

# INDIRAN

*The newsletter of the Ancient India & Iran Trust*

Issue 14: Winter 2020



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## Editor's Letter

### *News from the Ancient India & Iran Trust*

Welcome to the fourteenth edition of *Indiran*, the newsletter of the Ancient India and Iran Trust. Needless to say, 2020 has interrupted many of our activities, and as we go to print, the country's second lockdown has just begun. We hope we can still provide a minimal library service to researchers who need to access materials they can't find elsewhere, and remain open in a virtual if not physical sense. The cover picture at least offers hope of opening our doors again on brighter days to come.

Given the difficulties that many charities have faced this year, the Trust is fortunate at least to own its premises. This is thanks to the sound investment our founding trustees made in buying 23 Brooklands Avenue, a perfect home for the Trust and intrinsic to its unique character. We revisit these beginnings in an article from 1984 by founding trustee Harold Bailey, reproduced here on pages 12–13. This shines an interesting light on the original ambitions for the Trust and how well these have been fulfilled and expanded.

While the Trust was closed from March until August, Joanna Salisbury, (our Assistant Librarian) and I, as well as our wonderful volunteers, Charlotte Pippard, Janet Pope and Peter Jackson, continued to work from home and keep things moving (p. 6). This has ensured that we can still make the substantial, valuable donations of the late Professor John Hinnells' library, and books from the library of Professor Anna Dallapiccola available to readers as soon as possible. Work has also continued on expanding our collection on the Cambridge University Digital Library and we are delighted that the Howard Wilson Archive of Sri Lankan art is now available there.

However, although we found that a lot of our work could be done in

this way, we missed the interaction with visitors, so integral to life at the Trust, as well as the pleasant surroundings of the house and garden. Coming back made us appreciate this even more and we are pleased that, between lockdowns, we were able to welcome people back to use the library, albeit on a strictly limited basis. We are also lucky to have enough space to carry out our work in a safe, socially distanced manner.

Among our visitors this year was Agnes Korn, who visits every summer to continue her research on the Bashkardi language recordings made by Ilya Gershevitch in 1956 that are held at the Trust. She shares some interesting linguistic insights concerning the folktales in these recordings on pages 8–9. Also making use of our specialist archives, just before lockdown, was Professor Arjun Rao from Central University, Karnataka, who found many items of interest and relevance to his work in the Allchin Archive (p.7). Sadly, we have had to postpone several visits by Bursary recipients from around the world, but we hope we can reschedule these before too long.

Before lockdown, our programme of events was in full flow and our Friends had just enjoyed a wonderful guided tour of Cambridge Central Mosque by the University of Cambridge's Tim Winter, Chair of the Cambridge Mosque Trust Board. This included a beautiful recitation from the Quran by the Imam, followed by tea and biscuits in the Mosque's café. The Mani in Cambridge 2 conference, organised by our trustee Sam Lieu, also (just) managed to go ahead safely on 13–14 March, despite several speakers not being able to travel to Cambridge (p. 4).

Like most organisations, we are also learning to embrace the opportunities offered by digital technology and were pleased to

hold our first online lecture on 30 October, attended by over 70 people. While this inevitably lacked the intimate setting of the Trust, we still managed to create a sociable atmosphere and it allowed people from across the world, including several Friends of the Trust, to attend. We hope to host further online events, and also look forward to taking part in the Cambridge Festival (formerly the Festival of Ideas) in March/April next year, which will be largely digital.

A lot of us have had extra time to fill over the last few months and there have been several reports that reading has surged. Indeed, lockdown provided the opportunity for our trustee Nicholas Barrington, an avid book collector, to revisit his collection of books by travellers to Afghanistan and Central Asia during the 'Great Game' period, and he shares his thoughts on these on pages 10–11.

Finally, in another investigation into an intriguing object at the Trust, James Cormick uncovers the story behind a watercolour of Queen's College, Cambridge, which belonged to Harold Bailey. The piece (pp. 14–15) is entitled 'Ghostly presences' – no doubt, these were amplified during the months that James, our resident Custodian, spent alone at the Trust this year.

Munizha Ahmad-Cooke is the Administrator of the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

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## Events calendar 2019–20

### Michaelmas Term 2019

**11 October:** Moojan Momen (Afnan Library): The Baha’i faith and Iranian religion

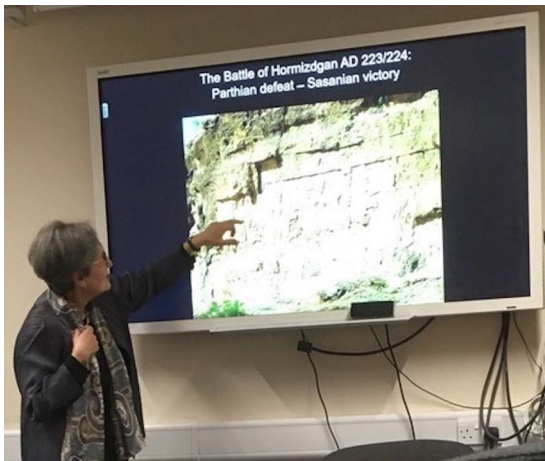
**25 October:** Cambridge Festival of Ideas. Ursula Sims-Williams (British Library; Ancient India & Iran Trust): Tipu Sultan: judging the man by his books

**8 November:** Friends’ event. Joe Cribb (British Museum; Ashmolean Museum; Ancient India & Iran Trust): The Ancient India & Iran Trust coin collection: an introduction

**29 November:** Charlie Gammell (independent scholar): Questions of identity in Herat’s past, present and future: 800 years of confusion and change

**7 December:** Sixth Allchin Symposium on South Asian Archaeology

**13 December:** Harold Bailey Memorial Lecture. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis (British Museum): Divine imagery in ancient Persia



*Above left: Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis delivering the Harold Bailey Memorial lecture in December 2019. Right: Friend of the Trust Piers Baker, trustee Christine van Ruymbeke and Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis at the drinks reception.*

### Lent Term 2020

**17 January:** Jana Igunma (British Library): Buddhism: origins, philosophy and manuscript traditions

**14 February:** Christopher Grey-Wilson (botanist and author): Afghanistan, through the eyes of a botanist

**21 February:** Friends’ event. Tim Winter (University of Cambridge): Guided tour of Cambridge Central Mosque



### Michaelmas Term 2020

We are grateful to trustee Joe Cribb (left) for delivering our first online lecture on 30 October. The richly illustrated lecture, ‘Coinage in Afghanistan during the period of Islamic conquest c. AH 30–256 [AD 650–870]’, was attended by over 70 people and much enjoyed: the comment at the bottom of this photo says ‘What an amazing presentation!’. We plan to post the lecture online soon and hope to organise more in the coming months.

Wary of screen fatigue and how much is already available online, we surveyed members of our mailing list to assess how much interest there was in the Trust hosting online lectures. The response was overwhelmingly positive and we are grateful to everyone who replied.

## Special events

### Mani in Cambridge 2 (13–14 March 2020)

*Sam Lieu*

This two-day symposium received a great deal of interest from Manichaean scholars worldwide and all available slots for speakers were taken up within a few months of advertising.

Despite the imminent threat of lockdown and closure of borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more than a dozen scholars were able to attend. They came from Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy (via Greece), Japan, Romania and the United States. About half a dozen Cambridge-based speakers also took part. Several speakers who were unable to attend sent their papers to be read on their behalf.

Two keynote lectures were included in the programme, both delivered by distinguished scholars from Northern Arizona University, and both well-attended: Zsuzsanna Gulacsi spoke on 'Harmonized accounts of the life of Christ in early Christian and early Manichaean art', and Jason BeDuhn spoke on 'Mani and Israel: Toward a new understanding of Manichaeism's Semitic heritage'. Several Friends of the Trust and special guests also took part in the events as well as attending the keynote lectures.

Stringent rules of personal hygiene were recommended and were scrupulously observed and there was no subsequent report of infection among the speakers.

As convenor, I am most grateful to the help of staff and trustees of the Trust for their collaboration and particularly to trustee Nicholas Barrington for his generous financial contribution to the event. I am also greatly honoured to have been presented with the contents pages of a forthcoming Festschrift for me at the symposium by the Trust's Chair, Nicholas Sims-Williams.



*Keynote speakers Zsuzsanna Gulacsi and Jason BeDuhn*

Sam Lieu is a trustee of the Ancient India and Iran Trust, current President of the International Union of Academies and a Bye Fellow of Robinson College, Cambridge.

### Allchin Symposium on South Asian Archaeology

*Cameron Petrie*

The 2019 instalment of the Annual Allchin Symposium was held on 7 December in the Brunei Gallery Building at SOAS University of London. In keeping with the tradition of the event, scholars at various stages of their careers presented papers in front of a similarly mixed audience. Akshyeta Suryanarayan (University of Cambridge, 'Study of organic residues in pottery from the Indus Civilisation in northwest India') and Adam Green (University of Cambridge, 'Remembering obligations: stamp seals, debt and balanced reciprocity in the Indus civilization c.2600–1900 BC') presented papers on the protohistoric periods. Mudit Trivedi (visiting Cambridge from the University of Chicago, 'In the looking glass: new results on the archaeometry of Indian glass from medieval Indor'), Yannick Laurent (University of Oxford, 'In the footsteps of Kim: the ancient monastery of the capital of Spiti'), Laxshmi Greaves (Cardiff University, 'Rāma's birth, childhood and coming of age imagined on the Kāmākṣamma Temple at Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu') and Kulamitra David Zukas (SOAS University of London, 'New aspects of the study of the Buddhist monasteries at Bhaja, Bedsa and Karla') presented papers on different aspects of the middle historic and medieval periods, while Kajal Meghani (British Museum and Brighton University, 'Finding South Asian collectors at the British Museum') spoke on the modern engagement of antiquarians and scholars with the material culture of the subcontinent. The Allchin Symposium Steering Committee and the trustees of the Ancient India and Iran Trust would like to thank Crispin Branfoot and Jason Hawkes for all of their organisation and logistics.

This year's Allchin Symposium will be held via Zoom on Saturday 5 December. It is free to attend, but necessary to register in advance. For further information and details on how to register, please visit the Trust's website:

<https://www.indiran.org/whats-on/allchin-symposium/>

You can also find the Allchin Symposium on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/allchinsymposium>

Cameron Petrie is Reader in South Asian and Iranian Archaeology at the University of Cambridge, and Honorary Secretary of the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

## Other news

### Janice Stargardt (30 January 1936–9 January 2020)

James Cormick



It was sad to hear of the death of Janice Stargardt in January this year, three weeks before her 84th birthday. She was a friend of the Trust and a frequent visitor to our Friday lecture series, particularly in the last few years. She was also, actually, a neighbour. She lived just round the corner in the Southacre flats, a residential development created by the University in the 1950s on Chaucer Road, just off Trumpington Road. And it was there that she and her husband, Wolfgang, and their two sons, met and became friendly with Harold Bailey, one of our founding trustees. Sir Harold had been booted out of his rooms in Queens' College after reaching retirement age in 1966, and had been given a flat in Southacre instead – and lived there for 14 years until moving to Brooklands Avenue in 1981 (see pp. 12–13).

Janet was not just a neighbour and friend of Sir Harold's. She shared academic interests with him, being an expert on the historical geography and archaeology of South East Asia, particularly Burma. She was also Australian (Sir Harold's family had emigrated to Australia in 1910) and took a compatriot's interest in his welfare. I remember her fondly describing the

mess in his flat, where the books were stacked in high piles on the floor like a forest. You had to negotiate your way through this forest with care, she said, to find him hidden in the midst of it at his desk. She also joked about his gardening habits. He loved planting daffodils in the Southacre park, but usually in the middle of the strips which had been conveniently cleared as walking paths.

She was highly informative, interesting and entertaining. She entertained generously in the other sense too. I remember most enjoyable dinner parties at her flat years ago, both before and after her husband's death. A very detailed account of her academic work can be found on the University of Cambridge Department of Geography's website: <https://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/people/stargardt/>. And on the Sidney Sussex website there is the text of the very loving eulogy delivered at her funeral service by Paul Flynn: <https://www.sid.cam.ac.uk/people/dr-janice-stargardt-memoriam>

James Cormick is the Custodian of the Ancient India and Iran Trust

### Nicholas Sims-Williams lectures at General Assembly of the Union Académique Internationale

The General Assembly of the Union Académique Internationale (UAI) (International Union of Academies), which took place in Paris on 25–29 November 2019, was attended by no less than three of our trustees: Almut Hintze and our Chair, Nicholas Sims-Williams, as the two representatives of the British Academy, and Sam Lieu, the current President of the UAI.

The UAI was founded in 1919 at the conclusion of World War I, with the aim of bringing together the academies of the world to collaborate on long-term projects. This centenary General Assembly concluded on Friday 29 November with a magnificent ceremony under the cupola of the Institut de France, during which Nicholas, wearing the traditional costume of the académiciens, gave a lecture in French on 'Knowledge without frontiers, yesterday and today'. The whole ceremony, beginning with the academicians filing past the soldiers and drummers of the Garde Républicaine, can be viewed via our blog: <https://bit.ly/3mkoQJJ>



## News from the library

### The latest news on donations, recent research and continuing work on the collections

*Joanna Salisbury*

Despite the Trust having to close its doors to readers and visitors for over five months this year, work on the library and its collections continued.

One of the last readers to have access to the library collections in March was Arjun Rao, an Assistant Professor from the Department of History and Archaeology, Central University of Karnataka. Arjun visited the Trust for a week whilst in the UK on a visiting fellowship programme, to work on Raymond and Bridget Allchin's archive. You can read more about his visit and research interests in the article on the facing page.

In January 2020 the Trust received nearly 400 books from Anna Dallapiccola, Professor of Indian

Art at the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University (latterly, Honorary Professor, Department of Fine Art, Edinburgh University) and an Honorary Fellow of the Trust. The first 250 books in this collection, which covers Indian, Islamic and Central Asian art, are currently being catalogued, available to view on the Cambridge University Library's platform iDiscover, with a view to adding further titles in the future.

Locking down the library did not stall the work of our wonderful volunteers, who continued to conserve, repair, list and accession books from our collections, old and new, at home. Our sincerest thanks go to Charlotte Pippard, Janet Pope and Peter Jackson for their valuable work and support for the Trust and its library in particular.

The library of the late Professor John Hinnells, formerly Professor of Comparative Religion at SOAS University of London – bequeathed to the Trust in 2018 and totaling over 60 boxes of books, journals,

offprints and other publications – is currently being accessioned by Janet and Peter, ready for cataloguing. This important collection of books on ancient India, Iran, the subcontinent and Zoroastrian studies will add substantially to our library's works on the Parsees and comparative religion.

In March 2019, the Trust's collection of Kabul Museum photographs (Allchin Archive, 1951) were the first to be made available on The Cambridge University Digital Library (CUDL). Over the last few months, work was undertaken to migrate our existing Howard Wilson photographic archive of Sri Lankan art (previously accessible on the Trust's website) to CUDL. We are pleased to announce that this has now been completed. The archive is available at: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/PH-AIIT-HWA/1>



*Volunteers and Friends of the Trust Janet Pope and Peter Jackson accessioning John Hinnells' books*

## Visitors to the Trust



Left: Site at Hallur, Karnataka, 1969 (N. Rao): Allchin Archive, Ancient India & Iran Trust. Below: Mounds at Bhamagiri site, Western Ghats (slide labelled: India – Pakistan, Neolithic, Chalcolithic): Allchin Archive, Ancient India & Iran Trust.



Allchin in South Asia, dating from the 1950s. Of particular interest to Professor Rao was the extensive collection of slides featuring geographical and archaeological sites across South India, with a focus on the changing landscape and geography of sites in Hyderabad, including Raichur, Hallur and Piklihal from 1952 and 1957 and the Utnur Ashmound excavation of 1957.

With our ongoing work to digitise our photographic collections, it is hoped that a selection of Allchin slides from South India can ultimately be added to the collection of Kabul Museum photographs (taken by Bridget Allchin in 1952), which was the first from the Trust archives to be accessible via the Cambridge University Digital Library.

Joanna Salisbury is Assistant Librarian at the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

### Digging through the Trust's Allchin Archive proves rewarding for visiting fellow

*Joanna Salisbury*

At the beginning of March, the Trust welcomed NTICVA (Nehru Trust for the Indian Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum) Visiting Fellowship recipient Arjun Rao. Professor Rao is from the Department of History and Archaeology at Central University, Karnataka, and is currently working on several areas of prehistoric

archaeological research, but wanted to visit the Trust during his fellowship in the UK to look at the research papers and notes related to Raymond Allchin's PhD thesis on prehistoric sites in South India.

The Allchin Archive at the Trust holds a copy of Raymond Allchin's thesis 'The Development of Early Culture in Raichur District of Hyderabad in the Deccan', completed in 1954, and Professor Rao was keen to study volume three, specifically the plates and photographs of sites in Raichur, taken in the early 1950s. The archive is still in the preliminary stages of being organised and catalogued, but Professor Rao was able to research and collect data from a number of

Raymond's field and travel notebooks from the early 1950s and also some additional research material on various South Indian sites from 1976.

The Allchin photographic collection at the Trust is extensive, totalling over 10,000 listed and indexed slides, which include the archaeological activities of Raymond and Bridget



Arjun Rao researching the Allchin Archive at the Trust

### Once upon a time: Telling a story in Bashkardi

Agnes Korn

In recent years, I have been visiting the Trust repeatedly to work on recordings of the Bashkardi language (or rather, group of dialects) that Ilya Gershevitch made in Southern Iran in 1956 (see *Indiran* 10, 2015: <https://www.indiran.org/about/trust-publications/newsletter/>). The recordings include various types of text: procedural texts (e.g. how to make a certain type of bread), dialogues and folktales.

Readers might expect that a Bashkardi folktale would start with an equivalent of the formula *yekī būd, yekī nabūd*, ‘Once there was, once there was not’, which is well-known from Persian and also found in many neighbouring languages such as Turkish (*bir varmış bir yokmuş*) or Georgian (*iqo da ara iqo ra*). However, in spite of the far-reaching influence that Persian has exercised on the minority languages of Iran, this formula is not found in the Bashkardi material, nor is it found in the Balochi data from Iran on which I have worked with Maryam Nourzaei.

What we do find are adaptations of Persian *rūzī (būd), rūzgār-ī (būd)*, ‘It was a day, it was a time’, which is a less frequent alternative to *yekī būd*. One of the Bashkardi tales recorded by Gershevitch – featuring a jackal as the main character – begins with *rūza rūzahā-ī bū, bū kakā-ī o nauk-ī*, ‘Once upon a time, there was an old woman and her grandson’.

However, more often Bashkardi folktales start with ‘There was’, introducing the main characters without a specific formula. One folktale has *hast-a ya maldār-ē. ya maldār-ē hast-a, hast-ar-ī ya sālāl*, ‘There was a rich man. There was a rich man; he had

[lit. to him was] a shepherd’.

The form *hast-a (hast-ar* if a vowel follows) is linguistically very interesting: *hast* alone already means ‘there is’. The element *a(r)* means ‘s/he was’ and corresponds to the Balochi *a(t)* (*t* following a vowel yields *r* in North Bashkardi). The origin of this form is not clear, which makes the fact that Balochi and Bashkardi share it all the more remarkable. The form *hast-a(r)* thus contains two finite verb forms, ‘there is’ and ‘was’.

The form *bū* in the formula quoted above is a variant of *būd* found when a vowel follows. Given that Bashkardi has *r* after vowels where Balochi has *t*, *būd* cannot be a genuine Bashkardi form (vs. Balochi *būt*). Thus, differently from *yekī būd, yekī nabūd*, for which neighbouring cultures have versions in their own languages, the formula *rūza rūzahā-ī būd* is not a translation, but has been borrowed as a whole from Persian. This is confirmed by a parallel phenomenon found in Balochi: one of the folktales that Maryam Nourzaei recorded in Iranian Balochistan starts with *hast-a deya ya rōč-e rōzegār-e, hast-a ya bādešāh-ē a*, ‘Then there was one day, one time, there was, there was a king’. Here, we see an adaptation of the Persian formula, combining *rōzegār*, which is borrowed from (classical) Persian, with *rōč*, the Balochi cognate of *rōz*. Interestingly, the Balochi expression combines the Persian formula with the *hast-a* form mentioned above.

The two introductions also differ in another aspect: the one with *būd* introduces two characters together, while the one with *hast-a* introduces them one by one, and this continues in the next sentences, where each point is mentioned separately: *ī sālāl-ī fakīr a. ī fakīr do tā čuk-ī hast-ī a o ya zā*, ‘This shepherd was poor. The poor man had [lit. to him were] two children and one wife’.

Introducing characters and features

one at a time is typical of oral-style storytelling, and this tale, introduced by a Bashkardi formulation, is of an oral style throughout, while the jackal story, introduced by the Persian formula, is more reminiscent of literary style.

It seems to me that the way a folktale is introduced goes with the structure and contents of the tale. The story of the shepherd is a long text composed of a whole series of motifs. While the individual motifs have parallels in folktales from other cultures, the way they are interwoven, some also rather loosely combined, is I think likewise characteristic of oral-style storytelling, and this particular tale might be specific to Bashkardi, or perhaps even composed spontaneously on the specific occasion when Gershevitch recorded it.

The text starting with the Persian formula is quite different, and of a ‘classical’ folktale type: A jackal steals yoghurt from an old woman. She cuts off his tail in order to stop him stealing her yoghurt, and demands that he brings her milk in exchange for his tail. The jackal thus goes to the goat to ask for milk; the goat promises milk under the condition that he brings some leaves; the tree promises leaves in return for a bird’s nest, the bird demands grain, and the field wants water. Having watered the field, the jackal goes on the reverse journey to bring the required items to everyone and get back his tail.

This chain of events will surely remind readers of similar folktales from other countries. These are called ‘cumulative tales’ in folklore studies. While cumulative tales are not particularly frequent in Persian according to Ulrich Marzolph, who studied a corpus of some 1300 folktales (*Typologie des persischen Volksmärchens*, Beirut 1984), his inventory does include a close parallel to our tale, which is similar



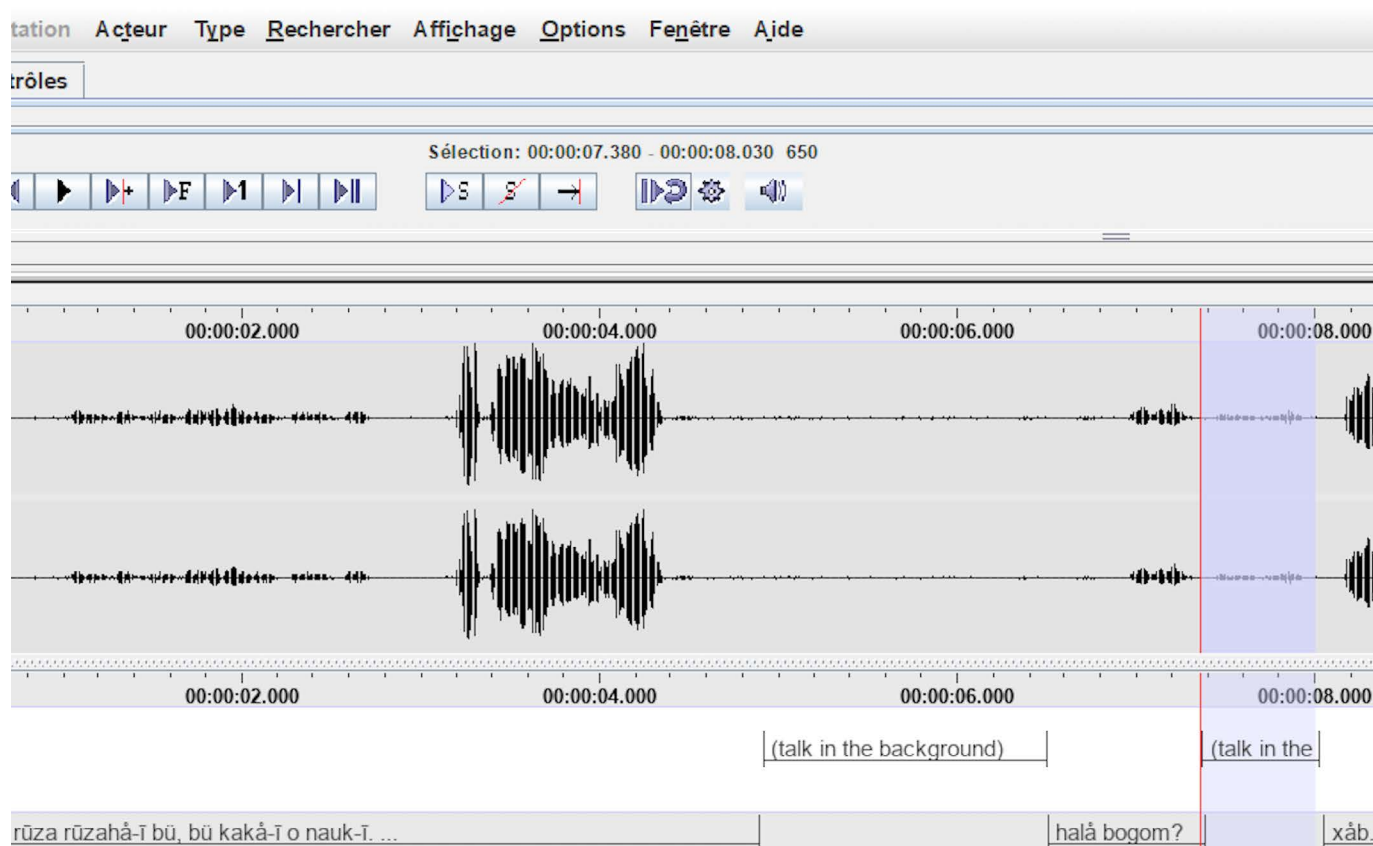
## Visitors to the Trust

not only in the items constituting the chain, but also in the event which sets it in train. Here, it is a cat (or mouse) stealing milk from an old woman, who tears off its tail. The cat is then obliged to replace the milk, the goat demands to be fed, the meadow wants water, etc.

The typology of folktales known as the 'Aarne-Thompson-Uther Index' (Helsinki 2004) shows that this tale

is found in many parts of the world from Europe to East Asia, East Africa and the Americas. The Bashkardi version and the jackal it features could now be added to this list.

Agnes Korn is a Researcher at the FRE Mondes iranien et indien, French National Centre for Scientific Research.



A snapshot of the the Bashkardi linguistic data being analysed using ELAN software

## Lockdown reading

### Books about Afghanistan

#### *Nicholas Barrington*

I have always loved books. It made sense to try and build up a library related to places where I served as a diplomat. This included antiquities and rare books where they could be found. Thus a collection of books connected with Afghanistan, Iran, Central Asia and Pakistan was available in my Cambridge house at the time of the coronavirus lockdown. I have been happy in isolation to take an overall look at them, read through the more obscure volumes without interruption and re-read others after many years.

Twenty years ago the assistant librarian of the Ancient India and Iran Trust recorded that many of my books were not in the Trust's fine library. I had concentrated on the 'Great Game' period of history in Afghanistan and Central Asia in the nineteenth century. There were still many links with the Trust's devotion to earlier centuries.

The enterprising travellers, explorers, diplomats and political agents who made a name for themselves in the Great Game were usually familiar with the classics and keen to identify places mentioned in the campaigns of Alexander the Great. They would know about Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta and the brilliant memoirs of the Emperor Babur. But since the collapse of the Mughal and Safavid dynasties there had been virtually no European visitors to Central Asia and cities like Balkh, Bokhara, Herat and Khiva were a mystery. The East India Company were consolidating their hold on Bengal, central and southern India but were determined not to offend their ally Maharajah Ranjit Singh, the powerful, disabled, diminutive ruler of the Sikh state in the Punjab. They knew little of what

was in Afghanistan and beyond.

In 1815 an impressive book called *The Kingdom of Caubul* was published by a senior Indian official, Mountstuart Elphinstone, with a mass of information that he had gleaned from a visit to call on the Afghan Amir at Peshawar, the latter's winter capital (soon to fall to the Sikhs). He was not allowed to travel further. The admired pioneer British traveller at this time was the middle-aged veterinary specialist William Moorcroft who was searching for quality Turcoman horses to improve Indian bloodstock. He visited Bokhara and was probably the first of his nationality to see Leh in Baltistan and the Bamian Buddhas. He and his companion died from unknown causes in what is now northern Afghanistan but was then an area controlled by Uzbek warlords, of whom the cruel slave trader Murad Beg in Kunduz became pre-eminent.

Others who visited the area, including Kashmir, in those early days were the Harrovian traveller (and artist) G.T. Vigne, the romantic French botanist Victor Jacquemont, the rough-hewn perhaps Irish soldier of fortune Alexander Gardner, who liked to dress in Scottish tweeds, the tough American Josiah Harlan and the remarkable man claiming at first to be American, Charles Masson. But the first to publish a full account of his adventurous journeys was Alexander Burnes, grand nephew of the Scottish poet. He was an ambitious young Indian political officer who had successfully carried out the tricky task of escorting five large English dray horses up the rivers of the Punjab as a British present for Ranjit Singh. He was then allowed and encouraged to make an arduous journey through Kabul to Bokhara and to the Caspian Sea, to explore the terrain and possibilities of British trade. He survived the conditions and dangers (it was



*Alexander Burnes in Bokharan clothes*

routine for travellers to be robbed, kidnapped and sold in Bokhara's slave markets) and returned to Bombay by Merv, Meshad, Tehran and Bushire. His clear eloquent account of his journey appeared in print in London in 1825 by which time he had returned to the UK. He became a celebrity, lionised in high society and, among other things, elected to the Athenaeum without a vote. (That is my own London club! Good library too). He became 'Bokhara Burnes'.

The quality of his writing and that of his contemporaries was high, as can be seen in their books and letters. They wrote fluently about landscapes, vegetation, buildings, local costumes and customs. Maps and plans were often included. No photographs, so they described people's faces. No telephones, so messages to superiors or subordinates were conveyed by frequent letters. These were delivered, sometimes over long distances and sometimes through battlefields, by special couriers, who in India were called *kossids*. In addition, they usually performed an information/intelligence gathering service. Educated local *munshis*

## Lockdown reading

(scribes) were needed to write and make copies. The main foreign language used was Persian.

Back in India Burnes was asked to make another visit to Kabul ostensibly for trade but partly to discourage the intelligent youngish Kabul ruler, Dost Mohammed Khan, prime among his many Barakzai squabbling brothers, from succumbing to blandishments from Russia, which appeared determined to extend its control over Central Asian khanates, and could threaten India.

He met a Russian envoy (they treated each other with great courtesy) and got to know the Amir, but had not been politically briefed and could not give the latter the assurance of British support that he requested. Masson was in Kabul and Burnes also met there the eccentric world-travelling polyglot missionary Joseph Wolff. The latter was an Austrian Jew converted to Anglicanism, married to an English aristocrat, who argued and preached everywhere and was to become famous several years later for undertaking a perilous trip to Bokhara to find out what had happened to two British officers, Stoddart and Conolly, who had been thrown into an infested snake pit and then executed by the Amir of Bokhara. The book trade allows no credit for authors' signatures but I have a fourth edition (1846) of Wolff's *Mission to Bokhara* clearly signed by the man, providing an indirect personal contact that I enjoy.

Burnes' final visit to Kabul (he was now Sir Alexander) was as part of the ill-conceived and ill-fated British attempt to send an army into Afghanistan to replace Dost Mohammed as ruler. He used his time there to finish his second book, but lost his life along with thousands of other British and Indian military and civilians when the Afghans turned against their invaders in what became known

in Britain as the First Afghan War. Several of those who had been made prisoners, and survived, wrote vividly about their experiences, notably the redoubtable Lady Sale, George Lawrence, eldest of his two more famous brothers, Henry and John, and Vincent Eyre, who was also a talented amateur artist. The two most substantial books about this period, in addition to those of Burnes, were the *Life of the Amir Dost Mohammed Khan of Kabul* by the intelligent Hindu who was Burnes' *munshi* and companion, Mohan Lal, and the four-volume memoirs of Charles Masson. He had been a British deserter whose detailed reports were so valuable to the British that he was pardoned. He took a special interest in archaeology, exploring many Buddhist stupas in the area, which they called 'topes', and collecting a huge quantity of ancient coins which he managed to have sent back to the British Museum.

There are other books of interest about Herat (Pottinger), Khiva (Burnaby and Abbott), Merv (O'Donovan), and of course later visitors to the area such as Robertson (*The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush*) and Sir Aurel Stein. Also Sir Thomas Holdich of the Boundary Commission. There were the two Sikh wars (1845 and 1848), what we used to call the Indian Mutiny (1857) and two more Afghan wars, but British public interest in Central Asia was not really aroused until around the time of the Second World War. The British diplomat Sir Fitzroy Maclean made an impact with his *A Person from England* in 1949. I had the pleasure of meeting him years later in Islamabad. Peter Hopkirk's books including *The Great Game* and *The Search for Kim* epitomised a series of good writing and research, particularly bringing in the Russian point of view, which has currently culminated in the books of William

Dalrymple. Some well-written travel books such as Eric Newby's *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* (1958) also became very popular.

I have more material to read but the following are some preliminary conclusions reviewing this body of books as a whole: Slavery was never far away in the nineteenth century. The British did what they could to abolish it. Communities of Jews and Armenians, as well as Hindus, existed in most Central Asian cities. Safe travel mostly depended on joining well-organised and armed caravans. Travellers had little difficulty in obtaining funds and credit from the Hindu bankers in Shikarpur, a modest enough town in north-west Sindh. Not only ladies of the area kept their wealth in caches of valuable jewels. Fine quality Kashmir shawls were everywhere welcomed as gifts. Many travellers were interested in local history and archaeology but surprisingly few in art history, an area of study influenced at last by Robert Byron's delightful book *The Road to Oxiana* (1937 and 1950). People recorded visits to the ruins of Balkh, the 'mother of cities', but few mentioned the tiled tombs nearby nor the blaze of colourful ceramics on the shrine of the Caliph Ali at Mazar-i-Sharif. I have detected no mention of the dramatic Minaret of Jam, which was only rediscovered shortly before I arrived in Kabul in 1959.

Nicholas Barrington is former British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Honorary Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, and a trustee of the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

### The Ancient India and Iran Trust

*Harold Bailey*

The Ancient India and Iran Trust was founded to maintain and advance the study of the two related but clearly distinct civilisations of India and Iran, from their prehistoric beginnings up to recent times.

For the modern study of these cultural areas there is excellent provision elsewhere, and the national languages of Hindi and Urdu in India and Pakistan and of Persian in Iran are easily accessible in both written and spoken form. But comparatively few are drawn to the older studies: to investigate the creative work in art and literature, to trace the character of these ancient cultures through archaeology and linguistic research, are more recondite pursuits. At a time of crisis for Oriental Studies in the United Kingdom (and to some extent also in other European countries, as well as the United States), it has seemed desirable to pledge private support to Indian and Iranian studies. The plan to found a trust was formed by two archaeologists, Dr Raymond Allchin and Dr Bridget Allchin. They were joined by Professor Johanna van Lohuizen-de Leeuw who had taught Indian art and archaeology in Cambridge some twenty years before. All three are concerned with the art and archaeology not only of India itself, but of the whole area of South Asia influenced by the spread of Indian culture.

Their original plan was enlarged and greatly expanded when they learned of my search for a permanent place to house my library – collected over a period of fifty years – of books covering both the Indian and the Iranian spheres. My own approach has been from the two sides of linguistic history and religion. I have been keenly

interested in the development of the one Indo-European language (first attested in Hittite records of about 2000 BC) from which both Indian and Iranian evolved. The other field of enquiry has been the oldest form of the Zoroastrian religion. My collection comprises the basic materials in religion, history and literature, necessary for tracing the development of these through the ages. As such it would nicely complement the collections of art and archaeological books to be brought together by the other founding trustees. The Ancient India Trust, enlarged to the Ancient India and Iran Trust, offered precisely what I had been seeking so long.

In due course a fifth member joined as a founding trustee: Dr Jan van Lohuizen, who – again over twenty years ago – had taken a Cambridge doctorate with a thesis on the activities of the Dutch East India Company in India.

The Trust founded, it was necessary to find a house to serve as a centre for study and large enough to accommodate not only my own library of over 15,000 books, but those of the four other trustees at a later stage. After three years of searching I happened to notice a house for sale in Brooklands Avenue. It seemed an ideal place for the library of a small institute. My enquiries at the estate agents led to prompt results: the owner, anxious to purchase another property that he had long set his heart on, was ready at once to hand over the house with its large garden, and in April 1981 Brooklands House became the joint property of the five trustees, and I went to live there.

Solidly built as a family residence in 1860, the house is in good repair. The previous owners had done much to modernise it. On the ground floor there are two large front rooms, one smaller room, and a kitchen. The three rooms were lined with shelves

and now hold the greater part of my library. There are five excellent rooms upstairs, and at the back of the house – originally the servants' quarters – a further five rooms which we plan to convert into offices, and the large garage beneath them into a bookstore.

The aims of the Trust, which we have set out in a brochure, are stated ambitiously, but recognise that it will take time to carry out the full programme. As and when funds permit, we aim to finance awards to scholars who wish to work on a topic within the broad spectrum covered by the Trust. It may not prove possible to provide full fellowships at the present high levels of funding, but one could hope to supplement grants from other sources. In addition, finance for publications and travel is a high priority.

At present the Trust's income for research is modest, but small awards to individual research students have already been made, while some support has also been given to institutions and other scholarly enterprises: for the past four years to the British Archaeological Mission to Pakistan; to the International Conference of South Asian Archaeology, meeting in Cambridge in 1981, as well as a contribution towards the publication of its Proceedings. Also, a donation towards the purchase, by the Fitzwilliam Museum, of a superb Nepalese Vishnu figure in bronze.

Very important for the Trust in its Iranian interests is to have received earlier this year a grant from the Leverhulme Trust for a research scholar to assist me in the projected edition of the Bundahishn (one of the most important of the Zoroastrian books of learning of the 9th century AD), and in the gathering of materials towards a dictionary of Zoroastrian Pahlavi – the language of Iranian literature in Sasanian times. At present our priority must be to

## From the archives



*Left: Harold Bailey (centre), picking flowers in the Trust's garden for guests Zaira Khiba (left), her brother Vova and daughter Amra, 1983. Right: Browsing books at the Trust, again with Zaira Khiba (right) and her brother Evgenij, 1986. Photos: George Hewitt.*

equip and refurbish the house: space must be made and shelving fitted to receive Professor van Lohuizen-de Leeuw's library of South Asian art and archaeology as well as Dr van Lohuizen's books on history, which are due to arrive in the coming year. But the library of Indo-Iranian books is already open and a small but steady flow of scholars over the past two years has made use of it. The Armenian section (important both for Indo-European linguistic history and for its close involvement in the history of Iran) includes some books, published last century, which are not to be found in the Cambridge University Library, and these were much appreciated by Professor Robert Thomson, in charge of Armenian at Harvard University, while he was here on leave in 1982. On his departure he presented several Armenian books to the library whose holdings continue also to increase steadily in its other departments. Beside the books covering the

Hindu and Buddhist traditions within India itself, there are also the basic materials for the spread of Buddhism to the north, to Tibet, China and beyond, and also, to a lesser extent, for the Indianisation of South East Asia. Similarly, on the Iranian side, the coverage is not only of Iran from the oldest Zoroastrian tradition to the Sasanian period: a sizeable section is devoted to Ossetic, an Iranian language still spoken in the Caucasus, which also preserves a whole epic tradition from ancient times. Already the empire of the Achaemenians spread Iranian influence widely to the northwest (Armenia and the Caucasus) and to the northeast (Sogdiana and beyond). The Iranians were in close touch with the western Mediterranean world, first Greek, then Roman and Byzantine, and the influence of Iran in the field of religion, beside Mithraism which reached as far as Scotland, spread out to Western Asia and has some importance also for the Mandaeans

of Mesopotamia and modern Iraq. The time span covered by these various Iranian traditions is almost 3000 years.

We greatly hope that with outside support the Trust will be enabled to carry out its aim to develop interest in all aspects of the Indian and Iranian traditions.

This article was first published in *The Cambridge Review*, 30 January 1984.

We are grateful to George Hewitt, Emeritus Professor of Caucasian Languages, SOAS University of London, for sharing his lovely photos of his family and Harold Bailey at the Trust in its early days.

## From the house

### Ghostly presences

*James Cormick*

In old houses like the Trust's at 23 Brooklands Avenue there are the ghostly presences of not only the people who have lived and worked here but also of their friends and acquaintances. This is especially so when their personal possessions are left in situ and bequeathed to the houses' later inhabitants.

Our house was part of the mid-19th-century expansion of Cambridge southwards into what used to be known as Newtown. It was bought by the five founding trustees, Harold Bailey, Joan and Jan Van Louhuizen and Bridget and Raymond Allchin, in 1981 to become the headquarters of the Ancient India and Iran Trust, to provide accommodation for the first three in the group of five, and to house their possessions. It then became the tradition for these

possessions to be left to the Trust for the benefit and enjoyment of later generations. And as a result of this, apart from the numerous books on India and Iran and Central Asia which form the nucleus of the library of the house, we have inherited furniture, pictures, coins and objets d'art of considerable interest.

I have already written in previous newsletters about some of these pictures, and now write about another one which has intrigued me for a long time. It is a watercolour of Queens' College, Cambridge, by 'Sir Gilbert Wyles, sometime Secretary to the Governor of Bombay' according to the note scribbled on the back of the picture by Sir Harold. The name rang a bell when I first read it some time after Sir Harold's death. I remembered being told he was a member of the string quartet that used to meet in Sir Harold's rooms in Queens' in the 1940s and 50s. Wyles

played the violin, Bailey the viola, and Ilya Gershevitch (then lecturer in Iranian Studies at the University) the cello. There were other members at other times, younger academics like Bob Coleman, Mark Dresden and Lucien Hatfield, but they are not part of this story.

Actually, Sir Harold got it wrong. His name was Wiles not Wyles, and he ended up as Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay, not Secretary to the Governor. He was born in 1880 and died in 1961 and had strong Cambridge connections. He went to the Perse School and then St Catherine's College, which he graduated from in 1901. His father, Henry Wiles (1838–1930) was a well-known local sculptor, with examples of his work in St John's College, Trinity College and the Fitzwilliam Museum. And one of his brothers, Walter Gilbert Wiles (1876–1966), emigrated to South Africa and



*The watercolour of Queens' College, Cambridge, painted by Gilbert Wiles in 1948*

## From the house

became a very well-known painter there, in fact one of the best-known landscape and seascape artists of the period. Sir Gilbert seems to have inherited some of the family's artistic tendencies. The watercolour of Queens', painted in 1948, after he retired from the Indian Civil Service, is obviously amateur but still very competent. And, reputedly, he was one of the better players in the quartet, although one suspects the standard was not particularly high. The quartet was formed solely for the enjoyment of the participants and not with the aim of ever performing in front of an audience. I am not sure if or how he served in the First World War, but he appears to have joined the Indian Civil Service before it in 1904, and after it, in 1918, starting his rise up the ladder of the Bombay Presidency as Chairman of the Cotton Contracts Board. And then he spent the

next 22 years, until 1940, working in Bombay, ending up as Chief Secretary, as I mentioned above.

He must have got married to his wife, Winifred Mary Pryor, a Cambridge girl, some time before 1907, as that is the date his daughter Joane Mary Wiles was born. She, the daughter, is better documented on the internet. She was born in Bombay and got married to Victor Ferrier Noel-Patton, a Scotsman working there, who later became a Conservative life peer. Famously against lowering the voting age from 21 to 18 when it was being debated in 1968, and against the sale of pornography on the 'top shelf' in newspaper shops and supermarkets, he is very kindly described in the Wikipedia article on him as 'patriarchal and caring'! ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor\\_Noel-Paton,\\_Baron\\_Ferrier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Noel-Paton,_Baron_Ferrier)).

Those generations are long gone.

But we have intriguing reminders of them in the objects they left behind. On Sir Gilbert's death in 1961, his widow, Lady Wiles, gave his papers to the Centre of South Asian Studies (University of Cambridge), where they are now catalogued into two boxes:

Box 1 – Papers relating to the creation of the Wiles Lectures; outbreak of war; government policy at the approach of independence.

Box 2 – Collection of pamphlets, treatises and programmes.

And there are six very similar but rather nice photographs of him in the National Portrait Gallery, taken in middle age when he was at the height of his powers, which can also be seen on application, or on the internet: <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp79718/sir-gilbert-wiles>

James Cormick is the Custodian of the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

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The Trust is an independent educational charity, established in 1978 to encourage the study of the early civilisations and languages of the Indian subcontinent, Iran and Central Asia.

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