotion to the immediate calls of duty.²³

This moral stance had its origins in the Evangelical movement which played such an important role in the first half of the nineteenth century in shaping Anglo-Indian beliefs, along with the rest of the pseudo-gentry. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the moral imperative was giving way to a more strident belief in physical toughness. The public schools, with their emphasis on school games, were largely responsible for this approach, and saw it as a prime task to produce manpower for the empire's growing elite.²⁴ Empire and foreign adventure were carefully cultivated among public school pupils, and the playing field was as important as the classroom in inculcating a number of attitudes and in encouraging the physical fitness which imperial life demanded. It was the games field which prepared boys for these imperial adventures. The rise of imperialism put

²² Gunn, S. & Bell, R. *Middle Classes* p.88

²³ Hyam, R. *Britain's Imperial Century* (London: Batsford, 1976) p.161

²⁴ Walvin, J. 'Symbols of moral superiority: slavery, sport and the changing world order, 1800-1950' in Mangan, J.A. & Walvin, J. (eds.) *Manliness and Morality* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987) p.248

a premium on authority, discipline and team spirit allegedly learnt in these arenas.²⁵

The evolution of attitudes favouring physical toughness and discipline added a dimension to the gentrification of the Victorian middle classes which made it more suited to the conditions of service in the Empire. The moral stance remained and helped to legitimise the difficult decisions that imperial administrators and soldiers had occasionally to make. The gentrification of the middle classes, which made the pseudo-gentry, proceeded in a variety of ways. During its evolution different aspects came to the fore in response to changing circumstances. The importance of leisured affluence waned and the pseudo-gentry adopted a more earnest tone which stressed duty and self-sacrifice. Various developments contributed to this change, especially the growth of the public schools. It could also be seen in the rise of the professions, who came into their own during the reign of Victoria.²⁶

The Anglo-Indians were no more, in many ways, than another manifestation of the gentrification of the middle class. Many of the values and attitudes held by the Anglo-Indians were identical to the pseudo-gentry as a whole, due to the fact that they were a part of the larger social grouping. The same concerns and aspirations were shared by both the Anglo-Indians and other middle-class sections of society. Their views on the role of the family, and their regard for respectability

²⁵ Mangan, J.A. *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p.137

²⁶ Wiener, M.J. *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850 - 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p.14

and the status that went with a genteel life-style were part of what it meant to be middle-class.

Despite their affinity with the rest of the middle class, the Anglo-Indians were still in various ways a special case. From the time of the nabobs they had always been regarded as set apart from other middle-class groups. During the course of the nineteenth century the closely knit social community that the Anglo-Indians created for themselves became increasingly more restricted to a group of families with a tradition of service in India. By the end of the nineteenth century this gave the impression that few who went into one or other of the Indian services could fail to claim an Anglo-Indian ancestor.²⁷ However, the extent of this development should not be overestimated, and the truth may be more complicated. For some India was a last resort, and many must have taken the advice of doctors who warned people about the dangers of life in India:

Our decided conviction is that, unless circumstances would almost seem to compel such exile, Europeans will act wisely in keeping away from India, since residence there implies a shortened term of life for many, and a lower condition of health for nearly all...It is a fact that a large number take their pension and die within the first year or two. ²⁸

Another influence limiting the numbers who went to India was the fact that it was also not unusual for those who served in India to feel negative about their time there and so would not necessarily advise their sons to follow the same career. The evidence of the Cheltenham College registers suggests that it was by no means automatic that son would follow father into one of the Indian services (see Table 7.3). In

²⁷ Allen, C. *Plain Tales from the Raj* (London: Futura, 1976) p.37

²⁸ Hunter, G.Y. *Health in India* p.15

addition, the range of careers and professions available to the educated middle class was becoming considerably wider than before.

Nevertheless, imperial service remained an important and attractive option for many young men until the early years of the twentieth century. These individuals and their families were bound together and separated from most middle-class people in England by the very different background arising from the exceptional circumstances that came with service in India. Many of the values and attitudes of the Anglo-Indians were typical of the middle class in general and on returning home to retire they could take their place among the pseudo-gentry that had remained in Britain. But very often the Britain they returned to was quite different from the place they remembered from many years before. Sometimes this meant having to make a fresh start, which was not always easy:

We return strangers to those of our own house, even if they exist, but more frequently amongst those who are grown up since our departure; we have new characters, and new places to make for ourselves, and that too often under the unfavourable circumstances of broken spirits and wasted health.²⁹

The upheavals of family life that went with service in India also helped alienate them from their more settled contemporaries. The rift between the Anglo-Indians and the rest of the middle class became more marked towards the end of the century, by which time many of their attitudes and values were becoming out of step with the changing lives of people in the home country. The Anglo-Indians were socially conservative, so the values that made them part of the pseudo-gentry continued to be important for them long after many people regarded

²⁹ Campbell, M *The Nabob at Home; or, The Return to England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842) Vol 2 pp. 245-46

them as old-fashioned and out-of-date. To a certain extent the middle-class values and attitudes of the Anglo-Indians were more marked and more adhered to in the closed society found in the European cantonments in India. Their strict hierarchy and official aspect did not encourage dissension from the accepted order of things. The middle-class values which are associated with the Victorians often appear more emphasized and of more importance in the world of the Anglo-Indians. They were not necessarily different from the values of the pseudo-gentry as a whole, but they were probably more assiduously observed amongst the Anglo-Indians than the middle-class in general. The Anglo-Indians hoped to retain their self-respect and status by maintaining certain standards of conduct which could sometimes seem eccentric or at least out of step with views in the home country. Attitudes which were the norm in India were becoming increasingly at odds with opinion in Britain. Many Anglo-Indians found it difficult to come to terms with an unfamiliar society which was beginning to set a value on other indications of success:

Rich men in India they were forced to fall into comparative poverty at home; and men who had governed great provinces or commanded large armies became less in England than wealthy tradesmen and their children, who were now beginning to compose the new aristocracy of Britain.³⁰

The full effect of this was not apparent until after the First World War, but it was a development that arose out of the exceptional set of circumstances that marked out the life of the Anglo-Indians. An Anglo-Indian from the early Victorian period would have felt quite at home in the Anglo-Indian world of the Edwardian era. There were, of

³⁰ Ross, R (Gen Sir Campbell Claye Grant Ross, Bengal Staff Corps) *Memoirs* (London: John Murray, 1923) p.17

course, changes of a political and economic nature, but despite these the Anglo-Indians seemed able to retain a consistent, if increasingly anachronistic, set of values and attitudes. Although this was a period of great change in British history, the culture and identity of the Anglo-Indians remained remarkably static, both in England and India.

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