

Report on 'Botany in British India' study day

The 'Botany in British India' study day was held on 7 December 2012 at the British Library, to launch the digitisation of 120 files from the India Office Records relating to colonial botany. For links to the files, see <http://bit.ly/RbQ54c> The aim of the day was to uncover relevant resources in the UK and South Asia and to find out how accessible these were. The speakers were:

Gina Douglas	Formerly Librarian and Archivist, Linnean Society
Anne Buddle	Head of Collections Management, National Galleries of Scotland
Dr Henry Noltie	Botanist, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh
Dr Paramjit Singh	Director and Scientist General, Botanical Survey of India
Professor Deepak Kumar	Professor of History of Science and Education, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi
Dr Mark Watson	Plant taxonomist, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh
Kathy Lazenbatt	Librarian, Royal Asiatic Society

Summaries of the talks are given below; sources discussed are listed separately. The lists, which are not intended to be exhaustive, will be passed to the Centre for World Environmental History, University of Sussex. The Centre is creating an on-line map of resources for the environmental history of South Asia. Even at this early stage, the lists show connections between sources and identify promising sources to explore.

Gina Douglas discussed the collections of the Linnaean Society. The holdings are surprisingly rich in South Asian material. Linnaeus himself never visited India, but several of his followers did. Johan Gerhard Konig, for example, worked as a naturalist for the Nawab of Arcot and several of his letters and plant specimens survive in the main Linnaean collection. Linnaeus's correspondence itself has now been digitised and is on-line; his annotated books will follow. The herbarium of the Society's first president, James Edward Smith, contains many specimens from India, with letters from key figures like Francis Buchanan. These have also been mounted on-line. The papers read out at the Society's regular meetings include papers on Indian subjects, submitted by men like Thomas Anderson, Henry Colebrooke, Hugh Falconer, and William Roxburgh. These submissions were often accompanied by illustrations; Gina showed some plant drawings from a paper by Thomas Hardwicke. Letters to the Society from its Fellows and Associate Fellows are 17 for William Roxburgh's *Flora Indica* (1820)

Format (NB 'Drawings' covers paintings etc.)	Quantity	Content	Creators	Location: Linnean Society
Documents; herbarium sheets	11 letters; 11 manuscripts	Letters from Tranquebar with plant descriptions and specimens	Johan Gerhard König (1728-85)	Correspondence available through Linnean Society website, and website of Linnaeus Correspondence Project, Sweden http://linnaeus.c18.net/
Documents	Extensive	Correspondence, includes material from India	Carl Linnaeus (1707-78)	
Books	Extensive	Annotated volumes from personal library	Carl Linnaeus	On-line through Linnean Society website, and Jstor
Herbarium; books; documents	Extensive			

			Strzelecki (1793-1823)	
Drawings	15 albums	East India natural history and marine life in Indo-Pacific ocean	Albert Charles Lewis Gunter (1830-1913)	
Drawings	26	Indian zoological	Thomas Hardwicke (1755-1835)	
Documents, photographs		Photographs of Ceylon	John Christopher Willis (1868-1968)	
Drawings	22	Plants and insects of India	William Carey (1761-1834)	
Drawings	5	Indian irises	David Don (1799-1841)	
Documents	1 volume	Manuscript of <i>Catalogue plantarum...Burmico</i> 1826-27	Nathaniel Wallich (1786-1854)	
Documents	2 folders	<i>Index catalogum florum Burmanica</i>	Nathaniel Wallich (1786-1854)	
Documents and drawings		Plants for the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta	Andrew Thomas Gage (1871-1945)	
Documents and drawings	1 volume	<i>Flora Indica</i> (watermark 1816-17)	William Roxburgh (1751-1815)	
Drawings		Flowers from Kashmir		

Format	Quantity	Content	Creators	Location; notes
Herbarium sheets	Extensive	Plant specimens with manuscript data	William Roxburgh (1751-1815), Francis Buchanan (Francis Buchanan-Hamilton) (1762-1829, Robert Wight (1796-1872), George Watt (1851- 1930), Roland Cooper (1890-1962), Frank Ludlow (1885-1972), George Sherriff (1898- 1967), Francis Kingdon- Ward (1885-1958)	Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Herbarium sheets, drawings, documents, glass-plate negatives	Extensive; 1000+ glass-plate negatives	Involvement in economic and taxonomic botany, exhibitions, Indian crafts, architecture, archaeology	George Watt	
Documents and glass-plate negatives		From career as Keeper of Calcutta Herbarium and Director of Botanical Survey of India. Himalayan interest.	William Wright Smith (1875-1956)	
Herbarium sheets; documents		From Indian career including as Curator of Lloyd Botanic Garden, Darjeeling; Expeditions to Sikkim	George Henry Cave (c 1870-1965)	
Herbarium sheets; documents; photographs		Expeditions to Bhutan; important photographs include Lloyd Botanic Garden, Darjeeling, and Rohmoo, a native plant-collector	Roland Edgar Cooper (1890-1962)	
Photographs; documents		Expeditions in Bhutan and Tibet; diaries	George Sherriff	Diaries edited by H R Fletcher in <i>A Quest of Flowers</i> (1975)

collections are the correspondence volumes of Nathaniel Wallich, under whose superintendence the garden became a hub of world-wide plant exchange. Paramjit showed examples of Wallich's letters. He noted that the Garden's Herbarium, of some 2.5 million specimens, contains a separate herbarium of about 12,000 specimens collected by Wallich. Other manuscript holdings include correspondence by men like William Roxburgh, J D Hooker, Charles Clarke and Robert Wight, and a rare collection of textile samples compiled by John Forbes Watson. Not all the Garden's archives survive: some were lost in the floods of the 1960s and 1970s. Paramjit noted collections in the Industrial Section of the Indian Museum, which is now a unit of the Survey: these include ledgers created by George Watt for his *Dictionary of Economic Products of India*. Paramjit then outlined the Survey's priorities for digitisation. Flora of India were the top priority. Many type specimens had already been digitised; the next step was to make them available on-line. The Garden's manuscript collections were the next priority. The aim was to place low-resolution images on-line, free of charge. Paramjit proposed that the Wallich correspondence, when digitised, be added to the material on the Wallich web-site hosted by Kew Gardens. He stressed that international collaboration was needed to make the Garden's collections as accessible as possible.

Format	Quantity	Content	Creators	Location; notes
Documents	Extensive	Correspondence and other manuscripts	Include William Roxburgh, David Don, J.D. Hooker, Robert Wight, Charles Baron Clarke (1832-1906)	
Drawings		William Roxburgh's <i>Flora</i>		

				Section of Museum
--	--	--	--	----------------------

Deepak Kumar gave an historical overview of archival sources in India. He

