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Author(s): Denis Wright

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# BURIALS AND MEMORIALS OF THE BRITISH IN PERSIA

By Denis Wright

*Former President of the British Institute of Persian Studies*

Memorials and graves of the British in churches and cemeteries in many parts of Persia are a reminder of Britain's historical links and manifold interests there—commercial, political, strategic, evangelical—over the past three and a half centuries. During much of that time disease was rife and medical care inadequate so that many died tragically young, among them babies and infants whose sad story is epitomised in the three Murdoch Smith headstones in the churchyard of Tehran's Armenian church of SS. Thadeus and Bartholomew.

Until late in the nineteenth century, the British and others of Christian faith who died in Persia were, when possible, buried in one or other of the cemeteries of the ancient Armenian communities settled in Qazvin, Isfahan, Bushire, Shiraz, Tehran and Tabriz. By the 1880s, faced with a growing Christian community in Tehran, the American Protestant Mission there took the lead in searching for a separate burial ground for these expatriates and in 1884, in conjunction with the Armenian Evangelical Church, bought from Mirza 'Ali Khan, Amin al-Dawla, 6,000 *zars* of land at Akbarabad, then a hamlet about two miles south-west of Tehran. Subsequent purchases in 1888 and 1904 of adjacent land provided Tehran's Protestant community with some 13,000 sq. m. for their cemetery. Some years later small Christian cemeteries under the care of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) of London were established in Isfahan, Kerman, Shiraz and Yazd while American missionaries established one at Hamadan.

Among the earliest recorded British deaths in Persia are those of Sir Robert Sherley and Sir Dodmore Cotton who, after visiting Shah 'Abbas at Ashraf on the Caspian, died within a few days of each other in July 1627 in Qazvin. According to their fellow traveller, Sir Thomas Herbert, Sir Robert was buried "under the threshold of his door without much noise or other ceremony", while Sir Dodmore, ambassador of Charles I, was buried in the Armenian cemetery where Armenian priests and people "very civilly assisted the Ceremony... his Coffin was covered with a crimson Satten-quilt lined with purple Taffata; upon his Coffin were laid his Bible, Sword and Hat".<sup>1</sup> No memorials survive.

Below, beginning with Isfahan, I give such information as I have gleaned from a variety of sources

about burials and memorials of those British who died in Persia. My information is far from complete and some of the graves and memorials I mention may no longer exist. For lack of information I say nothing about the Roman Catholic cemetery in Tehran where British were also buried, possibly also in other Catholic cemeteries elsewhere.

## ISFAHAN

Isfahan became the capital of Safavid Persia in 1598. In 1617 the East India Co. (E.I.C.) opened a "factory" there. When in 1786 Tehran became the Qajar capital, Isfahan was for much of the nineteenth century an important staging post for travellers from Britain and India on the road from Bushire to Tehran and Tabriz. Some of them died there, as did members of the Indo-European Telegraph Department and C.M.S. families stationed in Isfahan.

The earliest known British graves in Persia are in the Armenian cemetery of New Julfa, the Armenian suburb established by Shah Abbas at the beginning of the seventeenth century. During the nineteenth century, a number of British were also buried within the precincts of the Armenian All Saviours' Cathedral. In the twentieth century, the C.M.S. established a small Protestant cemetery on the Tehran road outside the town.

### *The New Julfa cemetery*<sup>2</sup> (Pl. XVII)

The two earliest graves, their headstones inscribed in Latin, are those of:

**William Bell**, d. 24.2.1624, aged 33. E.I.C. factor in Isfahan. He came to Persia in 1616 with the sailing vessel *James* carrying the E.I.C.'s first trial shipment of goods, and was the first ashore at Jask where they anchored. According to E.I.C. records, Bell died "after a seven nights sore visitation with a burning fever" and his funeral was attended by "Hollanders and such Franks as were resident, but likewise with Cogiah Nazer and other the principal of the Armenians, with all their churchmen . . . and at least 5000 Julfalines and other Xpians".<sup>3</sup>

**Dr. the Rev. Edward Paget**, d. 21.1.1703, aged 50 on his way home from India. Matriculated Trinity College, Cambridge 1671–2; Fellow 1679; Fellow of the Royal Society 1682; mathematics master, Christ's Hospital 1682–95; chaplain to Sir William Norris' mission to the Great Moghul Aurangzeb 1699–1702.<sup>4</sup>

In his monograph, in Armenian, *The Armenian Cemetery of New Julfa*, Mr. L. G. Minassian lists 149 European graves including those of Bell and Paget; some 20 others could also be British: where there is a surname some have been identified with the help of Bishop Hassan Dehqani-Tafti:

**Charles L. Arter**, d. 1919, aged 62. Ziegler & Co.

**Eric, Herbert and Kathleen Baggaley**, d. 1888, 1888 and 1892, in infancy.

**Rev. James L. Garland**, 1872–1933. Church Mission to the Jews.

**E. P. H. Glover**, 1842–98. Armenian origin.

**Dr. Leslie Griffiths**, 1899–1942. Australian doctor of the C.M.S. Murdered in tribal territory while travelling with his son and H.M. Vice-Consul Isfahan.

**Ian Griffiths**, 1930–42. Son of the above, murdered with his father.

**Emily Kathleen Hope**, d. 1931. Wife of British and Foreign Bible Society representative?

**Hilda Nightingale**, 1897–1943. C.M.S. nurse.

*All Saviours Cathedral*<sup>5</sup>

**Eveline Gordon Bruce**, d. 1873, aged 16 months. Daughter of C.M.S. missionaries.

**Frederick Knox Harris**, d. 29.4.1917, aged 28. H.M. Vice-Consul.

**John Stanley Hughes**, d. 11.2.1871, aged 28. Indo-European Telegraph Department.

**Dr. Catharine Mary Ironside**, d. 1921 of pneumonia, aged 49. C.M.S. doctor. Buried in the Armenian Cathedral "as a gesture of respect and affection of the Armenian community" among whom she worked (Pl. XVIII).<sup>6</sup>

**Dr. Andrew Jukes**, d. 10.11.1821 of cholera, aged 43. E.I.C. doctor at Bushire 1804. He was travelling to Tehran from India on a political mission when he died in Isfahan. J. B. Fraser, with whom he was travelling, read the Anglican Service over his grave after the Armenian Service. The funeral procession was led by the Armenian archbishop and clergy "in their rich robes of ceremony" followed by "all the

respectable merchants of that nation and the servants of the mission". The headstone is inscribed "Political Agent in the Persian Gulph".<sup>7</sup>

**Stuart Cumming McDonald**, d. 1868, aged 1 year.

**George A. Malcolm**, d. 15.7.1826, aged 21 at Yezdikhast en route for Tehran with the Kinneir Macdonald mission. Bombay Civil Service. Nephew of Sir John Malcolm.<sup>8</sup>

**John A. Orford**, d. 9.1.1869, aged 19 months.

**Claudius James Rich**, d. 5.10.1821, aged 34, of cholera in Shiraz en route for Bombay. Reinterred in Isfahan in 1826 at the instance of "his affectionate friend Colonel J. Macdonald Kinneir" after vandalism in Shiraz. Rich was the E.I.C.'s Resident in Baghdad.<sup>9</sup>

**Charles Darnley Stuart**, d. 14.7.1826, aged 21 at Yezdizhast en route for Tehran with the Kinneir Macdonald mission.<sup>10</sup>

**Major Arthur Stock**, d. 5.8.1831, en route for Tabriz. 15th Madras Native Infantry.

**Dr. John Taylor**, d. 6.12.1821 at Shiraz. Bombay Medical Establishment. Re-interred in Isfahan in 1826 following vandalism in Shiraz cemetery.<sup>11</sup>

**Frederick William Waddell**, d. October 1871, aged 9 months.

Malcolm, Rich, Stuart and Taylor were given a joint burial service on 17 July 1826: "there were in attendance at the solemn ceremony one califa or archbishop, twelve bishops, and forty priests, besides boys bearing candles etc. for all of which, of course, a very handsome present was given, and also a donation to the church".<sup>12</sup>

It is also recorded that **Thomas Adkins**, coachman to Sir Gore Ouseley, died in Isfahan on 31 July 1811 en route for Tehran, but where buried is not known.<sup>13</sup>

*C.M.S. Protestant Cemetery*

**Bahram William Dehqani-Tafti** (British mother), d. 6.5.1980, murdered by Iranian revolutionaries in Tehran, aged 24. Son of Bishop Dehqani-Tafti.

**Rev. H. C. (David) Gurney**, d. 27.2.74. Australian. C.M.S. Missionary.

**Mr. Harrison**. C.M.S. Missionary.

**Mary Isaac**. C.M.S. Missionary.

**Clifford Harris**, d. 1926 of typhus. A young school teacher at the Stuart Memorial College, Isfahan; his grave since obliterated by road building.

## BANDAR ABBAS

From 1722–63 Bandar Abbas was the E.I.C.'s base in the Persian Gulf. J. G. Lorimer, in his encyclopaedic *Gazeteer of the Persian Gulf* names eighteen employees of the E.I.C. who died there between 1739–61 with the comment, "probably many others", 1760 was a particularly bad year when, along with a Mr. Nash, "most of the European soldiers died". Alexander Hamilton, writing in 1727, thought that the unhealthy climate was not the only cause of death as "the Europeans often hasten Death sooner than he could come by his own accord by Intemperance and Debauchery of several kinds; and they have a Burial-place pretty near the Town, well stored with Tombs, but never a Christian Church in this Town".<sup>14</sup>

## QISHM ISLAND

Qishm Island, close off-shore from Bandar Abbas, was occupied without Persian consent by British and Indian soldiers in 1820 to serve as an anti-piracy base but was abandoned three years later because of the bad climate and high mortality. When J. B. Fraser visited the island in 1821, "of the whole force there were but 300 Sepoys and a few Europeans fit for duty; and not one British officer able to attend parade, except the Commandant himself. . . nothing can be imagined more desolate and unpromising than the island". Nevertheless, until 1935 the British retained at Basidu on the north-western tip of the island a naval supply depot and coaling station.

In 1968 the remains of the abandoned British cemetery at Basidu of about thirty graves and memorial obelisk were visible.<sup>15</sup>

## BUSHIRE

Bushire was the E.I.C.'s Persian Gulf headquarters from 1778–1857 and, thereafter until 1946, the seat of the British Resident for the Persian Gulf, a proconsular figure appointed by the Government of British India.

There are three cemeteries in and close to Bushire where British were buried.

*The Armenian Church of St. George*

A British visitor in 1966 reported seeing a number of British graves dating from 1856 in the church's graveyard and three wall tablets within the church commemorating British officers who lost their lives in the 1856–57 Anglo-Persian war; however, Sir

Anthony Parsons, who visited the church ten years later, listed only the following headstones and memorials:<sup>16</sup>

**John Arnott**. "Late Chief Engineer"

**M. J. Bird** of Sunderland, d. 14.10.1890 at Borazjan "in the service of the Persian Mining Corporation".

**Matthew Coates** of Belfast, d. 9.8.1871, aged 35, at sea of apoplexy. Commander of S. S. Mula.

**Newcombe J. C. Edwards**, d. 10.11.1893, aged 42.

**John Ferguson** of Greenock, d. 29.2.1869, aged 36. Chief Engineer, British India Steam Navigation Co.

**Victoria Goolzad**, d. 4.3.1916, aged 77.

**Charles Arthur Grant**, d. 24.9.1877, aged 7 months. Son of Major Charles Grant "officiating Political Resident".

**Joseph Gregory**, d. 17.5.1894.

**Varkom Gregory**, d. 22.7.1894, aged 43.

**Caroline Hayward**, d. 19.10.1905, aged 64. "Widow of Dr. William Hayward".

**A. M. J. Lucas**, d. 12.6.1906, aged 58.

**Ripsima Lucas**, d. 13.8.1898, aged 44. Wife of the above.

**Lt. John MacLeod**, d. 11.9.1823, aged 29. East India Co.'s Resident.

**Mesail S. Malcolm**, d. 17.7.1877, aged 32.

**Sarah Malcolm**, d. 29.11.1902.

**Elizabeth Malcolm**, born Bushire, d. 27.2.1909, aged 75. "relict of Arratoon Malcolm".<sup>17</sup>

**Seth Simon Nahapiet**, d. 21.5.1878, aged 8 months.

**Mary Frances Prideaux**, d. 1.8.1877, aged 33. Wife of Lt. Col. W. F. Prideaux, Political Resident.

**George F. Simpson** of Charmouth, Dorset, d. 11.8.1898, aged 40, "on board *SS Kilna* at Bushire".

**Lt. W. B. Warren** and **M. C. Utterson** "of the XXth. Regiment Bombay N.I.. Died of wounds received at the storming of Fort of Bushire 9.12.1856".

*Reshire (Rayshahr) Cemetery*

This British cemetery on the west side of the Bushire peninsula was abandoned after the removal in 1963 to Tehran of the remains of those killed in World Wars I and II. A visitor in 1966 found some thirty to forty graves, many unidentifiable, dating from 1815. Another visitor in 1976 noted the

remains of a mutilated large marble plaque listing names and regiments of soldiers killed in World War I.

Most of the fatal casualties (less than 50?) suffered by Anglo-Indian forces during the six-months Anglo-Persian war of 1856–7 were buried in this cemetery; among them, those killed at the storming of Reshire fort on 9 December 1856 (Brigadier Stopford, 64th Regt.; Col. Malet, Bombay Cavalry; Lts. Warren and Utterson, 20th Bombay Native Infantry); also Lt. Frankland of the 2nd European Light Infantry and eighteen others killed at the battle of Khosh-ab on 8 February 1857. General Stalker and Commodore Ethersey, the army and naval commanders, who mysteriously committed suicide within days of each other in March 1857, were also buried here.<sup>18</sup>

### SHIRAZ

Like Isfahan, Shiraz was an important staging post on the way to Tehran from Bushire. In the 1860s it became an Indo-European Telegraph Department station.

On 13 June 1811 Lady Ouseley gave birth here to the daughter who was to die a few months later in Tehran, the first recorded birth and death of a British child in Persia. **Thomas Sheridan** of the E.I.C.'s Bombay Civil Establishment, a member of Harford Jones' 1808 mission and subsequently an E.I.C. factor in Persia, died in Shiraz on 6 September 1812, being buried in the Armenian church of St. Mary there. But a long-standing regulation prohibiting the burial within the town of anyone dying without, prevented the burial of **Claudius Rich** in the same church. He died on 5 October 1821 and was buried in the then well-known *Bagh-e Jehan-Nama* ("Garden with a View of the World") on the hillside overlooking Shiraz where he had camped. Other British and fellow-Christians were subsequently buried in this garden, among them:

**Sergeant Collins**, Indo-European Telegraph inspector, murdered on the Shiraz-Kazerun road.

**Captain Chambers**.

**Dr. John Taylor**, d. 5.12.1822. Bombay Medical Establishment.

**Henry Valentine Walton**, d. 1871. Indo-European Telegraph.

Also, several children of Telegraph families.

Tablets in memory of Sergeant Collins and **Captain David Ruddell** were placed in the Armenian church. Ruddell, of the Bengal European Regiment, was attached to Henry Ellis's 1835 Persian mission

and died, aged forty-nine, on 16 December 1835 of fever in Shiraz en route for India.<sup>19</sup>

### TEHRAN

There are four cemeteries in which over the years British have been buried, the earliest being the Armenian church of SS. Thadeus and Bartholomew south of the bazaar, close to the original British mission house in the district still known, I believe, as the *Bagh-e Elchi* ("Ambassador's Garden"). The others are the Protestant cemeteries of Akbarabad and 'Azimabad, and the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in the British Embassy compound at Gulhak.

#### *The Church of SS. Thadeus and Bartholomew*

Headstones and tablets for the following were noted by me in 1970 and are believed to be still *in situ*:

**Charles Alison**, d. 29.4.1872 of pleuro-pneumonia. H.M. Minister, Tehran 1860–72 (Pl. XXa). *The Times* reported that

His funeral took place at 2 o'clock on Thursday afternoon, the 2nd. inst. with most unusual honours. All the Persian Ministers of State, except the Sadr'azam, all the generals and principal officers of the army, the Governor of the town, the Mayor and the heads of the Armenian and Jewish communities, accompanied on foot from the British Legation to the Armenian Church. All the foreign representatives with their staffs, all the European officials and residents, and a large concourse of people attended the funeral. Everybody was in full uniform and the street was lined by troops the whole way, on each side. The military band, the Shah's horses richly caparisoned, and also those of the Sadr'azam, formed part of the cortège. On the next day the Sadr'azam, accompanied by the Minister of War, went to the British Legation to pay a visit of condolence, and called also upon Mrs. Hill (Mr. Alison's sister).<sup>20</sup>

**Anna Burgess**, d. 8.1.1892, aged 77. Armenian-born widow of Edward Burgess (buried in Tabriz).

**John Burgess**, d. 1855, aged 18 months. Son of the above.<sup>21</sup>

**Harriet Baker**, d. 5.6.1878, aged 49. Wife of Dr. J. E. Baker, Medical Superintendent of the Indo-European Telegraph Dept.<sup>22</sup>

**Catherine Baker**, d. 22.2.1884, aged 76. Widow of Captain J. R. Baker R.N. and mother of the above Dr J. E. Baker.<sup>23</sup>

**Major-General Sir Henry Lindesay Bethune**, Bart. "General Ameer-i-Toop Khana" (headstone inscription)



tion), d. 19.2.1851, aged 64 (Pl. XIXc). Accompanied John Malcolm on his 1810 mission; member of British military mission, Tabriz. Retired to Scotland but returned to Persia in 1850 for health reasons.<sup>24</sup>

**Dr. James D. Campbell**, d. 23.3.1818, aged 31. Assistant surgeon, E.I.C. Accompanied Malcolm's 1810 mission.<sup>25</sup>

**Rev. Dr. William Glen**, d. 12.1.1849, aged 71 (Pl. XIXa). Scottish Missionary Society and translator of the Persian Bible. Died in Tehran while visiting his son, a member of H.M. Legation.<sup>26</sup>

**Eleanor Katherine (Nellie) Murdoch Smith**, d. 30.11.1883. Wife of Robert Murdoch Smith, director in Tehran of the Indo-European Telegraph Department. Daughter of the above Mrs. C. Baker. Her headstone also records the death in 1881 of an infant daughter, **Jeanie**, aged 6 months.<sup>27</sup>

**Hugh, Alan and Andrew Murdoch Smith**, d. respectively 21.11.1876, aged 4; 4.1.1877, aged 5 months; 31(sic).11.1869, aged 1 day (Pl. XXb). Children of the above.<sup>28</sup>

**Hubert, Archie and Nellie Murdoch Smith**, d. 19, 20, 21 March 1884 aged 7, 5 years and 4 months respectively, at Kashan of diphtheria while en route for Scotland (Pl. XXc).<sup>29</sup>

**Charles Scott**, d. 28.10.1841, of dysentery, aged 36 (Pl. XIXb). Second son of Sir Walter Scott. Member of British Legation.<sup>30</sup>

**Rosina Regina Stevens**, d. 5.5.1856, aged 20 months. Daughter of R. W. Stevens, H.M. Consul, Tehran.

The memorial tablets of Alison, Campbell and Scott are inside the church, the others in the churchyard.

Two others known to have died in Tehran and possibly buried in this cemetery are **Artillery Sergeant Spears**, died November 1811<sup>31</sup> and a **Mr. Hollingworth**, manservant of Sir G. Ouseley, died 1 November 1812.<sup>32</sup>

A visitor in 1974 noted two memorials, presumably of British subjects (**Talmage Nelson**, d. 13.3.1877, aged 3 months, and **Dr. David Khan**, d. 1905, of typhus, aged 57, Army doctor) in *St George's Church* (Armenian) in south Tehran.<sup>33</sup>

#### *Akbarabad Protestant Cemetery*

As already mentioned, this cemetery was acquired in 1880–4. It was managed by a committee of Ministers/Ambassadors, usually under the chairmanship of the British representative, sometimes that of Germany or the USA.

In 1930 an English visitor found "outside the walls [of Tehran], the so-called Protestant cemetery . . . it really is the burying place for any foreigner who may die in Tehran, and is very well kept. It looks more like a pretty garden inside high walls."<sup>34</sup>

According to British consular records, the cemetery contained at its closure in 1970 508 graves of which 117 (possibly another 20) were German, 102 (possibly another 22) were British, 49 American and 18 Swiss.<sup>35</sup> Among the British were:

**Eliza Shireen Ouseley**, d. April 1812, aged 9 months. Daughter of Sir G. and Lady Ouseley. First buried in the garden of the British mission house south of the bazaar, then in 1882 re-interred in the "old chapel", in 1890 moved to Akbarabad and in 1979, damaged, to British Embassy, Tehran.<sup>36</sup>

**William T. Bamford**, d. 8.8.1898 at Gulhak, aged 21. One of more than twenty-five Telegraph staff and families buried in this cemetery. Gertrude Bell, in Tehran during the 1892 cholera epidemic, wrote of many European deaths, among them "Telegraph clerks who had been playing cricket the day before."<sup>37</sup>

**Henry Cadogan**, d. 22.8.1893 in the Lar Valley, aged 34. Diplomat, British Legation, Tehran. Engaged to Gertrude Bell.<sup>38</sup>

**Lily Hepburn** of Wakefield, Yorkshire, d. 23.9.1963, aged 85. Mother of Olive Suratgar, wife of Lotfali Suratgar, Professor of English, Tehran University.

**Charles Cradock Hartopp**, Bart, d. 14.3.1930, aged 36. Diplomat, British Legation, Tehran.

**Dr. Thomas F. Odling**, d. 17.2.1906 of typhoid, aged 55. Telegraph Dept. and British Legation doctor, and daughter, d. 11.9.1898 aged 10 months.<sup>39</sup>

#### *‘Azimabad Protestant Cemetery (Pls. XXI–XXIIa)*

By the 1960s, Akbarabad was no longer an isolated village beyond the city walls but a suburb of Tehran surrounded by houses, some of whose inhabitants objected to Christian burials on their doorstep. In consequence, the municipal authorities urged the Protestant Cemetery Committee to seek a new site. Desultory search and negotiation were brought to a head in 1967 when the municipality at first refused to allow the burial of a Swiss national in the cemetery. Thanks to the goodwill of both the Prime Minister (‘Abbas Hoveyda) and Mayor and his assistant (Messrs. Nikpay and Pirouz) a satisfactory agreement was eventually reached whereby in return for the surrender of the Akbarabad site and an undertaking to leave existing graves there undisturbed for thirty years, the Tehran Municipality provided the

Protestant community with a new walled site of some 14,976 sq. m., equipped with water and electricity, at ʿAzimabad on the Qum road about ten miles from the centre of Tehran. The cemetery was consecrated on 1 July 1970 by clergy representing the Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Lutheran churches of Tehran. Two stone plaques, one on either side of the gateway, one in English the other in Persian read as follows:

#### TEHRAN PROTESTANT CEMETERY

THIS CEMETERY, PROVIDED AND EQUIPPED BY THE MUNICIPALITY OF TEHRAN TO REPLACE THE OLD AKBARABAD PROTESTANT CEMETERY, WAS CONSECRATED ON THE FIRST OF JULY 1970

THE AMBASSADORS OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA, DENMARK, FEDERAL GERMANY, THE NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR SIR DENIS WRIGHT NEGOTIATED THE TRANSFER AND ESTABLISHED THIS CEMETERY

The cemetery is today managed by the *Evangelische Gemeinde Deutscher Sprache* in Iran (German Protestant Church community) under the supervision of a committee of ambassadors whose chairmanship rotates annually.

To the end of 1997 16 British were among the 72 burials recorded at ʿAzimabad. The cemetery also contains a number of headstones transferred from Akbarabad.<sup>40</sup>

#### COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION CEMETERY

This British cemetery is situated in the south-west corner of the British Embassy's Gulhak compound. Following the exhumation and transfer from cemeteries in different parts of Iran of the dead of two World Wars,<sup>41</sup> a dedication service was held on 10 November 1963 in the presence of the British, American, Netherlands and Pakistan ambassadors, and representatives of the Canadian, French and Indian embassies.

The cemetery contains 573 identified graves, of which 552 are those of Commonwealth forces (UK 467, Undivided India 76, Australia 3, New Zealand 2, Canada, Southern Rhodesia and Burma one each);

also USSR (11), Poland (10), France, Netherlands and Norway one each.

A memorial in the cemetery commemorates by name 3,595 soldiers of the Commonwealth armies who died in operations in Iran during the 1914–18 war: 3,391 from undivided India, 202 from the UK and 2 from New Zealand, among them over 600 victims in South Persia alone of the 1918 influenza epidemic (Pl. XXIIb).<sup>42</sup>

#### TABRIZ

Tabriz, capital of Azerbaijan province, was in the early nineteenth century the seat of ʿAbbas Mirza, the Crown Prince and Governor-General of the province. He commanded the Shah's armed forces, and in 1810 was given charge of foreign affairs by Fath ʿAli Shah. Tabriz thus became a second capital where the British and Russian envoys spent much of their time. It was also the headquarters of successive British military missions between 1810–39. There are two Armenian churches in Tabriz where British burials and memorials have been recorded:

*St. Mary's Church*<sup>43</sup>

**Sergeant George Dickson**, 26th Regiment.

**Isabella Nisbet**, d. 3.9.1834, aged one year. Daughter of Alexander Nisbet, store keeper of the British Military Mission and his English wife.<sup>44</sup>

*The Church of Sourp Shoughakat* (the name of a revered Armenian nun)<sup>45</sup>

**Edward Burgess**, d. 18.6.1855, aged 45. Merchant and Nasir-ed-Din Shah's principal translator. Married an Armenian lady from Tabriz.<sup>46</sup>

**Isaac Greenfield**, d. 25.12.1885, aged 65. Presumably the father of Katty Greenfield whose abduction and marriage to a Kurdish chieftain in 1891 caused a sensation.<sup>47</sup>

**Mr. Christian**

**Dr. John Cormick**, d. October 1833 at Nishapur on his way to join the Crown Prince. E.I.C. Doctor. Accompanied John Malcolm on his 1810 mission. Married an Armenian and settled in Tabriz.<sup>48</sup>

**Dr. William Cormick**, d. 30.12.1877 in Shepherd's Bush, London, aged 57. Son of the above, Married an Armenian lady, sister of Edward Burgess' wife.<sup>49</sup>

**Regina Stevens**, d. 20.10.1856 of cholera, aged 24. Armenian-born wife of R. W. Stevens, British Consul in Tabriz 1847–54, Tehran 1854–60.

Nine other Cormick graves are in this cemetery, including the brother of William, d. 1856 of cholera.<sup>50</sup>

**Sir John Kinneir Macdonald**, H.M. Minister in Persia 1826–30, died in Tabriz after a long illness on 11 June 1830. **Major Isaac Hart**, popular head of the British military mission, died of cholera that same night in Tabriz and was buried in the Armenian cemetery there with full military honours but no memorial survives.<sup>51</sup> Macdonald by his own wish was buried in the precincts of the Armenian cathedral of Etchmiadzin (Uch Killisa) ten days' march away in Russian territory.

John Campbell (later Sir John) who took charge on Macdonald's death requested all British subjects in Tabriz to wear mourning for two months while 'Abbas Mirza, the Crown Prince, ordered the bazaars to remain closed for three days, public marriages and festivities postponed and his Court to dress in grey. On 16th June an impressive procession escorted Macdonald's coffin on the first four miles of its long journey into Armenia. Servants, mounted and on foot, led horses draped in black, muffled drums, four pieces of artillery and a captain's guard preceded the coffin borne on a *takht-e ravan* or litter between two mules, while four British sergeants and two "public servants" acted as pall-bearers; behind came the chief mourners, comprising Campbell and his staff, the Russian ambassador and his staff, and high-ranking Persians, followed by more artillery and 450 men of the Crown Prince's Bodyguard. A salute of forty-nine guns was fired, marking Macdonald's age.

Captain Macdonald, a nephew of the deceased, two British sergeants and two servants accompanied the *takht-e ravan* on its difficult ten-day trek to Etchmiadzin. One of the sergeants, name unknown, has left a detailed description of this journey.<sup>52</sup> He tells of thunderstorms and drenching rain, of being poled in a flat-bottom boat across the fast-flowing Aras river marking the frontier between Persian and Russian territory, of passing snow-tipped Ararat "where Noah's ark is still said to be on the top". At Nakhichevan, the party were ceremonially welcomed by the Russian governor with a contingent of infantry and Cossacks and by Armenian clergy, "chanting hymns and carrying flags, crosses and other symbols of the church". Three days later, on the outskirts of Yerevan, the British party donned full dress and placed Macdonald's decorations on his coffin before being received by the Russian governor, Prince Bebutoff, with a military guard and some sixty Armenian clergy. Next day, 25 June, Russian soldiers, mounted and on foot, escorted them into

Etchmiadzin. Bells tolled and a procession of 150 clergy and choir boys, all decked in their finest garments, conducted the *takht-e ravan* to the cathedral where the coffin was placed on a table within and covered with a gold-embroidered cloth. Next morning after prayers in the cathedral "which lasted about two hours" the coffin was taken to the grave close to the west door, exclusive burial ground of Armenian pontiffs. There in the presence of Prince Bebutoff, the Armenian burial service was followed by the Anglican service read by Captain Macdonald. In due time, the Court of Directors of the Honourable Company erected over the grave a marble headstone "in testimony of their estimation of important services ably and successfully performed under circumstances of unusual difficulty".<sup>53</sup>

Two English ladies, among the very first to reside in Tabriz, died there, though no memorials survive. The first was **Mary Dudley** of Soho, London, who died of cholera in 1830. She had married in London in 1819 'Ali Muhammed, gunsmith, one of the first Persian students in England.<sup>54</sup> The other, **Mrs. Bonham**, was the wife of Edward Bonham, merchant and first British consul in Tabriz. She died of typhus on 30 December 1844. Daughter of Sir William Floyd, Bart., and reputedly a niece of Sir Robert Peel.

Edward Burgess, in a letter to his mother from Tabriz, describes her funeral:

A grave was prepared inside the Armenian church . . . the cold was intense and the streets in many places blocked up with ice and snow. At near midnight on Monday the procession moved out of the house in the following order. First went the Armenian priests in their gold and silver brocade robes, with large wax tapers, lanterns etc. chanting the service of their church. Then came a number of people with torches on long poles and lanterns, then the body carried by M. d'Ozeroff's Cossacks in uniform, then M. d'Ozeroff (Russian Consul-General) and I; next Mr. Bonham supported by the doctor and other Europeans, his friends; then a long line of Christians of various denominations such as Russians, Georgians, Greeks and Armenians who notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather came uninvited to show their respect to Mrs. Bonham . . . when the coffin was lowered into the grave I read the service according to the rites of our church.<sup>55</sup>

Five members of the British military mission stationed in Tabriz are known to have died while on active service with Persian forces:

**Captain Charles Christie**. Killed at the battle of Aslanduz against the Russians, 31 October 1812.<sup>56</sup>

**Sergeant William Hayward**, died of wounds near Nishapur, 4 December 1832, while campaigning against the Turcomans.<sup>57</sup>



**Major Stone**, Artillery Officer. Died at Ardebil 1812.<sup>58</sup>

Also two unnamed sergeants killed at the battle of Sultanabad against the Russians, 13 February 1812.<sup>59</sup>

**William Hollingsworth**, manservant, died October 1812 of "an inveterate bilious disorder" while traveling with his master, James Morier, to Tehran from Azerbaijan. Buried in the village of Ahmadabad in Gilan.<sup>60</sup>

#### OTHER CEMETERIES WITH BRITISH GRAVES

##### *Abadan*

This cemetery is maintained by the National Iranian Oil Co. and includes British re-interred in 1969 from a British cemetery in Ahwaz.

##### *Kerman*

Before being abandoned many years ago, this small cemetery held eight British graves, among them those of three C.M.S. missionaries. **Mary Bird**, d. 15.8.1914 of typhoid, aged 58,<sup>61</sup> **Rev. Henry Carless**, d. 1898,<sup>62</sup> and **Dr. Dobson**. Also the graves of **J. H. Davies**, d. 1929 British consul Kerman and **Edward F. Malony**, d. 20.2.1926.<sup>63</sup>

##### *Kharg Island*

A British consular report of 1970 mentions an abandoned British military cemetery of 36 unidentifiable graves and "what appears to have been an obelisk", presumably the graves of Anglo-Indian troops who occupied the island in 1839–42 and 1856–8.

##### *Mashhad*

The only known British grave is that of Mrs. Temple, the wife of H.M. Consul General Lt. Col. H. M. Temple, who died in 1899 and was buried in the grounds of the Consulate-General.<sup>64</sup>

##### *Yazd*

**Kate Mothersole**, d. September 1907 C.M.S. missionary.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> T. Herbert, *Some Years Travels into Divers Parts of Africa and Asia the Great* (London, 1677), pp. 212–14.

<sup>2</sup> L. G. Minassian, *The Armenian Cemetery of New Julfa* (Isfahan, 1985); T. W. Haig, "Graves of Europeans in the Armenian Cemetery of Isfahan", *JRAS* (1919), pp. 321–52; J. Carswell, *New Julfa. The Armenian Churches and Other Buildings* (Oxford, 1968), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> F. C. Danvers and W. M. Foster, *Letters received by the East India Co. (E.I.C.) from its Servants in the East*, vol. V (1617), 100; *Calendar of State Papers. Colonial, East Indies* (1622–4), p. 268; F. J. Goldsmid, *Telegraph and Travel* (London, 1874), p. 562, for Latin epitaph.

<sup>4</sup> Goldsmid, *op. cit.*; H. Das, *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb* (Calcutta, 1959), pp. 36, 77; M. Hunter, *The Royal Society and its Fellows* (Oxford, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> H. Kurdian, "English Graves in Persia", *JRAS* (1939), pp. 262–3; L. G. Minassian, in *Haigazian Armenological Review*, Beirut, V (1974), pp. 188–9.

<sup>6</sup> R. E. Waterfield, *Christians in Persia* (London, 1973), p. 165.

<sup>7</sup> J. B. Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan*, etc. (London, 1825), pp. 124–6.

<sup>8</sup> J. E. Alexander, *Travels from India to England*, etc. (London, 1827) pp. 145, 150.

<sup>9</sup> Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 99; Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 133, 150; C. J. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan* (London, 1836), vol. II, pp. 239–40; Carswell, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 145, 150.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 150; *East India Company Register and Directory* (Calcutta, 1823).

<sup>12</sup> Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> Sir Gore Ouseley, *MSS. Diaries 1810–15*, Bodleian Library, p. 150.

<sup>14</sup> Lorimer, *Gazeteer of the Persian Gulf*, etc. (Calcutta, 1915), vol. I, part I, pp. 123–4; A. Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies* (London, 1727), vol. I, p. 95.

<sup>15</sup> Fraser, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–34; D. Wright, *The English amongst the Persians* (London, 1977), pp. 65–6; *British Consular Report 1970*.

<sup>16</sup> Papers in author's possession.

<sup>17</sup> The Malcolms (originally Malkomian) were an Armenian family of Bushire long associated with the E.I.C. Others on Sir Anthony Parsons' list were probably, like the Malcolms, natu-

- ralised British subjects or Protected Persons. See Wright, *The Persians amongst the British* (London, 1985), pp. 145–6.
- <sup>18</sup> G. H. Hunt, *Outram and Havelock's Persian Campaign* (London, 1858), pp. 192, 220, 222, 243–5; B. English, *John Company's Last War* (London, 1971), pp. 88, 124; G. D. Barker, *Letters from Persia and India 1857–9* (London, 1915), pp. 17, 19, 24, 31; Papers in author's possession.
- <sup>19</sup> W. Ouseley, *Travels in various countries of the East* (London, 1819), vol. II, p. 205; Rich, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 239; C. J. Wills, *In the Land of the Lion and Sun* (London, 1891) pp. 293, 295; Goldsmid, *op. cit.*, p. 643; Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 133; S.M.T. Mostafavi, *The Land of Pars*, tr. N. Sharp (Chippenham, 1978), p. 48.
- <sup>20</sup> *The Times*, 8.6.1872.
- <sup>21</sup> B. Schwartz (ed.), *Letters from Persia written by Charles and Edward Burgess* (New York, 1942) pp. 123–4.
- <sup>22</sup> W. K. Dickson, *The Life of Major-General Sir Robert Murdoch Smith* (London, 1901), p. 251.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.
- <sup>24</sup> Public Record Office (PRO): FO60/158; R. B. M. Binning, *A Journal of Two Years' Travel in Persia*, etc. (London, 1857), vol. II, p. 217.
- <sup>25</sup> "The Russian Frontier", *JRCAS XVIII* (April 1961); Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians*, pp. 54–5.
- <sup>26</sup> J. Bassett, *The Land of the Imams* (London, 1887), p. 114; Waterfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 99–100.
- <sup>27</sup> Dickson, *op. cit.*, pp. 254, 294.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294–5.
- <sup>30</sup> Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
- <sup>31</sup> W. Ouseley, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 125.
- <sup>32</sup> G. Ouseley, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
- <sup>33</sup> Article by Jane Crane, in *Tehran Journal*, 10.6.1974.
- <sup>34</sup> C. E. Alexander, *A Modern Wayfarer in Persia* (London, 1931), p. 63.
- <sup>35</sup> The Society of Genealogists has a copy of the British Consular list of burials. *Asia Monumental Inscriptions*, vol. I, ASI/M12.
- <sup>36</sup> G. Ouseley, *op. cit.*, p. 109; British Library, Aberdeen MSS./43209; C. Stuart, *Journal of a Residence in Northern Persia* (London, 1854), p. 171; Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
- <sup>37</sup> *The Earlier Letters of Gertrude Bell* (London, 1937), p. 336.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 267, 341.
- <sup>39</sup> *British Medical Journal* (7 April 1906), pp. 837–8.
- <sup>40</sup> Information provided by Pastor Dr. A. von Öttingen, Tehran.
- <sup>41</sup> Transferred from cemeteries in Tehran, Masjid-e-Sulaiman, Hamadan, Qazvin, Naibund, Reshire, Rasht, Shiraz.
- Information from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.
- <sup>42</sup> Tehran consular report 1970; P. M. Sykes, *A History of Persia* (London, 1921), vol. II, p. 515.
- <sup>43</sup> Kurdian, *op. cit.*, pp. 262–3.
- <sup>44</sup> Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 115n.
- <sup>45</sup> E. B. Eastwick, *Journal of a Diplomat's Three Years' Residence in Persia* (London, 1864), vol. I, p. 193.
- <sup>46</sup> Schwartz, *op. cit.*, pp. 123–5.
- <sup>47</sup> J. B. Feuvrier, *Trois ans à la cour de Perse* (Paris, 1896), pp. 245, 261; seen by the author in 1968.
- <sup>48</sup> PRO, FO/60/134; G. Fowler, *Three Years in Persia* (London, 1841), vol. I, p. 330.
- <sup>49</sup> *Medical Times and Gazette* (5 January 1878); Plarr, *Lives of the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons* (London, 1930).
- <sup>50</sup> Seen by the author in July 1968.
- <sup>51</sup> British Library, India Office Records (10), L/PS/9/91 Campbell's despatch of 21.6.1830; Fowler, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 327.
- <sup>52</sup> MSS. with Mrs. N. Moss, Melbourne, Australia.
- <sup>53</sup> 10,L/PS/9/91; *Memoir of Sir John McNeill* (London, 1910), p. 131; H. F. B. Lynch, *Armenia* (London, 1901), vol. I, p. 266. The headstone, seen by the author in 1986 is now set in a nearby wall.
- <sup>54</sup> PRO; FO/60/15 for her marriage certificate; Fowler, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 61–2; R. Mignan, *A Winter's Journey through Russia*, etc. (London, 1839), vol. I, p. 141.
- <sup>55</sup> M. Wagner, *Travels in Persia*, etc. (London, 1856), vol. III, pp. 93, 109; J. Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara* (London, 1845), vol. II, p. 234; Schwartz, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–3.
- <sup>56</sup> H. Pottinger, *Travels in Beloochistan and Sindh* (London, 1816), p. 245; G. Drouville, *Voyage in Perse fait en 1812 et 1815* (Paris, 1825), p. 29n.
- <sup>57</sup> PRO, FO/248/67.
- <sup>58</sup> H. D. Willcock, *Notes on the Willcock Family* (London, 1902), p. 76.
- <sup>59</sup> J. Morier, *A Second Journey through Persia*, etc. (London, 1818), p. 186; PRO, FO/60/6.
- <sup>60</sup> Morier, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
- <sup>61</sup> C. C. Rice, *Mary Bird in Persia* (London, 1916), pp. 4, 183.
- <sup>62</sup> Sykes, *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia* (London, 1902), p. 192; information from Bishop H. Dehqani-Tafti.
- <sup>63</sup> From photographs taken in April 1997.
- <sup>64</sup> British Consular report 1970.
- <sup>65</sup> Information from Mrs. G. Francis-Dehqani.